

## The unique Green Karst Region

by Luisa Errichiello, ISMed-CNR (Italy)

The lecture taken in the first day of the Training School aimed at describing the goal, activities and main results of the Short Term Scientific Mission carried on in November 2019 in the Green Karst Region (Slovenia) by Luisa Errichiello, researcher at ISMed CNR (Italy), within the COST Action 18110 – Underground Built Heritage as catalyser for Community Valorisation. The presentation first provided information about the role and activities carried on by the host institution, i.e. RDA Green Karst, Ltd, a non-profit organisation which functions as a regional development agency in the area of Slovenia (called Green Karst) including the municipalities of Bloke, Cerknica, Loška dolina, Ilirska Bistrica, Pivka and Postojna. Subsequently, it showed the empirical focus of analysis, respectively consisting of two different types of Underground Built Heritage (UBH): a) natural caves; b) military remnants of Alpine Wall Fortifications built by the Italian army in the period between the I and II World War.

The researcher also illustrated the collection data strategy adopted that relied on secondary document analysis, field inspections at different sites, face-to-face interviews with local stakeholders and participant observation during a meeting involving 12 local stakeholders. The context analysis and the discussion of main institutional factors influencing the process of re-use and valorization of the UBH of the Region were presented. Then, the analysis moved to the specific UBH visited. As for natural caves, two very different models



of governance - respectively adopted for Postonja Cave Park and Krisna Cave were presented and their main advantages and disadvantages were critically discussed, pointing out at the challenges and obstacles for a sustainable tourism development, able to answer to tourists' expectations, but also protect the environment and account for the host population's needs. As for military remnants, the focus of analysis was on three groups of fortifications, i.e. the underground artillery fort on Primož hill, around Pivka town, the caverns of Milanja (above Ilirska Bistrica) and the remains of caverns and the roofless cave of Unška koliševka (Postojna). Alpine wall fortifications at Primož have only recently been partly made accessible, reopened and integrated into the tourist offer. They are at the beginning of the revalorisation path and the whole system takes part of the park of Military History. As for the other two groups of remnants, as almost of them in the region, tours are organized by local expert guides although the bunkers are accessible to everyone. However, they are in a state of abandonment and significant investments would be required to restore, re-use and valorize them. After reporting the main results of interviews with key local stakeholders interested in the valorization process of these groups of military remnants, the presentation discussed the main decisions taken during the first meeting realized according to a Living Lab approach and oriented at identify the most urgent issues to address and to the set up of the trajectory of development to follow in future years concerning the process of re-use and valorization of these military remnants.

