

Building Bridges: 3 bridges connecting Nova Gorica and Gorizia

As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of globalization, multiculturalism and cultural diversity, the example set by Nova Gorica and Gorizia serves as an inspiring model of how embracing one's shared past can lead to a brighter and more harmonious future. This is probably one of the many reasons why these twin cities are chosen for the title of European Capital of Culture 2025. This cross-border cooperation not only enriches the lives of the people in these two towns but also contributes to the broader goal of building a more interconnected Europe.

The cross-border cities always had a unique way of operating, as they would call it in the modern times love-hate relationship, especially when we have cultures so different as Slovenian and Italian trying to merge and create an amicable environment for the people living in this territory so we can truly say that cross-cultural cooperation isn't without its challenges. The towns face occasional bureaucratic hurdles and differing national regulations, small part of local population that refuses to except the different culture, missing Italian minority on Slovenian side and dialogue between young people of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, which can make collaboration even more complex. However, their determination to overcome these challenges through dialogue and negotiation is a testament to the enduring spirit of unity.

Through cultural exchanges, educational initiatives, and gastronomic collaborations, these two towns have demonstrated the power of cooperation in building bridges between communities. Separated only by a river, they have managed to create cross-cultural cooperation, serving as a testament to the power of collaboration and shared heritage in overcoming historical divisions.

Cooperation Over Division

The first bridge and probably the most important one connecting these two is culture. Despite these physical and political divisions, the people on both sides of the border maintained strong cultural and familial ties.

One of the most remarkable initiatives is the establishment of the Nova Gorica Cultural Center (Kulturni dom Nova Gorica), KIT – Cultural Information Touchpoint. This institution served as a hub for cultural exchanges, hosting exhibitions, concerts, and theater performances that attracted visitors from both sides of the border. The center aimed to celebrate the region's shared heritage while promoting contemporary artistic expression and it has the best possible location to do so, Europe Square or Piazza della Transalpina, the place where border despaired. Similarly, the Gorizia Cultural Center (Centro Culturale di Gorizia) embraced the idea of cross-cultural cooperation. They organized joint events and exhibitions, emphasizing the historical and cultural ties that bound the two towns together.

When we mention culture, the one of the things we think about is language, the residents of Nova Gorica primarily speak Slovenian, while those in Gorizia speak Italian. However, due to their proximity, many people in the region are bilingual and can communicate in both languages, which helps bridge the linguistic gap.

Knowledge crates new paths

The educational sector has played a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural cooperation in Nova Gorica and Gorizia. Schools in both towns have encouraged student exchanges and language learning programs. These initiatives not only strengthen the linguistic ties between Slovenian and Italian communities but also foster understanding and friendship among the younger generation. The newspaper by students of University of Trieste – Sconfinare try their best to promote the region of Gorizia, and collaboration with students from Nova Gorica would probably be one of the best efforts to unite this region, when it comes to its youth.

Culinary Diplomacy

The third and probably most interesting bridge between these two societies is food, and Nova Gorica and Gorizia have capitalized on their shared culinary heritage. Both towns have vibrant culinary scenes, and they have come together to celebrate their gastronomic traditions through food festivals, wine tastings, and culinary workshops. These events not only showcase the delicious flavors of the region but also promote the idea that culture transcends borders. Once you know Kranjska Klobasa is hard to forget it and life without Italian pizza couldn't be considered whole.

As they look to the future, Nova Gorica and Gorizia serve as an inspiring example for other regions seeking to build bridges across cultural, linguistic, and historical divides. The partnership between Nova Gorica and Gorizia has had a positive impact not only on the well-being of their residents but also on the broader European vision of peaceful coexistence and collaboration.

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