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From the vision of preserving and revitalizing the maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage to its implementation in Kvarner and Istria

15 years of systematic preservation and revitalization of the maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria and 10 years of work and activity of the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria

Abstract

This introductory article provides an overview of systematical efforts in the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria. It also highlights the important role played by the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria. While a group of enthusiasts began working in this field in the early 2000s, we consider the round table titled Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime Heritage, held at the Rijeka Boat Fair at the end of September 2009, as the symbolic beginning of a more structured approach to this topic. The ideas and visions shared at this event laid the foundation for initiatives that followed. The first major milestones included the organization of the event Let's Revive the Dead Canal (2011), the launch of the Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE, held annually in Rijeka since 2012, and participation in the Brest International Maritime Festival, France in 2012, which was later expanded to other international locations and along the Croatian coast. A major breakthrough in this area came with the international project *Mala Barka* (2014), followed by further EU-funded initiatives such as *Mala Barka 2*, *Arca Adriatica*, and *AdriPromTour*, with Primorje-Gorski Kotar County as the lead partner. These projects led to the successful organization of maritime heritage events, the restoration of traditional boats, including the Lošinj lugger Nerezinac, and the establishment of interpretation centers, among other activities. Collectively, these efforts have significantly contributed to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage and have fostered synergistic links with the tourism sector. A notable outcome is the

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establishment of the Kvarner Tourist Board's brand Kvarner Maritime Heritage. The key stakeholders in these initiatives have also launched numerous supporting activities, including thematic lectures, round tables, and exhibitions. The positive outcomes achieved across Kvarner and Istria have inspired increased engagement from local communities, who are now more inclined to pursue similar projects and activities. It is therefore with satisfaction that we can conclude that the systematic approach to preserving and revitalizing maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage has been highly successful. One of the crowning achievements is the inclusion of the Art of Building and Sailing Traditional Boats of Kvarner and the Art of Sailing with Lateen and Lug Sails along the Croatian Coast on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia.

Keywords: 15 years of systematic preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria, Coordination, preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage

1. Introduction

Fifteen years have passed since the systematic efforts to preserve and revitalize maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria began, along with 10 years of work and activities by the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the results achieved, recognize what has been done well, and identify areas where further progress is needed to achieve even better outcomes.

From the outset, it should be emphasized that none of these initiatives originated solely from this group of enthusiasts, nor will it end with it. Therefore, great recognition should be given to all those historians, museologists, ship modelers, shipbuilders and maritime heritage enthusiasts, who have contributed significantly to research, presentation and preservation of maritime heritage throughout history. Considering the state of preservation, presentation and revitalization of maritime heritage, which is an ongoing effort since 2000 led by a group of enthusiasts from the Faculty of Maritime Studies of the University of Rijeka, under Professor Dinko Zorović (restoration of the ship *Uragan*, creation of a replica of the brigantine mast, exhibition of the Rijeka torpedo, installation of maritime artifacts in space, etc.), it has become clear that sporadic approaches are insufficient and that without a systematic approach to this area, it will be impossible to make any progress.

Simultaneously with the development of this knowledge, the first traditional sailing boat festival and regatta (today known as *Mala Barka – Story of the Sea*) was organized in Mošćenička Draga in 2009. Although this was not the first traditional boat festival in Kvarner (the first was held in Krk in 1998 – Krk Sails) and in Istria (the first was held in Rovinj in 2006), this event resonated strongly with the public and the media, which covered it enthusiastically. Following this, an invitation was extended to participate in the Rijeka Boat Fair, held at the end of September 2009. Along with crew participation on traditional boats and a review regatta, a roundtable discussion on the Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime Heritage was organized. This roundtable was attended by speakers from Kvarner and Istria, including both enthusiasts and experts from relevant institutions.

Later, based on the vision and ideas set out at this round table, concrete activities began to be implemented, yielding positive results. Therefore, we consider this round table to mark the symbolic beginning of the systematic preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria.

An important contribution to this effort was the establishment of the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria (*Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria*). This organization has operated informally since 2011 and has been officially registered under the Associations Act since 2014.

The first significant steps in preserving and revitalizing maritime heritage included the organization of the event *Let's Revive the Dead Canal* in 2011, followed by the *Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE*, which has been held annually in Rijeka since 2012. At the same time, traditional boats were organized to participate in the *Brest International Maritime Festival*, France, in 2012, and later in other locations across France, Italy and Slovenia.

Shortly after that (2014), the international project *Mala Barka* was approved, followed by other EU projects (*Mala Barka 2*, *Arca Adriatica*, *AdriPromTour*), led by the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County as the main partner. These projects provided funding and enabled the implementation of concrete activities aimed at preserving and revitalizing maritime heritage. They also fostered intensive cooperation with the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka and the Faculty of Maritime Studies at the University of Rijeka, which further contributed to the quality of project implementation.

These projects enabled the organization of highly successful events based on maritime heritage, the restoration of traditional boats, including the Lošinj lugger Nerezinac, the establishment of interpretation centers and a wide range of activities that contributed to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. Additionally, they helped create strong synergies with the tourism sector. One key outcome of these projects is the creation of the *Kvarner Maritime Heritage* brand, established by the Kvarner Tourist Board.

In the meantime, the main stakeholders involved in these projects have launched numerous initiatives and participated in the implementation of activities relevant to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. Throughout this period, they have also supported numerous local government units that have initiated their own projects in this field, organizing a wide range of thematic lectures, round tables, and occasional exhibitions. Representatives of the “movement” from Kvarner and Istria, in addition to hosting their own events, actively support and participate in events related to maritime heritage preservation across Croatia, and often abroad.

In addition to the results achieved by stakeholders involved in the aforementioned projects, it is important to emphasize that these accomplishments have sparked increased interest among local communities throughout Kvarner and Istria in initiating similar projects and activities. This growing engagement confirms that the systematic

approach to the preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage has been a resounding success.

The crowning achievement of all these efforts is the inclusion of *The Art of Building and Sailing Traditional Boats of Kvarner* and *The Art of Sailing with Lateen and Lug Sails Along the Croatian Coast* on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia.

2. Conclusions of the round table discussion "Preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage"

Given the importance of the results of the round table on the Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime Heritage, held in September 2009 at the Rijeka Boat Show, with panelists Robert Mohović, Tea Perinčić, Ferdinando Zorović, Dario Vasičić, Silvano Raffaelli and Ricardo Bosazzi, along with other enthusiasts, experts and institutional representatives, it is essential to highlight the conclusions reached at this meeting. The round table played a crucial role in shaping subsequent concrete activities in the preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage.



Figure 1. Round table on the "Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime Heritage" held in September 2009 at the Rijeka Boat Fair

Following a thorough discussion, all participants agreed that the desired results could not be achieved without a systematic approach. Sporadic efforts were not even remotely sufficient. Guided by this shared understanding, a vision

was established, and key ideas were presented at this round table, leading to the following conclusions.

Croatian Adriatic culture and its broader recognition are inconceivable without the valorization and revitalization of maritime heritage. Sporadic approaches are inadequate. Only a systematic strategy, supported by long-term financial planning, without which these projects are not possible, can produce meaningful results.

To this end, it was concluded that systematic activities must be undertaken to create synergistic effects, including:

- the preservation of existing ships and boats, their restoration, and the construction of replicas of historical vessels;
- the organization of events related to the valorization of maritime heritage;
- ongoing research, presentation and education efforts,
- the development of methods to present, popularize and highlight the significance of preserving and revitalizing maritime heritage as part of Croatian identity.

Due to the fact that traditional boats are in great danger of disappearing completely, one of the most important goals was to:

- preserve existing boats that still hold indigenous value through restoration and construct replicas of historical vessels;
- develop such projects within maritime museums/collections and other institutions and associations dedicated to the preservation of maritime heritage;
- identify ways to encourage individuals or owners of traditional vessels to preserve and restore them.

In support of these goals, a series of initiatives were proposed:

- allocation of dedicated berths in ports for traditional vessels;
- exemption from, or reduction of, mooring fees,
- provision of expert assistance in the reconstruction and renovation of traditional boats;
- provision of financial resources to support restoration and equipping of vessels (including grants, non-repayable funds, the possibility of favourable lending options, etc.).

A significant advancement in this field would be the formal recognition of traditional vessels as part of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia.

It is also essential to launch projects such as:

- reviews and regattas of historical boats (and eventually ships), organization of festivals promoting maritime heritage;
- presentation of both tangible and intangible heritage through lectures, exhibitions, demonstrations and workshops of traditional skills, etc.;
- integration of such events into the tourism offer as part of cultural tourism and destination branding,
- connecting these events with other cultural and artistic programs (music, visual arts, theatre, etc.).

As previously mentioned, this vision and these ideas led to the implementation of specific activities that have produced positive results and brought us to the current state of progress in Kvarner and Istria in the field of preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage.

3. Review of the results during the past 15 years

On the wings of enthusiasm and the conclusions drawn from the 2009 round table, systematic activities were initiated in the preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage in Kvarner and Istria. Numerous regattas of traditional sailing boats were launched and festivals promoting maritime heritage were organized. A wide range of lectures, round tables, exhibitions, workshops on traditional maritime, fishing and shipbuilding skills were held. Many international and other projects related to the preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage were approved and implemented, alongside various initiatives and many other important activities that contributed not only to visibility but also to the realization of specific content. The following section briefly presents the most important achievements.

3.1. Regattas of traditional sailing boats and events promoting maritime heritage

The first regatta of traditional boats in Kvarner, *Krk Sails*, was held in Krk in August 1998 (this was a revival of the original regatta, first held in Krk in 1925 and later continued intermittently). In Istria, the Rovinj Regatta of Traditional Boats with Lug and Lateen Sails (*Regata rovinjese di barche tradizionali con vela al terzo e latina*) took place in Rovinj in June 2006. This was followed by the Review and Regatta of Traditional Boats with Sails (today known as *Mala Barka – Story of the Sea*) organized in Mošćenička Draga in July 2009.

Since 2009, numerous traditional boat shows and regattas have been regularly organized – today there are around fifteen such events held annually in Kvarner and Istria. Some of these have evolved into full-fledged events promoting maritime heritage, featuring workshops and demonstrations of traditional maritime crafts and skills, as well as lectures, exhibitions, rowing and sailing activities for children, parents and visitors. Although regattas, which are competitive by nature, have occasionally led to the use of inauthentically equipped boats in pursuit of better results, they have undeniably raised public awareness of the events and the traditional boats, and have further motivated many to preserve and restore these boats.

The Nino Gasparinic Traditional Sailing Boat Regatta in Lovran was launched in 2010. The Nerezine Traditional Sailing Boat Regatta, which had a long but interrupted tradition (the first one was organized in 1920), was revived in 2011. In the same year, the then-informal Coordination, in cooperation with the ProTorpedo Association,

co-organized the event *Let's Revive the Dead Canal*, which was a forerunner to the *Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE*. Since 2012, FIUMARE has been held continuously in Rijeka and has grown into one of the largest events of this kind in the Republic of Croatia. The Fažana Traditional Sailing Boat Regatta was launched in 2012. The same year in Rab, the Rab Sailing Days were introduced, featuring a regatta of cruisers and traditional boats. Although this event later faded out, it was relaunched in 2021 as the Regatta of Traditional Rowing and Sailing Boats. In 2014, the Ivo Sipa Traditional Boat Festival was launched in Ika. Traditional boat festivals were also organized as part of other events, such as the Wine and Hot Springs and 300 Years of the Ika Shipyard. Also in 2014, the St. Martin's Regatta of Traditional Boats was launched in Martinšćica on the island of Cres. The Wooden Barracks Regatta was initiated in Selce in 2015. In Crikvenica, a regatta of traditional sailing boats was added to the traditional Fisherman's Week event, which has been held for over 50 years. In 2018, Malinska launched a regatta that grew into a festival *Homo na jidra – Nikola Jurić Memorial*. In 2019, the town of Cres introduced the Days of Cres Maritime and Fishing Heritage festival *Creski kaić*. In 2024, the traditional *Porcijunkula* event in Malinska and Glavotok was expanded to include a Review and Blessing of Traditional Boats. A Regatta of Traditionally Built Vessels is also held as part of the large *Fiumanka* sailing regatta in Rijeka, while in Medveja, a review of traditional boats takes place during the *RetroRibarska* event. In the meantime, other regattas of traditional sailing boats were launched, including the *Barkajol Melkior Paraguay Regatta* in Ičići and *Burtižanje* – a show regatta of traditional boats held in Puntarska draga in Punat on the island of Krk. However, these events did not continue for long. This year, the launch of a new event is planned in Pula – Traditional Sails under the Arena.



Figure 2. Regatta of traditional sailing boats in the port of Rijeka – "Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE"

3.2. Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE

The then-informal Coordination, in cooperation with the ProTorpedo Association, co-organized the event *Let's Revive the Dead Canal* in 2011. This event served as the forerunner to the *Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE*, which has been held continuously in Rijeka since 2012.

The *Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE* creates events centered on maritime heritage and attracts tourists to Rijeka and Kvarner region for extended stays. The festival promotes Rijeka and Kvarner by presenting and valorizing maritime, fishing and traditional shipbuilding heritage through a wide array of attractive events. It also highlights various Kvarner destinations and their specific eco-ethnic products. A key objective of the festival is to educate all destination stakeholders about the historical and cultural heritage of Rijeka and Kvarner, with special emphasis on educating the youngest citizens about maritime heritage. Beyond preserving and revitalizing maritime heritage, the festival also aims to enhance the cultural tourism potential in Rijeka/Kvarner. The *Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE* is the bearer of the Kvarner Tourist Board's tourism brand *Kvarner Maritime Heritage*.

The FIUMARE festival features approximately thirty different programs held at around twenty locations, and it has been consistently recognized as a prominent maritime event with cultural, educational and touristic value.

FIUMARE's diverse programming includes: an exhibition of traditional boats on the Korzo and in the Dead Canal, workshops on traditional crafts and maritime skills, popular science lectures, thematic exhibitions (in the fish market, in museums, on the Korzo), open deck days on ships in the Rijeka port, a "ball of sails and lights", regattas of traditional sailing boats, sailing activities for children and parents on traditional boats, fishing tournaments, art colonies, expert-guided tours through Rijeka's maritime heritage, open days of the Faculty of Maritime Studies of the University of Rijeka and the Maritime School Bakar, open days of the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, the City Museum of Rijeka and the Natural History Museum in Rijeka, as well as an eco-ethnic fair of indigenous products, an all-evening program at the Rijeka Astronomical Center, an exhibition of maritime-themed books in second-hand bookstores, reenactments of historical events (e.g. Karolina Riječka saves Rijeka) and a performance by members of the Little Book Lovers reading club from the Rijeka City Library.

Through the program of this event, in addition to the presentation of tangible maritime heritage, various programs are also held that significantly contribute to the preservation and revitalization of intangible heritage, which is both highly important and indispensable in a modern museological approach. The great importance of the Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE is also reflected in its role in connecting Rijeka, as the natural and historical center of Kvarner, with other destinations, thereby further enhancing the value of the region's heritage potential. The success of the Kvarner Festival of the Sea is further evident in the unification of

numerous events across different locations in Kvarner under the common theme of the Review and Regatta of Traditional Sailing Boats in Rijeka, Lovran, Ika, Mošćenička Draga, Krk, Malinska, Cres, Martinšćica, Crikvenica, Selce and Nerezine. The central and largest event is FIUMARE in Rijeka. Through this event, the Kvarner Sea Festival expands its mission to encompass the entire Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, running from spring to autumn, and offering numerous opportunities for both locals and tourists to take part in one or more events. FIUMARE in Rijeka lasts for eight days and brings together all elements of the region's rich maritime history, emphasizing Rijeka as the center of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.



Figure 3. "Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE" (Korzo, Rijeka)

The organizer of the Kvarner Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition – FIUMARE is the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria (Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria). The co-organizers include the City of Rijeka, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Rijeka Tourist Board, Kvarner Tourist Board and the Port of Rijeka Authority.

The value of this festival lies in its ability to bring together a wide range of institutions, associations, companies and individuals. Many participants contribute to the implementation of the festival's program and activities, including: the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, Rijeka, the Pro Torpedo Association, ŠRD Luben, MO Luka, the Faculty of Maritime Studies of the University of Rijeka, the Bakar Maritime School and the training ship *Vila Velebita dva*, the Rijeka Technical School, the Rijeka City Museum, the Natural History Museum in Rijeka,

the Northern Adriatic Captains' Association, the Marina boat hostel, the Center for Industrial Heritage of the University of Rijeka, the Sušačani Club, the PGŽ Photo Union, the Rijeka University Library, the Rijeka City Library, Rijeka Sport d.o.o., the Rijeka Astronomical Center, the Rijeka Academic and Astronomical Society, the *Mali Neboder* and *Ex libris* antique bookstores, the Mošćenička Draga Ecomuseum and members of the coordination of Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria: the Kuća o batani Association – Casa della batana Rovinj/Rovigno, JK Brioni Fažana, the Mošćenička Draga Ecomuseum (Interpretation Center for Fishing and Maritime Heritage House of the Sea) and the Department of the Chakavian Parliament of the Municipality of Mošćenička Draga – Section for Traditional Boats Draške Barki Mošćenička Draga, the Association Our Lovran – Lovrana Nostra, the Lovranska Lantina section Lovran, JK Plav Krk and ŠD Škarpina Nerezine.

3.3. Participation in festivals, traditional sailing boat regattas and fairs in the country and abroad

In addition to organizing and participating in festivals and regattas of traditional sailing boats in Kvarner and Istria, maritime heritage and skills are also presented at numerous festivals, regattas and fairs throughout Croatia, but also abroad.



Figure 4. Representatives of Kvarner at the "Brest Maritime Festival" 2012.

At the initiative of the Coordination, with the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County as the lead organization, along with the support of local tourist boards, cities and municipalities, a project was launched in 2012 to enable the participation of traditional boats in the Brest Maritime Festival in France. The appearance in Brest attracted significant attention and great interest from the public and the media in Croatia and in France. This project played a key role in enhancing the visibility of the “movement” for the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage.

Representatives of the “movement” from Kvarner and Istria not only take part in the events they organize, but also actively support and participate in other initiatives related to the maritime heritage preservation: *Lateen Sail* in Murter, *Regatta for Soul and Body* in Betina, *Days in the Bay* in Stari Grad on Hvar, *Hvar – the Metropolis of the Sea* in the town of Hvar, *Rota Palagružona* in Komiža and *Zadarska Koka* in Zadar. Croatian maritime heritage is also promoted internationally at sea festivals in Brest, Morbihan and Sète in France, as well as at traditional boat regattas in Venice (*Regatta Storica* and *Vela al Terzo – Coppa del Presidente*), Piran and Izola. Among notable activities are multiple appearances at boat fairs in Rijeka and Zagreb. At these and other events, Croatian maritime heritage is presented through thematic lectures, round tables and occasional maritime exhibitions, workshops on traditional maritime, fishing and shipbuilding skills, as well as cultural, artistic and gastronomic programs.

3.4. Participation in the preparation and implementation of international projects

A major step forward in the implementation of the plan was the initiation of international projects, which provided funding and enabled the realization of concrete activities. Of particular note are the *Mala Barka* and *Mala Barka 2* projects, after which MALA BARKA became a recognized symbol of the preservation and revitalization of traditional maritime heritage, especially in Kvarner and Istria. These projects were followed by the *Arca Adriatica* and *AdriPromTour* projects. The lead partner in all these initiatives was Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, with key partners including the Kvarner Tourist Board and the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka, with whom we have developed excellent cooperation. These projects enabled the implementation of specific activities, increased public visibility, and encouraged others to apply for similar projects. In addition to the aforementioned projects, numerous coastal local government units have implemented their own maritime heritage projects in their areas through funds from LAGUR or other funding sources.

Thanks to these initiatives, substantial funding was secured for the establishment of maritime heritage interpretation centers, the restoration of boats and the Lošinj lugger Nerezinac, and the organization of a wide range of maritime heritage events. The implementation of these projects also created a synergistic effect with the tourism sector. In addition to the above, heritage sites were marked with interpretive signage, and ten common cross-border tourist itineraries were developed, which will be further

refined and adapted to user needs and preferences. Furthermore, educational materials such as picture books, brochures, postcards, leaflets and a mobile application were created. The projects also led to the development of maritime heritage databases and virtual museums accessible at: <http://www.malabarka.eu/hr/naslovnica/> and <https://arcaadriatica.eu/>. Through collaborative work on these projects, the Kvarner Tourist Board established the Kvarner Maritime Heritage brand.

3.4.1. Mala Barka



The MALA BARKA project – Tourist valorisation of the maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage of the northern Adriatic through the creation of new tourist products aimed to enhance the tourist valorisation of the maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage of the northern Adriatic by developing new tourism products. The project was implemented from 1 February 2015 to 29 April 2016, with the following partners: Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (lead partner), the Kvarner Tourist Board, the Municipality of Izola and the Izola Tourist Board. The total project budget was €678,016.66, of which €576,314.15 was co-financed through grants from the European Regional Development Fund (Operational Programme Slovenia – Croatia 2007 – 2013).

The project objectives were: to develop and promote a recognizable tourism product based on maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage, to establish clear product recognition and branding, to develop a cross-border network of experts in destination management and establish a center of excellence, to develop a joint center of excellence and ensure its sustainability and facilitate the expansion of the model to other cross-border areas, to upgrade and enhance existing tourism events, to ensure the long-term protection of both tangible and intangible cultural and historical maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage by equipping interpretation centers, to promote the tangible and intangible heritage of the border region on maritime, fishing and shipbuilding (vessels, traditional crafts, customs, traditional dishes and drinks, etc.), and to strengthen human resources for the development of new tourism products based on maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage.

The project achieved several results, including the implementation of entertainment and educational events in Rijeka, Mošćenička Draga and Izola; the establishment of museum spaces (interpretation centers) dedicated to traditional

seafaring, fishing and shipbuilding in Mošćenička Draga (Interpretation Center of Fishing and Maritime Heritage *House of the Sea* Ecomuseum Mošćenička Draga) and Izola, and the development of a new tourist product, MALA BARKA. The project also promoted the attractions of the cross-border area through monographs, brochures, television videos and participation in fairs.

3.4.2. Mala Barka 2



The project MALA BARKA 2 – Preservation of the Maritime Heritage of the Northern Adriatic aimed to preserve, protect, develop and promote the maritime heritage of the northern Adriatic through tourism valorization based on the principles of sustainable tourism. The project ran from 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2019. The project partners were Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (lead partner), the Kvarner Tourist Board, the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka, the Association and Ecomuseum *Kuća o batana Rovinj – Associazione Ecomuseo Casa della batana Rovigno*, the Municipality of Izola – *Comune di Isola*, the Tourist Association of Izola – *Ente per il turismo Isola*, the Municipality of Piran – *Comune di Pirano* and the Maritime Museum – *Museo del mare Sergej Mašera Piran – Pirano*. The total project budget was €2,164,455.00, of which €1,839,786.75 was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia Cooperation Programme). For more information, visit: www.malabarka.eu

The goals of the project were to preserve, protect, develop and promote maritime heritage of the cross-border area through valorization based on the principles of sustainable tourism. Specific objectives included cataloguing, preservation and interpretation of maritime heritage, the creation of a tourist offer positioning the northern Adriatic as a maritime heritage destination and the development of cross-border cultural and tourism products.

The primary aim was to ensure maximum protection of the existing tangible and intangible maritime heritage across the entire coastal border area and to systematically integrate it into tourism through a series of measures (establishment of interpretation centers, organization of educational and demonstration events, a virtual museum, etc.) to develop and activate a shared tourist product.

The key results of the project included an increase in the number of permanently protected intangible and tangible maritime heritage assets (through interpretation centers, a virtual museum, a maritime heritage database, descriptions of technical

characteristics of vessels), promotion of the coastal border area as a single tourist destination through an intensive promotional campaign, development of attractive tourism offerings, such as events and workshops organized by the Academy of Traditional Maritime Skills, an increase in the number of visitors to the border area, improvement of maritime heritage tourist infrastructure, including interpretation centers in Mali Lošinj (Nerezine), Krk, Izola and Piran, as well as the restoration of traditional vessels to serve as authentic examples and exhibits in harbors and at regattas, and increased education and engagement of children, youth and visitors in traditional maritime crafts and skills, through programs delivered by the Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills.

3.4.3. Arca Adriatica



The ARCA ADRIATICA project – Protection, promotion and tourist valorisation of the Adriatic maritime heritage was implemented under the third priority axis *Environment and Cultural Heritage* of the INTERREG Italy – Croatia programme. This project continued the efforts of previous successful EU-funded initiatives, Mala Barka and Mala Barka 2, by focusing on the joint protection, promotion and tourist valorisation of the Adriatic maritime heritage. Running from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2021, the project brought together the following partners: Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (HR) – lead partner, the Municipality of Malinska – Dubašnica (HR), the Kvarner Tourist Board (HR), the Ecomuseum *Kuća o batana – Casa della batana* (HR), the Municipality of Cervia (IT), the Municipality of Cesenatico (IT), the Mediterranean Agricultural Institute of Bari (IT) 3, the Municipality of San Benedetto del Tronto (IT), the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (IT) and the Municipality of Tkon (HR). The total project budget amounted to €3,168,790.00 (HRK 23,544,109.70), with 85% co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund, and 15% contributed by project partners. More information available at: <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/>

The main objectives of the project were to develop a joint tourism product based on the principles of social and environmental sustainability, while simultaneously valorizing, preserving, protecting and promoting the rich maritime heritage of the cross-border area. Through a range of measures and project activities, efforts were made to protect the existing tangible and intangible maritime heritage to the greatest extent possible, and to contribute to the creation of a new tourism product and a unique and recognizable cross-border destination.

The results achieved through the project included both the continuation of existing initiatives and the establishment of new ones. Networks of centers

of excellence were further developed and expanded, and an Action Plan for the Development of Sustainable Tourism was created for the Municipality of Malinska-Dubašnica. Markings were designed and installed for 54 maritime heritage attractions (48 in Kvarner and 6 in Rovinj), 23 traditional boats were restored, 8 of which in Kvarner, the Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills was established, and both existing and new promotion centers continued their work or were newly-founded. During 2019 and 2021, 10 interpretive events dedicated to maritime heritage were held across Kvarner, in Rijeka, in Mošćenička Draga, Krk, Crikvenica and Mali Lošinj/Nerezine. New cross-border tourist itineraries under the ARCA ADRIATICA brand were developed, resulting in a total of 24 itineraries. Promotional videos were produced and broadcast on TV and radio stations, accompanied by the publication of various promotional materials. The maritime heritage database was enriched with an additional 250 entries, and a proposal for inclusion into the Register of Cultural Assets was prepared. Furthermore, a Virtual Maritime Heritage Museum was created and the DUBoak Interpretation Center in Malinska was renovated and reopened.

3.4.4. AdriPromTour



The AdriPromTour project – Valorization of the Adriatic Cultural and Natural Heritage through Strengthening Visibility and Tourism Promotion was implemented under the Interreg V-A Italy – Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014 – 2020, within the initiative Joint Development of Thematic Cultural Routes. The project ran from 1 June 2022 to 30 June 2023. Project partners included Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (CRO) as the lead partner, the Municipality of Cervia (ITA), the Municipality of Cesenatico (ITA), the City of Kaštela (CRO), the Europe Point of Teramo Consortium (ITA), Šibenik-Knin County (CRO), the Polytechnic University of Marche (ITA) and the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula (CRO). The total project budget was €609,504.46, of which 85% was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, and 15% was financed by the project partners. The budget of the Croatian partners amounted to €308,312.98, with the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County contributing €118,930.16.

The main objective of the project was to promote maritime and cultural heritage, with a particular focus on maritime heritage valorized through the *Arca Adriatica* and *Cultural and Tourist Routes along the Frankopan Trails* projects.

The key results of the project, particularly those related to maritime heritage, included the education of stakeholders on maritime heritage, a two-day study trip with visits to the maritime heritage interpretation centers on the island of Krk (Krk and Malinska), organization of the thematic event *Večer od mora* (Evening of the Sea) in

Mošćenička Draga, a comprehensive media campaign, participation in the Place2GO tourism fair in Zagreb, development of promotional materials, presentation of the project to Slovenian journalists during a study trip in Mošćenička Draga organized within the project *Preservation, Protection and Promotion of Maritime and Fishing Heritage and Identity of the Municipality of Mošćenička Draga – Story of the Sea*, production of three videos, including a promotional video, a video documenting the study trip and a final video of the project, and recording six locations for the VR platform.

3.5. The most important results in the field of preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage

The most significant achievements in the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria include the restoration of traditional boats, notably the Lošinj lugger Nerezinac, the establishment of the Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills, the development of maritime heritage interpretation centers, various other accomplishments and initiatives, the inclusion of the Art of Building and Sailing Traditional Boats of Kvarner and The Art of Sailing with Lateen and Lug Sails Along the Croatian Coast on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia, as well as the organization and hosting of the Conference on the Preservation and Interpretation of the Maritime Heritage of Croatia.

3.5.1. Restoration of traditional boats

The restoration of traditional boats, essential for their preservation and protection from decay, was a challenging task. One of the main difficulties was finding skilled shipbuilders capable of performing the necessary work. In addition to the restoration efforts, the Faculty of Maritime Studies and the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Rijeka prepared detailed technical descriptions, conducted technical surveys, and created drafts to ensure that replicas of these traditional boats could be built in the future if necessary. All the restoration activities were also documented.

As part of the *Mala Barka 2* project, a total of eight traditional boats were restored in Kvarner. The restored vessels and their details are as follows: *guc* from 1953, applicant: Športsko društvo Škarpina, Nerezine, restorer: Brodograđevni obrt Brodograditelj, Dobrinj, shipbuilder Zdravko Škrabonja; *guc* from Opatija from 1895, applicant: Udruuga Ikarski barkajoli, Ika, restorer: Kika marine service d.o.o., Ičići, shipbuilder Feručo Brubnjak; *leut* from 1934, applicant: Ecomuseum Mošćenička Draga, Mošćenička Draga, restorer: Stolarski servis Loris, Mošćenice, shipbuilder Loris Rubinić; *gajeta* from 1932, applicant: Igor Felker from Susak, restorer: Veliko plavetnilo d.o.o., Rijeka, shipbuilder Ivan Kalčić; *guc* from 1990, applicant: Yacht Club Jadro, Selce, restorer: Vekasa – Commerce d.o.o., Krk, shipbuilders Stanislav Žic and Josip Mršić; *pasara* from 1954, applicant: Our Lovran Association – Lovrana

nostra, Lovran, restorer: Inter Diesel d.o.o., Lovran, shipbuilder Ivan Kalčić; Lovran *guc* from 1968, applicant: Arsen Dobrijević from Čavli, restorer: ASPAR craft for production, trade and services, Matulji, shipbuilder Ivan Pavelić and *bragoc* from 1960, applicant: City of Krk, restorer: Malinska Shipbuilding Craft, Malinska, shipbuilder Franko Kraljić.



Figure 5. Restoration of traditional boats

Within the framework of the *Arca Adriatica* project, a total of eight traditional boats were restored in Kvarner. The restored vessels and their details are as follows: *guc* from 1933, applicant: Ecomuseum Mošćenička Draga – Mošćenička Draga, restorer: Stolarski servis LORIS – Mošćenička Draga, shipbuilder Loris Rubinić, place of restoration: Mošćenička Draga; *guc* from 1970, applicant and restorer: Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria – Rijeka, shipbuilder Loris Rubinić, place of restoration: Mošćenička Draga; *pasara* from 1931, applicants: Sports Society Škarpina Nerezine and JK Reful Cres, restorers: ODIN wooden boat repairs – Cres, shipbuilder: Marino Toić and Alvis Benussi – Rovinj, secondary occupation shipbuilder and sailmaker, place of restoration: Cres, Bale and Rovinj; *guc* from 1945, applicant: Association Our Lovran – Lovrana nostra, Section Lovranska lantina – Lovran, restorer: Navis Nautika 2 – Lovran, shipbuilder Željko Petričić, place of restoration: Veprinac/Perinići and Tošina/Opatija; *gajeta* from 1958, applicant: JK Plav Krk, restorer: Brodograđevni obrt Malinska – Malinska, shipbuilder: Franko Kraljić, place of restoration: Malinska; *pasara* from 1976, applicant: Ikarski barkajoli Association – Ika, restorer EPO – Opatija, shipbuilder Feručo Brubnjak, place of restoration: Liganj (Lovran); *pasara* MK 34 from 1989, owner: Toni Kraljić, restorer: Malinska Shipbuilding Workshop – Malinska, shipbuilder: Franko Kraljić, place of restoration: Malinska and *pasara* MK 73 from 1985, owner: Klaudija Koči, restorer:

Malinska Shipbuilding Workshop – Malinska, shipbuilder: Franko Kraljić, place of restoration: Malinska.

The restoration model followed a structured approach. Applicants were associations dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. These associations submitted either their own boats or privately owned boats for restoration, with prior agreements made with the owners outlining their post-restoration responsibilities (independent ongoing maintenance of the boats, keeping the boats moored within Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, displaying a flag with the project logo, participating in traditional events and regattas). As part of the application process, applicants were required to provide basic information about each boat, document its condition and submit a cost estimate for restoration. Once the boats were selected, a public tender was issued for their restoration. Local shipbuilders from the Kvarner region applied, and contracts were signed with the selected builder for each boat. In the *Mala Barka 2* project, the available renovation budget was determined for each boat based on the cost estimate. In contrast, the Arca Adriatica project allocated a fixed amount of €10,000 for each boat. If the funds were insufficient, in both projects the applicants were responsible for securing additional financing to complete the restoration and return the boat to operation. Restoration work had to be performed to preserve each boat's authentic appearance, which meant using appropriate materials and reconstructing original elements such as rudders, masts and traditional sails. Throughout the restoration process, experts from the Faculty of Maritime Studies of the University of Rijeka provided supervision. Each restoration was accompanied by the creation of technical descriptions (Robert Mohović, Đani Mohović and Renato Ivčec from the Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka), technical filming and documentation, the production of blueprints (Roko Dejhalla from the Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka), and documentary filming of the entire process (Tomislav Budiselić, Studio Insomnia). Upon completion, the boats were ceremonially launched into the sea at local traditional events.

It is important to note that, in addition to the restoration of traditional boats through the aforementioned projects, a significant number of restorations have also been carried out through private initiatives and institutional projects funded by public sources. Notable examples include the restoration of several traditional boats through the *Drvo je prvo* project (led by: Mali Lošinj Tourist Board), the construction of a replica of the Brseč *batana* (*patana*), implemented by the Municipality of Mošćenička Draga through the *Story of the Sea 2* project, funded by LAGUR Vela Vrata, and various restorations of traditional boats financed by the Municipality of Malinska-Dubašnica.

3.5.2. Restoration of the Lošinj lugger *Nerezinac*

One of the most complex activities undertaken within these projects was the restoration of the Lošinj lugger *Nerezinac*, which has been transformed into a unique example of a floating museum. In addition to restoring the ship's hull and onboard

systems, a major challenge involved reconstructing the lugger's authentic rigging. This was particularly demanding, as no traditional sailing ship in Croatia had been equipped with authentic rigging for over a century.

The wooden motor vessel *Dražica* (renamed *Nerezinac* following its renovation) is a valuable example of traditional shipbuilding. Recognizing its cultural significance, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia listed it as protected cultural asset in 2010. The renovation was carried out based on historical models of the Lošinj luggers from the late 19th century. Through this comprehensive restoration, the ship's lower deck was converted into an attractive Interpretation Center of the Maritime Heritage of the Island of Lošinj. This innovative museum represents a unique addition to the region's tourism infrastructure, contributing to the authentic maritime character of island towns in the northern Adriatic. Moored on the Lošinj Captains' Coast, directly in front of the Museum of Apoxyomenos, the ship presents and interprets the long and rich maritime tradition of its region in a modern, attractive and interactive way. The ship also participates in maritime tourism events, including regattas of traditional vessels. As a "floating" interpretation center of maritime heritage, both docked and sailing, it can be encountered in various northern Adriatic ports, as part of the *Mala Barka* project itinerary, or unexpectedly while sailing along the coast.



Figure 6. The restored Lošinj lugger "Nerezinac"

The museological concept of this unique interpretation center was developed by curator Katarina Mažuran, prof., while the exhibition design was created by Sanjin Kunić, dipl. designer, and Luka Jelušić, MFA designer.

The exhibition, located on the lower deck of the ship, presents life on board through five thematic sections: crew, food, cargo, maritime routes, and ship

construction and maintenance (all enhanced with sound). These thematic sections are interpreted in a way that goes beyond presenting facts, they also invite visitors to imagine possible stories and to engage creatively, filling in historical gaps with their own interpretation. In addition to photographs and authentic objects, the exhibition includes illustrations and textual narratives that suggest possible aspects of the ship's past. The incomplete, fragmentary and imaginary approach to storytelling encourages visitors to reflect on the nature of historical authenticity, challenging the assumption that history and tradition are fixed and unquestionable.

The display on the quay and on deck contains an information board featuring key facts about the ship and an interactive "workshop" section, modeled after a traditional carpenter's bench. Here, visitors can try their hand at various traditional maritime skills and ship maintenance techniques. On deck, they are also invited to engage with practical seafaring skills or ship management. Possible activities include caulking, mending sails, planning and sanding wood, hammering nails, bending wood (with steam), tying sailor's knots, scrubbing the deck, blowing the horn, being hoisted using a block and tackle, raising the sail, etc.

In this final phase of the renovation, the ship underwent restoration at the Mali Lošinj shipyard, which provided extensive support for the project (director Antony Saganić, Dragan Balija in commercial and procurement, and facility manager Dragomir Fatuta). Special recognition is due to Zdravko Škrabonja, the shipbuilder who, as a subcontractor of the shipyard, carried out nearly all the woodwork. Additional contributions came from Loris Rubinić, who crafted the console and cleats, and Siniša Mikelić from Rab, who hand-wove the traditional braided fenders.

The renovation project was developed by Jasmin Perić and Mišel Margan of Ri Naval d.o.o., who were responsible for designing the restoration and ensuring compliance with the standards and regulations of the Croatian Register of Shipping. Professors Robert Mohović, Đani Mohović and Renato Ivče from the Faculty of Maritime Studies served as consultants for both the design and supervision of the restoration, with a particular focus on maintaining authenticity and preserving the traditional appearance of the ship.

The ship's renovation involved extensive work, including restoring the hull and constructing a completely new deck, installing the main and auxiliary engines, tanks, and the engine room and integrating all other ship systems. One of the most technically demanding tasks was the reconstruction of the mast and rigging. To achieve an authentic replica consistent with the traditional Lošinj lugger, experts from the Faculty of Maritime Studies of the University of Rijeka conducted in-depth research and precisely defined the components of the mast and rigging system. Additionally, the renovation had to meet all the requirements by the Croatian Register of Shipping, a complex task overseen by the design team. Alongside the structural restoration, a fully equipped interpretation center was installed below deck.

In addition to the shipyard workers, several key individuals contributed to the final outfitting of the ship: Ferdinando Zorović, Robert, Đani and Josip Mohović Jr., Renato

Ivče, captain Gilberto Fazlić and Ivan Bižaca, tugboat captain at the Lošinj shipyard.

The ship is owned by Loger d.o.o., a company founded by the late Kresencio Lekić, Karl Heinz Putz and Ferdinando Zorović. A tripartite agreement was signed between Loger d.o.o., the City of Mali Lošinj and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County for the use of the ship within the project. Under this agreement, the ship was placed in service for a period of five years free of charge for project-related services and maintained for 20 years without the right to charge for services. Partial funding (approximately HRK 1,000,000.00) was secured through the *Mala Barka 2* project. The remaining amount was covered by the Ministry of Tourism, the City of Mali Lošinj, the Mali Lošinj Tourist Board and other sponsors. The total value of the ship's restoration and the establishment of the Interpretation Center for the Maritime Heritage of the Island of Lošinj amounted to approximately HRK 4,000,000.00.

3.5.3. Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills

In cooperation with the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka and the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria and its members, and the Rijeka Technical School, the Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills was launched in 2017. As part of Academy's activities, traditional shipbuilding workshops were organized with local shipbuilders in Malinska, Mošćenička Draga/Mošćenice and Selce, and at the Rijeka Technical School. Some components of the program were also conducted during cultural and tourist events (maritime festivals, exhibitions and regattas of traditional sailing boats, etc.), serving both as educational and demonstration activities that promoted maritime heritage. In addition to the practical workshops, theoretical lectures on traditional shipbuilding were held in Rijeka. These lectures were offered as public sessions, open to anyone interested in learning more about maritime craftsmanship.

The Academy was founded with the goal of passing down the art of building and restoring traditional vessels (barges) to younger generations, ensuring survival of this endangered cultural skill. The establishment of traditional shipbuilding workshops aimed to achieve several key objectives: restoring traditional vessels, transferring knowledge and preserving the craft of building and repair, encouraging small-scale shipbuilders and woodworkers to specialize in traditional shipbuilding, educating children and young people about the types and characteristics of traditional vessels unique to the northern Adriatic, integrating traditional shipbuilding into school curricula and formal education programs, and preserving traditional shipbuilding through documentation (photographs and/or videos of restoration of traditional vessels conducted during workshops).

Participants of the Traditional Shipbuilding Workshops were primarily students from the Rijeka Technical School, Department of Shipbuilding, with occasional participation of students of Maritime School, students from the Faculty of Maritime

Studies, students from the Naval Architecture Department, and interested members of associations dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. The workshops also welcomed interested individuals, including tourists. In addition, special demonstration workshops were organized specifically for primary school children. While the content of the workshops was consistent across all target groups, the level of complexity was tailored to suit each target group.

As part of the *Mala Barka 2* project, 20 works workshops were held for students of the Technical School Rijeka, specializing in shipbuilding technology. Each workshop lasted 8 school hours. The Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria was responsible for organizing and managing the workshops. The workshop leaders included Robert Mohović, Đani Mohović, Nedeljko Dunato, Silvano Raffaelli and Davor Lončarić. Marija Marač and Ljiljana Domazet, teachers of the Technical School Rijeka, acted as mediators between the students and traditional shipbuilding masters. For each traditional shipbuilding workshop, these mediators prepared a detailed implementation plan in coordination with the shipbuilder and the workshop leader and briefed the participants on the schedule and objectives before the practical work began. The restoration of the vessels during these workshops was photographed and filmed, creating valuable educational and promotional materials that contribute significantly to the preservation of intangible heritage.

The traditional shipbuilding masters who led the workshops were Franko Kraljić in Malinska, Loris Rubinić in Mošćenička Draga/Mošćenice and Josip Mršić in Selce. Transportation to and from the workshop locations was provided for all students and teachers participating in the program.

Traditional shipbuilding workshops in Malinska were conducted during the restoration of a *bragoc* built in 1960, measuring 9.50 m, originally constructed in Chioggia, as well as a 5.96-meter long *guc* from Krk. In Mošćenice, workshops took place during the renovation of the 7.95-meter long *leut* (trawler) of St. Andrew, built in Cres in 1934, as well as during the restoration of several Kvarner *guc* vessels. In Selce, workshops were held during the renovation of the 6-meter long *pasara*, built in 1974 at the Krk shipyard.

Theoretical lectures related to traditional shipbuilding were delivered at the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka, the Technical School in Rijeka, the Faculty of Maritime Studies, and the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Rijeka. The lectures were led by renowned experts in shipbuilding and maritime studies, including teachers of professional subjects, shipbuilders, and other specialists in the field of traditional boat building and restoration.

Theoretical lectures followed a clearly defined content and included the following topics: Introduction to traditional shipbuilding workshops: The current state and perspectives of traditional vessels preservation and revitalization (Robert Mohović), The importance of developing the Academy of Traditional Crafts and Skills (Tea Perinčić), Types of traditional boats and ships (Luciano Keber), Materials used in

building traditional boats and ships (Marija Marač), Boat and ship design: line drawing, structural elements and other components (Dunja Legović), Construction of wooden boats (Luciano Keber), Construction of wooden ships (Ljiljana Domazet), Techniques for building and restoring traditional boats (Roko Dejhalla), and Maritime customs and contemporary presentation of traditional boats and ships (Jakov Karmelić).

Traditional shipbuilding workshops for elementary school students were organized in Mošćenička Draga, Malinska and Selce. Additional workshops targeting students and visitors were held during major maritime heritage events in Krk (*Krk Sails* 2018), Nerezine (*Nerezine Traditional Boat Regatta* 2018), Lovran (*Nino Gasparinic Traditional Boat Regatta* 2018) and Mošćenička Draga (*10th Traditional Boat Review and Regatta – MALA BARKA*, 2018). Multiple workshops took place at each of these events.

As part of the Arca Adriatica project, traditional shipbuilding workshops were conducted for students of the Rijeka Technical School, specializing in shipbuilding technology. These workshops were held both at the school, where a workshop had been equipped with the necessary machinery and tools through the project, and at the Mošćenice shipbuilding workshop of shipbuilder Loris Rubinić. During the workshops, a replica of a traditional *pasara* was constructed jointly by students and shipbuilders Loris and Josip Rubinić. Complementing practical training, theoretical lectures were integrated into the regular curriculum and were held both prior to and concurrently with the practical part of the workshops. These lectures were delivered by teachers Marija Marač and Ljiljana Domazet, who also served as mediators between the students and the master shipbuilders. Each workshop lasted five working days with six school hours per day during the 2020/2021 school year. The Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria oversaw the organization and management of the workshops, and Robert Mohović served as the workshop leader. The entire workshop process was carefully photographed and recorded, generating valuable material for future educational and promotional purposes.

A traditional 4.35-meter long *pasara*, originally built in Lovran in 1939, was selected as the model for the replica. The reconstruction followed a lines plan developed by shipbuilder Gianfranco Sirotnjak in 1989. Based on this design, Roko Dejhalla from the Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka, prepared the technical documentation, including the General Plan, Construction Plan with Sections, the Main Rib Design, and the Accommodation Plan for Equipment and Personnel. The Description of the Boat/Boat Construction was developed by Robert Mohović in collaboration with the shipbuilders.

This project was implemented in such a way that the shipbuilders were compensated for the time dedicated to preparing and constructing the boat through traditional shipbuilding workshops, while they independently procured the materials necessary for construction and equipment. Upon completion, ownership of the boat remained with the shipbuilders.



Figure 7. Making a replica of a traditional pasara at the Rijeka Technical School

In addition to the previously mentioned workshops, further sessions were held during the Nino Gasparinic Traditional Sailing Boat Regatta 2021 in Lovran, as well as the 12th Traditional Sailing Boat Review and Regatta – MALA BARKA / ARCA ADRIATICA, held in Mošćenička Draga in 2021.

It is encouraging to note that the work of the Academy of Traditional Maritime Crafts and Skills has continued beyond the scope of the original projects. The Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka has successfully secured funding on an annual basis to continue organizing traditional shipbuilding workshops for students of the Rijeka Technical School. These workshops are conducted by shipbuilder Feručo Brubnjak, with Robin Matulja serving as the responsible teacher.

3.5.4. Interpretation centers

One of the most significant outcomes of the project has been the establishment of interpretation centers dedicated to maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage. The value of these centers lies not only in their role in preserving and presenting of heritage, but also in their synergy with tourism, as they have become attractive tourist facilities that have elevated cultural tourism to a higher level.

As part of the aforementioned EU-funded projects, four interpretation centers were developed: Interpretation Center of Fishing and Maritime Heritage House of the Sea – Ecomuseum Mošćenička Draga in Mošćenička Draga, which served as a pilot project and a model for subsequent interpretation centers across Kvarner, The

Interpretation Center of Maritime Heritage of the Island of Krk, located in Krk, The Navigational Interpretation Center of Lošinj Maritime Heritage – Lošinj Lugger *Nerezinac*, The Interpretation Center of Maritime Heritage DUBoak in Malinska, and the Batana Interpretation Center in Rovinj, also renovated and revitalized.



Figure 8. The Interpretation Center of Maritime Heritage of the Island of Krk

As previously mentioned, numerous interpretation centers related to maritime heritage have been established throughout the Kvarner region outside of these projects, including in Lovran the Lovran Guc House, in Jadranovo the Fishermen's House, in Baška the Buymer Fishing Museum, in Kostrena the Kostrena Seamen's House, in Lopar *Čovik i More* (Man and the Sea) Fisheries and Maritime Interpretation Center, in Rab Juxta Mare Virtual Museum of Fisheries, Maritime Affairs and Shipbuilding of the town of Rab, in Kraljevica the Small Museum of Fisheries and Shipbuilding, in Bakar the *O Ribi* Fisheries and Maritime Heritage Interpretation Center, in Selce the Fishermen's House and in Klenovica, the Klenovica Fishermen's House Interpretation Center. In Cres, preparations are underway for the museological concept of the *Creski Kaić* Interpretation Center. The oldest part of the port (*mandrač*) is now designated exclusively for traditional boats, creating a kind of open-air "floating museum". A similar initiative has been realized in Krk, where a part of the Fishermen's Pier serves a comparable purpose. In Malinska, in addition to the interpretation center, there is a traditional shipyard of the Kraljić family, which has also been arranged for visitor access, and a section of the coastline in front of the DUBoak center is also reserved for traditional boats. In Mali Lošinj, alongside the Floating Interpretation Center of

Lošinj Maritime Heritage at the Lošinj lugger *Nerezinac*, the Lošinj Captains' Coast features interpretive elements highlighting the maritime history of the island. There are also plans to convert the former Nautica building into an interpretation center.

In addition to the interpretation centers mentioned above, museums play a vital role in the presentation and interpretation of maritime heritage. Particularly significant is the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka, which serves as a central institution for the research, preservation and promotion of maritime heritage. Other important contributors include the Rijeka City Museum, the Natural History Museum in Rijeka, the Museum of Apoxyomenos in Mali Lošinj and the Tower in Veli Lošinj, the Crikvenica City Museum in Crikvenica, the Maritime and History Museum of Istria in Pula and the Umag City Museum in Umag. The monasteries on Košljun and in Porto on the island of Krk also contain valuable exhibits of maritime and fishing heritage.

3.5.5. Other achievements and initiatives

In addition to the above, it is important to highlight that over the past 15 years, significant initiatives have been launched to catalogue traditional vessels, and, equally importantly, to develop formal Rules for the Restoration, Construction and Equipping of Traditional Vessels.

Significant progress has also been made in the research of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria, serving as a foundation for the creation of a virtual maritime museum platform (<http://www.malabarka.eu/hr/naslovnica/> and <https://arcaadriatica.eu/>). Between 2014 and 2021, experts from the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka, in collaboration with experts from the Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka, conducted extensive field research. The findings were systematically recorded in an online database, developed within the framework of the aforementioned projects. Prior to initiating the field research, 17 categories of maritime heritage, both tangible and intangible, were defined.

Several important initiatives have also been introduced to support traditional vessels, such as allocating berths specifically for traditional vessels and exempting mooring fees. As a result, all wooden boats located in the jurisdiction of port authorities in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County now benefit from a 50% reduction in mooring fees, while vessels that are traditionally equipped and participate in events pay 10% of the fee. Further support is offered through expert assistance in the reconstruction and renovation of vessels, and guidance in securing funding through projects. It is encouraging to note that these initiatives have begun to yield tangible results.

A strong commitment to institutional engagement has led to ongoing participation in numerous initiatives related to the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. Over the years, a wide range of public lectures and exhibitions on maritime themes have been organized, aiming to raise awareness of the public and institutions about the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage.

There has also been regular participation in the development of cultural development strategies for various local and regional self-government units, as well as in the formulation of cultural tourism development strategies. In addition, active support has been provided for numerous initiatives, most notably the establishment of a Museum of the Sea in Rijeka. The team also contributed to the preparation and implementation of the opening ceremony of the Rijeka – European Capital of Culture 2020 event.

In recent years, numerous events centered on maritime heritage have been organized, generating a strong synergistic effect with the tourism sector. These activities were complemented by the installation of heritage signage with interpretation panels, the development of ten joint cross-border tourist itineraries, which will continue to be refined and adapted based on user needs and references, and a comprehensive destination promotion campaign. This included the production of a monograph and thematic brochures, picture books, postcards, leaflets and a mobile application. Additionally, television videos were produced, participation in fairs was ensured, and centers of excellence and promotion were established. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in the formation of the Kvarner Maritime Heritage brand.

Equally significant is the establishment of the Section for Croatian Maritime Heritage of the Scientific Council for Maritime Affairs of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, founded in 2016. This section was initiated by individuals who played key roles in the projects and achievements relating to maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria: Robert Mohović, head of the section, and members: Jakov Karmelić, Tea Perinčić, Đani Mohović, Dinko Zorović and the unfortunately late Roko Dejhalla.

3.5.6. Inclusion on the list of intangible cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia

Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage. Beyond the many tangible results, one of the most meaningful achievements has been the growing awareness within society of the importance of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage as integral components of coastal identity. In many ways, the crowning achievement of these efforts, which include the establishment of interpretation centers, the organization of numerous events focused on maritime heritage, the implementation of educational workshops, and the hosting of thematic lectures and exhibitions, is the successful inclusion of The Art of Building and Navigating Traditional Kvarner Boats and The Art of Navigating with Lateen and Lug Sails Along the Croatian Coast on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia. This recognition not only honors these traditions but also carries with it the responsibility to ensure their continued preservation. Efforts are currently underway to prepare the nomination of the latter tradition for inclusion on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

3.5.7. Conference on the preservation and interpretation of Croatian maritime heritage

The results of the 15 years of continuous work in the preservation of Croatian maritime heritage were presented at the first national conference dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of maritime heritage, held as part of the Festival of the Sea and Maritime Tradition FIUMARE 2024. This two-day conference, held on 12 and 13 September 2024, was entitled *15 Years of Systematic Preservation and Revitalization of Maritime Heritage in Kvarner and Istria and 10 Years of Activity of the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria*, at the Governor's Palace, hosted by the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka. The conference was organized by the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria, in cooperation with the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka. The Organizing Committee included Robert Mohović, Tea Perinčić, Jakov Karmelić and Iris Bruketa. Although the event was focused on marking milestones in Kvarner and Istria, numerous participants from Dalmatia also joined the conference, presenting both completed projects and upcoming initiatives from their regions. All presentations and examples of best practices will be published in a dedicated section of the Journal of Maritime and Transportation Sciences. On the occasion of these anniversaries, in addition to the FIUMARE Festival and the Conference, a public exhibition titled *On the Routes of Maritime Heritage* was mounted on boards along the Korzo in Rijeka.



Figure 9. Conference on the preservation and interpretation of Croatian maritime heritage

4. Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria - Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria

A significant contribution to the achievements outlined above has undoubtedly been made by the Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria (Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria). This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Coordination's formal establishment, although it began operating informally in 2011. In 2014, it was officially registered under the Associations Act. The founding members of the Coordination include the Chair of the Chakavian Parliament of the Municipality of Mošćenička Draga – Section for Traditional Boats *Draške Barki* – Mošćenička Draga, the Association Our Lovran – *Lovrana nostra*, the Section *Lovranska lantina* – Lovran, the Sailing Club Plav – Krk, the Sports Society *Škarpina* – Nerezine, the Association *Kuća o Batana* – *Casa della Batana* – Rovinj/Rovigno and the Sailing Club Brioni – Fažana. The associated members of the Coordination are the Association *Ikarski barcajoli* from Ika, JK Jadro from Selce and JK Gratisan from Pula.



Figure 10. Establishment of the "Coordination of Associations for the Preservation of Maritime, Fishing and Shipbuilding Heritage of Kvarner and Istria (Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria)" in Mošćenička Draga in 2014

Over the years, the Coordination has become an indispensable actor in planning and implementation of projects aimed at preserving and revitalizing Croatian maritime heritage, a role that has been recognized by numerous institutions. The Coordination cooperates closely with the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka, the Association of Maritime Museums of the Mediterranean, relevant authorities in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the City of Rijeka, and various municipalities and cities in Kvarner and Istria. The representatives of the Coordination are also among the initiators and active members of the Section for Croatian Maritime Heritage, the Scientific Council for Maritime Affairs at the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In addition to its efforts in the northern Adriatic, the Coordination maintains strong cooperation with all major associations engaged in the preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in the Republic of Croatia.

In recognition of its work, the Coordination has received several awards. In 2017, it was honored by the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Croatia for its “contribution to the promotion of maritime culture”. It was recognized by the Kvarner Tourist Board for its role in the preservation and promotion of maritime heritage in Kvarner and for the organization of the FIUMARE festival. Most recently, at the Kvarner Tourism Day 2024, the Coordination received another award marking 15 years of systematic efforts in preservation and revitalization of maritime heritage in Kvarner and Istria and 10 years of its own activity. The award acknowledged its contribution to the development of the Kvarner Maritime Heritage brand and the organization of the First Conference on the Preservation and Interpretation of Croatian Maritime Heritage.

5. Awards and recognitions

We are proud that the results of our efforts work have been widely recognized, as demonstrated by a series of notable awards and recognitions. Among the most significant achievements are: project *Mala Barka* received 3rd place in the Community and Government category for sustainable tourism; project *Mala Barka 2* was proclaimed the Best EU Project of Croatian Counties in the category of Cross-Border Cooperation in 2020, underlining its success in fostering international cooperation; the Kvarner Maritime Heritage brand, developed by the Kvarner Tourist Board, was awarded 1st place as the Best Thematic Product of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Europe in 2022, recognizing its excellence in cultural tourism innovation; in 2023, the project earned a prestigious international award, BIG SEE Award in the category Creative Stories and Destination Identity, celebrating it as a unique heritage experience.

6. Conclusion

In the past, the transfer of knowledge, skills and good practices as part of maritime tradition occurred naturally, passed down from generation to generation without

deliberate effort or awareness of its vital role in preserving community identity. However, the rapid changes in lifestyle, especially in the 20th century, disrupted this centuries-old process. As a result, our first task was to identify these key elements of our tradition as valuable heritage, something to preserve with pride and share with others, while ensuring it is meaningfully lived within the contemporary context of the 21st century.

All of the initiatives outlined above represent significant progress in the valorization and interpretation of the maritime heritage of Kvarner and Istria. They are essential not only to the local communities, where maritime heritage remains a core component of regional identity, but also to visitors, contributing to synergistic connections with the tourism industry. Most importantly, these efforts have raised awareness and fostered a deeper sensitivity within local communities regarding the importance of preserving and revitalizing maritime heritage. They have played a critical role in preserving not only tangible assets, but also intangible maritime heritage, which is especially vulnerable to disappearance. Recognizing that heritage cannot survive without the people who carry its knowledge and skills, particular attention was devoted to developing diverse models for engaging all generations, especially young people. They are the future custodians of this heritage.

Everything accomplished in the preservation and revitalization of maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage of this region stands as a powerful testament to the commitment of the local community and the broader region of Kvarner and Istria to sustainable development, preservation of cultural identity, and the importance of tourism valorization of maritime heritage.

Texts and materials used for the preparation of the paper

In the preparation of this paper, working materials and informal texts created during the implementation of the aforementioned projects and activities were used.

