THE 2021 LAUREATE OF THE UNESCO-GREECE MELINA MERCOURI INTERNATIONAL PRIZE

KOZJANSKO PARK PUBLIC INSTITUTE, PODSREDA, SLOVENIA

PROGRAMME

ADDRESS
Audrey Azoulay
Director-General of UNESCO

VIDEO INTRODUCTION
UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri international Prize

WELCOMING REMARKS
H.E. Maria Diamantopoulou
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Greece to UNESCO

ADDRESS
H.E. Lina Mendoni
Minister of Culture and Sports of the Hellenic Republic

VIDEO OF THE 2021 LAUREATE
Kozjansko Park Public Institute, Podsreda, Slovenia

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF THE 2021 LAUREATE
Mojca Kunst
Director
Kozjansko Park Public Institute

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2021 LAUREATE
KOZJANSKO PARK PUBLIC INSTITUTE, PODSREDA, SLOVENIA

The exceptional area of Podsreda in Slovenia includes a total of 314 protected cultural heritage sites and monuments and a rich biodiversity. This varied landscape is characterized by wooded orchards on pre-Alpine hills that merge with a fertile plain along the Soča River.

In 2010, Kozjansko Park, located in Podsreda, was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The Kozjansko Park Public Institute is dedicated to the sustainability of this unique area, and the well-being of the communities who rely on it for their livelihoods. Through environmentally friendly initiatives, the Institute has increased the quality of the meadow orchards, making their crop increasingly viable and marketable.

Today there are more than 50,000 farmed and wild fruit trees in the area, including apple, pear, cherry and walnut, which are essential for the maintenance and development of biodiversity. At a time when meadows and orchards are threatened across the globe, including by climate change, in Podsreda, they are thriving.

The Institute ensures the sustainability of the landscape through the engagement of local communities and a network of farms that has operated for over 20 years.

By reviving the meadow orchards, the Institute also helps to preserve biodiversity and as well many animal species, particularly birds. Since 2004, Kozjansko Park has also worked specifically to protect solitary bees and other insects, which play an important role in the pollination of the orchards. In 2004, the Park joined the Natura 2000 ecological project.

The Institute launched a comprehensive strategy for the long-term sustainable management and development of this remarkable area, combining educational workshops, cultural events and festivals, and product marketing initiatives.

JURY MEMBERS

- JEAN-ROBERT PITTE, France
  Acting as President of the Jury, Member of the Institut de France and Permanent Secretary of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques

- KRISTAL BUCKLEY, Australia
  Lecturer in Cultural Heritage at Deakin University

- KHALIFA AL KHALIFA, Bahrain
  Director of Antiquities and Museums at the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

- SOUAYIBOU VARISSOU, Benin
  Executive Director of the African World Heritage Fund

- BETINA ADAMS, Brazil
  Independent Architect in Urban and Architectural Conservation, Counsellor of the Santa Catarina’s State Council