

Alps-Adriatic Manifesto

1918 – 2018

War is over!

1

Se vuoi. Če hočeš. Wenn du es willst.

If you want it.

The manifesto: an overview

This manifesto represents a plea to carry out the work of remembrance as the “work of the future”, and, by reviewing the past century, to learn lessons and draw strength for a cosmopolitan policy of justice and freedom. A form of politics that is not afraid to tackle big changes, and that unites a global and regional way of thinking and acting in the Alps-Adriatic region.

(1) Remembering: Man can face the truth

We Alps-Adriatic inhabitants have to address the “dangerous memories”: the shared responsibility of our nations in the First World War, in national socialism and the Shoah, in communism and Stalinism, and in the long-ignored exploitation of the colonially suppressed regions that were drawn into the war.

(2) The civilisation and barbarism of Europe

Nationalism, exclusion, and violence do not disappear even after the war is over. Today, they continue to exist as a politics of fear of that which is different and the search for scapegoats. We need to oppose this with the rich experiences of the resistance against totalitarianism and violence, as well as the vision of a peaceful, United Europe.

(3) Globalisation requires cosmopolitan thinking and acting

In order to face the challenges posed by our globalised world – climate change, an unjust global economic order, wars, forced flight and migration – we require transnational forms of democracy to contain the unleashed markets. The United Europe needs to make its contribution to a worldwide union of peace.

(4) Alps-Adriatic community as an embodiment of the longing for a different type of politics

A future transnational Alps-Adriatic region of peace can become a laboratory for a peaceful Europe.

(5) An Alps-Adriatic region of peace, achieved through many small steps

- *Educational goal of cross-border multilingualism through obligatory learning of neighbouring languages*
- *Visible multilingualism and multiculturalism in the public sphere*
- *Working through the delicate points in our history together*
- *Integrated regional development*
- *Sustainable alpine agriculture*
- *Joint tourism development*
- *Regionally specific environmental policy*
- *Seizing the opportunity of migration*
- *Demilitarisation and disarmament*
- *A region with an adaptable geography and transnational democratic institutions*

(6) The utopia as a source of strength: use of the “sense of possibility” (Robert Musil)

This sense of possibility can also be felt in John Lennon’s call: “War is over... *if you want it.*”

“We are living in a new situation, and a new humanity is forming, one of coexistence of those who are different: the coexistence of the future depends on the decisions we make today.” (Pierluigi di Piazza)

Who would deny that we are living in an age of crisis and conflict? Tendencies towards the brutalisation of our language and the political culture, the rupturing of solidarity through the dismantling of social rights, half-heartedness towards climate change and other environmental dangers; the deliberate destruction of that which remains of the European Peace Project – this is our reality. But instead of facing up to it, numerous governments and political powers of Europe talk only of the danger of the refugees and migrants, of the supposed Islamisation of the continent, of the undermining of its democratic culture – all while themselves hollowing out the European idea in its best sense. Racism, xenophobia and nationalistic hate have shifted from the edge of the political spectrum to the centre of society. Yet at the same time, we are witnessing the ascent of strong opposing forces that do not quietly accept this trend, that pursue a policy of openness and that want to once more “dare more democracy” under these new conditions.

We have the choice: capitulate before this inhumanity, or resist and advocate courageously for a good life for all. This manifesto is a plea to carry out the work of remembrance as the “work of the future”, and, by reviewing the past century, to learn lessons and draw strength for a cosmopolitan policy of justice and freedom. A form of politics that is not afraid to tackle big changes, if necessary. And a form of politics that knows how to unite a global and regional way of thinking and acting – specifically in the Alps-Adriatic region.

3

When we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War this year, we are aware that here in the Alps-Adriatic area, we live in a region that represented one of the major arenas of the “Great War” and in which the subsequent changes to the borders were more radical and of greater impact than elsewhere.

In Germany, Austria, Italy and other countries, the First World War was followed by only a short phase of democracy; fascism and national socialism soon took over. They fanned the flames of the Second World War. All this, in turn, brought with it destruction, devastation and enormous suffering, leading once again to the shifting of borders, displacement and resettlement, which became deeply anchored in the collective memory. The Nazi regime committed the historically unique crime of the Shoah. Immediately after the war, the ideological competition between the systems of capitalism and bureaucratic “real socialism” escalated into the Cold War and to proxy wars in the global south. The Iron Curtain divided economic systems and conceptions of humanity. Today, after the collapse of “real socialism”, there is a great opportunity for a democratic unification of the whole of Europe. Yet at the same time, strong opposing forces also exist, both in the older as well as the younger member states of the Union. By now, good relations exist between the states and the peoples in the Alps-Adriatic region, but “conflicts of memory” dating back to the legacy of wars, systematic repression and multifaceted forms of violence continue to pose a potential for danger and represent a reservoir for politics based on nationalism and discord.

(1) Man can face the truth (Ingeborg Bachmann)

“It is not knowledge we lack. What is missing is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions.” (Sven Lindqvist) Reflecting on our present and our future requires us to examine the past once again with a critical and self-critical eye. This is a difficult task, but this makes it all the more important to remember the shared blame that Austria-Hungary and Italy, whose successor states we call home, brought upon themselves through their participation in the First World War. The destruction and self-destruction of multi-national states in 1918 certainly did not lead to a democratic balance between ethnic groups and social classes in the new states, but instead led to further conflicts that favour the advent of fascism and national socialism.

But we must also remember real socialism, which turned the ideology of liberation into a totalitarian doctrine and a system of oppression, taking on various forms from Stalinism to Titoism, which cannot be equated. But although we in no way lament the end of these dictatorships, we must also not forget the hopes that went hand in hand with the promise of social justice.

Ultimately, we must also remember the long-ignored exploitation of the countries and regions that were subjugated by colonialism, which had to suffer the same atrocities that Europeans put each other through from 1914-1918 much earlier on already, and which were also dragged into the European World War. Colonialism continued to persist even after 1918; the colonial wars of fascist Italy against Libya and Abyssinia come to mind. Many of the questions that remained unsolved or that were decided imperialistically at the time, such as the demarcation of the borders in the Middle East, are still sources of trouble and conflict for us today.

4

(2) “In the globalisation of Europe, civilisation and barbarism are interwoven” (Edgar Morin & Mauro Ceruti)

We are children of the 20th century, an era of the most horrific wars and excesses of violence, but also of great achievements such as the start of decolonisation, the first steps toward a just global system with the codification of human rights and the founding of the UN, as well as the experimentation with non-violence as a political strategy. If we can learn anything from the last century, then above all this:

Nationalism, exclusion, and violence are part of a syndrome that does not disappear after the end of war, but continues to have an effect. Racism often shifts its shape; today it appears in the form of antisemitism, anti-Islamism and anti-Slavism, and often also in combinations thereof, since the patterns of this way of thinking survive for longer than the actual contents. It is a policy of fear of the “other” that divides people who would in fact share the same interests. It is a policy that turns justified fears – the fear of losing one’s workplace and social security, of social relegation – into jealousy, anger and hate towards the respective scapegoats. It is populist in that it strengthens existing prejudices instead of resolving them, and in that it appeals to our worst tendencies instead of our best characteristics.

With its rejection of migration, “New Nationalism” showcases a dramatic form of political sovereignty that has already been lost; it puts on a “demonstration of the

power and the protection that the countries are increasingly unable to provide.” (Wendy Brown) After all, more and more, the transnational markets were coming to determine the economic and social policies of the individual countries.

“New Nationalism” makes use of the accompanying narcissistic wounds of an aggrieved masculinity and mobilises traditional warrior ideals, which were prevalent during – but not only during – the First World War, and which make their presence felt in aggressive rivalry, domestic violence and political fanaticism, and even in terrorism, radical Islamism and right-wing radicalism.

“New Nationalism” promises politics for the poorer classes, yet we see that the opposite occurs: throughout the whole of Europe, social rights are being dismantled, the influence of unions is being stifled and civil society organisations that support disadvantaged groups are being drained financially. The populist phrase is discovering a neoliberal policy of redistribution from the poorer classes to the rich.

Yet the last hundred years are also rich in experiences of resistance against the principle of unlimited profit and of countless, not always successful experiments to form a solidary societal order. And the experience of the successful resistance against national socialism and fascism is still an effective source of strength – especially in our region. The attempt to draw lessons from Auschwitz and Hiroshima, to deconstruct enemy images and to approach former opponents and work together with them is our living heritage. The concept of Europe as a concept of peace has a long tradition, which was first formulated in political categories by the peace movements of the 19th century. But only after two World Wars, with the founding of the Council of Europe and the European Union, was it possible to take the first steps towards implementing this concept, although this was not enough to prevent the disaster of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. However, Europe as a peace project can only be successful insofar as it is not based on the ideology of the nation state and unbridled capitalism, but instead on the notion of overcoming this ideology.

5

(3) “Today the fate of humankind is even more crucially linked than ever before. The boundaries between the problems of 'others' and 'our' problems are being increasingly erased.” (Janez Drnovšek)

Today, our neoliberally dominated globalisation forces a complex interdependence between economics, politics and culture across the entire globe, but it also creates new divides within and between societies. The logic of maximum profit threatens to become more than just an economic doctrine, but rather a general principle of human interaction. A culture of mistrust and rivalry, of an envy-based society and of petty advantages is shifting to the forefront and debasing the ethical and spiritual foundations of a good life for all people.

We are faced with a paradoxical situation: the needs and interests of “us” and the “others” have never been as closely intertwined as they are now. After all, the worldwide ecological problems such as climate change or the pollution of the environment, the fight against hunger, the fight for women’s and children’s rights, the move away from fossil fuels and a sustainable form of production that no is longer based on permanent growth – all this requires solidary cooperation on a global level. Yet if anything, we are experiencing a withdrawal of our identity back into that which is

supposedly our “own”. We are denying the urgency of the problems, the battle against climate change is being fought only half-heartedly, and the exploitation of the global south by the rich north continues unchecked. In conflict with its own principles, Europe is building ever higher real, legislative and mental walls to block out the migration from the south, which of course is also an effect of the western “imperial mode of living” (Ulrich Brand), which threatens the living conditions on other continents and on the entire planet. Where it was once a venue for communication, the Mediterranean is now a sea of segregation. Europe itself threatens to fall apart into various nation states that mistrustfully seal themselves off from one another. But “nationally, democracy cannot be saved nor can capitalism be civilised; for this to happen, democracy must be established transnationally as an opposing political force to the market.” (Andreas Gross)

If we are serious about wanting a socially just world, we in the global north cannot continue to live as we have done so far. Thus we want to counter this policy of fear, jealousy and greed, which leads to racism, division and self-inflicted harm, with a joyful policy of courage, calm and generosity, from which solidarity can blossom. And we support all initiatives that already do this. We believe in a Europe that believes in itself and that has learned from its mistakes. A Europe that has stopped lecturing and dominating the rest of the world. If the “old continent” still has a mission today, then it is this: to take the foundations of human rights, democracy and non-violence that were formed on its own soil (albeit developed by people the world over) and finally consistently apply these to itself. It must be a Europe that preserves the diversity of regional identities and yet still promotes unity, with pan-European political parties and transnational forms of democracy. Instead of an EU that is tightly regulated in a centralist and authoritarian market-oriented manner, we must strive for a community with a stronger federalist constitution, in which a “Europe of the regions” creates a counterweight to the “Europe of the nations”. A Europe that opens itself up to its neighbours in the East and in particular in the South, and uses the sea – whose name, which comes from the Latin for “midland” (*mediterraneus*), is no coincidence – as a bridge. A Europe that maintains fair economic relations with the global south and, with a “Marshall Plan” for Africa, shows that we are aware that we can only do well when the people in the other parts of the world are also doing well.

Europe can only be an effective peace project if it promotes peace on the inside as much as on the outside. Europe must become the name of our special contribution toward a global union of peace. Only when the law of the strongest is replaced by the strength of the law can it have a core consisting of a just world economic order and a fair global political system. This also means doing away with the policy of exercising military power and standing up for global disarmament, for a way of living that is founded not in growth but in sustainability, in line with the encyclical *Laudato si* and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), the 17 goals for the sustainable development of the UN, to which our states also committed in the year 2015.

(4) “The border is something twofold and ambiguous: at times it is a bridge with which to move towards the other, at times a barrier with which to push him back” (Claudio Magris)

We alone cannot change the whole world, but we can do everything in our power to work on the foundations for a sustainable and peaceful life in our own region – the

multilingual, diversely populated, ever-changing Alps-Adriatic region, a small-scale version of the European Union. Today especially, we need to strengthen the cross-border regional cooperation, not as a solitary development, but as an instrument for the realisation of the global development goals in situ and as a building block for a federal democratic Europe. "Alps-Adriatic" describes more than a broad (touristic) region; rather, it is the embodiment of a political idea, the focal point of aspirations and desires for alternative forms of coexistence.

We need to preserve and make use of the gift of diversity and the appreciation of diversity that the Alps-Adriatic idea represents. Unlike almost anywhere else in Europe, here we have experiences with borders and their transmutations, with the idea of the border itself and with the necessity of the crossing of borders. By dint of war and expulsion, but also of economic migration, the Alps-Adriatic region became a melting pot. We have only just begun to distance ourselves from all forms of totalitarian thinking and to develop new forms of dialogue in order to lay the foundations for a sustainable future through remembrance and reconciliation. But we have manifold experiences with transnational cooperation, which also took on organised forms with the founding of the Alps-Adriatic Working Group in 1978. As inhabitants of the region, we have developed "border competence": "Senza Confini/Brez meja" is a slogan against racist exclusion and for the courage to coexist. All these experiences should make us more open and tolerant for migrants and refugees. All this, of course, without wanting to deny the problems that arise when different people live together – the new arrivals must also find their place within an inclusive Alps-Adriatic identity. This Alps-Adriatic identity, larger than the local and more varied than the national identity, could become a bridge toward a greater European identity of a homeland Europe within the global identity of a *Homeland Earth* (Edgar Morin).

7

Our region has brought forth many excellent men and women who can serve as role models and points of orientation for this endeavour of ours. To name a few: the author Ingeborg Bachmann, the former archbishop of Udine, Alfredo Battisti, the environmental and peace activist Hermann Gamerith, the anti-fascist and poet Ciril Kosmač, the pacifist, psychotherapist and author Maruša Krese, the resistance fighter Angela Vode, the author who opened up the Julian Alps, Julius Kugy, the filmmaker and intellectual of Friuli descent, Pier Paolo Pasolini, the author Fulvio Tomizza from Istria and many, many others. They all criticised violence in its multi-faceted forms, attempted to civilise society and contributed to reconciliation and peace in their personal lives. In a united, transnational education of the youth in the Alps-Adriatic region, their work should occupy a firmly established place.

By encouraging unity without exclusion, a future Alps-Adriatic region of peace could become a laboratory for a peaceful Europe and a more peaceful world. A constructive discussion of the experiences of the 20th century could transform it into a region that has learned to learn from history.

(5) "A country that opens up to others, to history, to current events..." (Fulvio Tomizza)

A region of peace requires an ambitious vision, but it can only be created through many small steps. With the following suggestions, we offer some initial ideas for consideration

for their realisation, with the knowledge that a lot still remains to be substantiated, and in the hope that many others will join in with their own ideas. As utopian as some of the suggestions may sound, we in fact are mostly building on plans that have long since been elaborated or implemented in other places by experts.

“The union of a distinct diversity is the main message of the three-country border”

This phrase by geographer Friedrich Zimmermann shows us the way ahead. A cross-border region of peace raises, as do all forms of regional external relations, political, legal and cultural questions. But here, the idea is more important than the details of the implementation, and the geographical borders of the region must, for the time being, remain deliberately vague and open. The objective, rather, is all about “peace actually becoming native to this region”, where “the languages spoken here still wear a uniform” (Maja Haderlap). The creation of a regional identity should trigger a dynamic that promises a way out of the dead ends of nationalist confrontational politics. At this point, it needs to be acknowledged that the respective majority bears the greatest responsibility; the minorities can only permit themselves this generosity once their rights are truly ensured.

Educational objective: cross-border multilingualism

To overcome “methodical nationalism” and learn the basics of dealing with diversity, it is of essential importance to develop a transnational regional education system. The Alpen-Adria Bildungsverbund (Alps-Adriatic Educational Network), which was founded in the context of the trilingual school project *Drei Hände – Tri roke – Tre mani*, could be regarded as an incubator for this new system.

- A key component is the compulsory learning of the two respective neighbouring languages from kindergarten or primary school onwards.
- The plurilingualism of the refugees and migrants must also be sufficiently taken into account in their education.
- A joint curriculum element of regional history and regional culture.
- A trilateral teaching post based on the model of the “Euregio teacher” training in the Upper Rhine region (Germany, France, Switzerland).
- Close scientific cooperation between the universities and colleges of the region, which should also lead to the establishment of an Alps-Adriatic Master’s programme.
- Creation of an Alps-Adriatic Youth Office based on the model of the Franco-German and German-Polish Youth Office.

Visible multilingualism and multiculturalism

The public usage of language must be freed from its function as an instrument of national delimitation. With the aim of raising awareness of our multicultural heritage and the resulting common ground of the region, we suggest that

- throughout the entire Alps-Adriatic region, all topographical signs are created in a multilingual design wherever historical indications exist – starting with the main locations of Klagenfurt, Villach, Udine, Trieste, Maribor and Ljubljana.

The aim of this is not to mark out imaginary claims to territory, but rather to make shared traditions visible.

Joint confrontation of history

Addressing various historical views still remains an important challenge in every country as well as between the various Alps-Adriatic countries. Otherwise, in situations of crisis, historical resentments will quickly be resurrected and functionalised for political purposes.

- Remembrance work must be carried out in order to bring to light the often still-hidden truth.
- Dialogue is necessary to enable profound, sustainable reconciliation and approximation.

Integrated regional development

Integrated regional development should enable a form of economic activity that does justice to both humans and nature. This applies, for example, to public transport, to air traffic, and to harbour areas. However, national egotism dominates here. To counter this, we suggest:

- Increased joint use as well as targeted joint expansion of the infrastructure.
- Creation of transnational forums for mutual information, joint decisions and coordinated planning.

Sustainable alpine agriculture

Agriculture in the Alps (i.e. in unfavourable locations) cannot and should not compete with the global agricultural market. This is why we suggest:

- Removing alpine agriculture from the GATT cycle and securing its existence with corresponding measures such as fixed prices and/or purchasing schemes.

This could be a transnational pilot project, which could also be of interest for other regions in the EU. It would represent a building block with which to create a laboratory for independent regional development in the Alps-Adriatic region.

Joint tourism development

Despite the small geographical scale of the region, the tourism, a significant economic branch, is organised in a strict national sense, which puts an enormous restriction on its possibilities. Cultural differences, linguistic barriers and the predominant competitiveness need to be overcome in order to make use of the potential of a joint presence in the region. Positive approaches such as the *Alpe-Adria Trail* show what is possible. Further steps could be:

- Joint cross-border tourism offers, for example based on the model of “Léman sans frontière” (Lake Geneva without border) including the transport association.
- Establishment of a *Strada Senza Confini* (based on the suggestion of tourism expert Manfred Kohl), that is to say a large circuit connecting all the important landscapes of the three countries.

- The coexistence of various ethnicities that tap into the touristic advantage of the multilingualism and multiculturalism as well as the historical heritage as special qualities of the region.
- Promotion of the already existing “peace tourism” (Peace Trails, monuments and museums).
- Creation of a joint tourism institution.
- Those with political responsibility are called upon to create appropriate structures that facilitate touristic cooperation in the region.

Region-specific environmental politics

One specific problem to add to the general challenges is the necessity of intensive heating throughout winter.

- State support and incentives with the goal of replacing fossil fuels with heat pumps, pellets and other measures.
- A new energy concept for the Alps-Adriatic region that relies on a clean, autochthonous energy supply and makes nuclear power superfluous (Krško exit scenario).
- Expansion of (cross-border) natural parks.

Seizing the opportunity of migration

It is a fact that by now, all European nations have become immigrant societies. And what is more, that they require immigration in order to ensure the continued functioning of society. Instead of excluding migrants and refugees and portraying them as a danger, the message of pope Francis should also apply to the Alps-Adriatic region: “Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees”. It goes without saying that this should be done with our own interests in mind.

- The successful integration of migrants in the Italian village of Riace could be a paradigm and model for (semi) abandoned mountain villages in the countries of the Alps-Adriatic region.

Demilitarisation and disarmament

Since the Cold War, Friuli-Venezia Giulia in particular has been the “powder keg” of Italy. The US military base of Aviano is where air operations were launched during the Gulf War in 1991, where the F-117s that bombarded Belgrade took off in 1999, and where the American bombers that shot at Gaddafi’s troupes in 2011 started out. We suggest:

- No foreign military bases in the Alps-Adriatic region.
- A region-specific contribution to global disarmament and demilitarisation.

A region with an adaptable geography

In such a tightly interwoven Euro region, the opportunities for participation in political life must also be adapted to the new circumstances. The goal is for the people in the region to receive a greater say in particular with regard to the issues that affect them directly, regardless of which national territory they inhabit. This means we must expand the opportunities for exercising influence beyond the national borders. But this type of concept of democratic regional participation cannot be a rigid juridical system,

but instead must expand and contract in accordance with the necessities. We plead the case, therefore, for an “amoeba-like democracy”. As steps in the direction of this transnational regional democracy, we suggest:

- Joint meetings of the state parliaments, regional parliaments and equivalent institutions.
- Institutionalisation of shared transnational regional consultation committees and ultimately of decision-making when it comes to regional issues.
- In parallel to this, permanent civil society forums.
- At length, with the perspective of a reciprocal triple citizenship for all inhabitants of the Alps-Adriatic region.

The dismantling of mental and structural obstacles to cooperation intended by this programme undoubtedly also represents a factor for the economic revival of the region. As a consequence, we inhabitants of the Alps-Adriatic region could liberate ourselves from our peripheral position and form our own little centre.

(6) “Utopias are decisive sources of power for every emancipation movement” (Oskar Negt)

Nowadays, there is often a lack of indignation, and there is a lack of hope. There is a lack of courage, the courage to believe in a world capable of change and to actually work on this change. This, too, is a symptom of the ruling, supposedly ideology-free orthodox thinking that wants to make us believe that the present circumstances do not have an alternative. But as the experiences of the last century show, it is indeed up to us to make a change. The Carinthia-born Robert Musil taught us to use our *sense of possibility* for this purpose. This sense of possibility is also discernible in John Lennon’s call, which inspired this manifesto: “War is over... *if you want it.*”

11

October 2018

Editing: Werner Wintersteiner. We thank all those who supported us, but in particular the following people, who participated in the debate surrounding the manifest with great intensity: Elio Baracetti, Cristina Beretta, Sergio Cosolo, Nadja Danglmaier, Rudolf Dörflinger, Lena Freimüller, Wilfried Graf, Bettina Gruber, Hans Haider, Mira Miladinović Zalaznik, Jutta Steininger and Marjan Sturm.

Translation into Slovenian: Vida Obid. Translation into Italian: Francesco Pistolato.
Translation into English: Lizzie Warren Wilson.

For more information about the project, please take a look at our website:
<http://zso.slo.at/warisover>