Subject: Statement of Support for the Nomination to Enter the Škofja Loka Passion Play on the Representative List of the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Stara Loka is a settlement at the margin of Škofja Loka with more than a thousand-year-old declared tradition. The first mention of Škofja Loka in deed of gift named as Lonca of emperor Otto II from 973 was actually referred to Stara Loka, the same as the naming Lonka in the agreement between the Patriarch of Aquileia and the bishop of Freising in 1074. Stara Loka is thus rightly considered to be the parent of Škofja Loka.

Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka, established on 29 January 2014 with intent to preserve and revive the cultural historical and natural heritage of Škofja Loka, in the preamble to its Rules refers right to this long and rich tradition of Stara Loka including the cooperation in the performance of the Škofja Loka Passion Play ever since its beginnings. A letter of unknown leader of the Škofja Loka precession from 1713 undoubtedly shows that Stara Loka and its surrounding villages and places, which fell under the church bell of St. George, were one of the key pillars of the performance at that time, and even a half of images in the procession were entrusted to them. The role of Stara Loka was important especially in the spiritual sense because the main office of the parish and deanery was here, and also the Brotherhood of the Holy Rosary was here and it cooperated in the preparation of the passion play procession.

The response of the inhabitants of Stara Loka to the invitation to cooperate in the modern performances proves that the Škofja Loka Passion Play has been live in the consciousness of people here all the time. Already in 1999, 2000 and 2009 they participated as individuals in numerous scenes, and they were recognized as the group in the Butcher's guild and among cavalrmen. The role of Stara Loka is even more visible in this year’s performance because the director has newly entrusted two individual scenes to it, the thirteenth (Look Man) and the eighteenth (Arc of the Covenant), and the formation of the Company of Grenadiers as the constituent part of the nineteenth scene (Holy Sepulchre).
Thereby the main connecting and motivational role was taken right by the newly established Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka, which has over 150 members after a little more than one year of operation. It recognized an ideal opportunity to strengthen the consciousness of the inhabitants of Stara Loka about the significance of their cultural heritage with the intense inclusion in the current performance of the Škofja Loka Passion Play, and the Škofja Loka Passion Play certainly belongs to its cultural heritage. The Society attracted its members as well as non-members to participate voluntarily; the inclusion of numerous young people, who are the best and at the same time the only guarantee to maintain, preserve and promote the tradition of the Škofja Loka Passion Play also in the future, is particularly valuable.

Alojz Pavel Florjančič, the founding father of Lonka and the honorary member of the Society, had done a lot even before the Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka was formally established in order to preserve the living passion play tradition in the consciousness of the Loka people. Being the editor of the journal Pasijonski doneski (Passion Play Contributions), the initiator of the Passion Play Evenings in Stara Loka and of the Days of the Škofja Loka Passion Play, he considerably helped that the Škofja Loka Passion Play lives also in the time between two performances and that it resounds also in the wider national space. Pasijonski doneski, being the only Slovenian serial publication with exclusively passion play contents, have become a referential framework for researching and documenting the Škofja Loka Passion Play within the ten years of publishing. Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka is proud that it can be, beside the Škofja Loka Museum Association, the co-publisher and co-issuer of this eminent collection of essays on account of the author contribution of Alojzij Pavel Florjančič.

Because of all the above-mentioned, the Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka, according to the adopted decision by common agreement of the Executive Committee No. 1-14/2015 as of 18.03.2015, fully supports the nomination to enter the Škofja Loka Passion Play on the UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Yours faithfully,

Klemen Karlin, MA

President of the Lonka Cultural and Historical Society Stara Loka