

FORTIC

From remains Of the war to the
aRchiTecture of peace
in cross-border area of Italy-Croatia



D.3.1.1 2025 Night of Fortresses in Pula, Korčula, Vieste
and Cervia Report





Italy – Croatia



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Introduction

Originally launched in 2022, Night of Fortresses (NOF) is an international initiative that focuses on the development of sustainable cultural tourism. Since then, it has brought together 75 cultural sites across 10 European countries – Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Romania, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Italy. The Night of Fortresses event is part of two EU-funded projects implemented by Fortress of Culture Šibenik. The first, GIFTSnet – Network for Green and Inclusive Fortified Tourism Solutions, is financed through the Interreg IPA Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Montenegro 2021–2027 program. The second, FORTIC – From the Remains of War to the Architecture of Peace in the Cross-Border Area of Italy-Croatia, is supported by the Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021–2027 program. Thanks to cross-border collaboration through the FORTIC project, the event expanded to new locations in both Croatia and Italy.

The last edition brought together a record number of participants and activities – thousands of visitors took part in more than 190 events at a total of 75 cultural sites in 10 European countries. All programmes were free of charge for visitors and included workshops, themed guided tours, exhibitions, lectures, public forums, musical and stage performances, film screenings, theatre productions, fairs, gastronomy programmes, sports activities, and ecological actions for cleaning the environment.

This year’s theme, "Night of Fortresses Goes Green", introduces a new, eco-conscious component and a new challenge – raising awareness among visitors about sustainable tourism and eco-friendly practices, encouraging active participation in environmental protection, and promoting cultural heritage as a key element of sustainable development.

Thanks to the FORTIC project, Grad Pula - Pola, Comune di Cervia and Municipality of Vieste took part in the Night of Fortresses for the first time this year, joining Fortress of Culture Šibenik and the City of Korčula—project partners who have been involved in the event for four consecutive years.



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NOF 2025 in Pula

For the first time, the city of Pula joined Night of Fortresses through the FORTIC project. The programme took place across three sites: Kaštel, Fort Bourguignon and Fort Casoni Vecchi (Monte Paradiso).

At Kaštel, guided tours were held during the morning for primary school students, while the afternoon slots were open to the general public. Visitors had the opportunity to experience this recognizable symbol of the city from a new, interpretative perspective.

Fort Bourguignon hosted a rich all-day program, particularly aimed at children and families. Alongside an exhibition of works by students from the School of Applied Arts and Design, numerous creative workshops, educational games, performances, and STEM activities with animators were held. Special interest was sparked by the ecological workshops, which introduced sustainable practices to the youngest participants in a fun, practical, and inspiring way.

Fort Casoni Vecchi (Monte Paradiso) was transformed into a dynamic cultural hub during the afternoon and evening. Restoration workshops, a clown performance, aerial silk dancing, a performance by the Cantus Populi choir, and a DJ program created an atmosphere enjoyed by visitors of all ages, further highlighting the importance of reviving public spaces through culture and community.

The positive response, high attendance, and strong level of community engagement demonstrated that Pula's fortifications hold significant potential not only for further cultural activation within the Night of Fortresses framework, but also for broader long-term development as vibrant heritage and community spaces.



Night of Fortresses

GOES GREEN

PULA, 9. SVIBNJA 2025.

KAŠTEL

09:00 – 12:00 Vođene ture Kaštelom za učenike osnovnih škola (prijave zatvorene)

17:00 | 19:00 Vođene ture Kaštelom za sve zainteresirane

FORT BOURGUIGNON

09:00 – 20:00 Izložba radova učenika Škole primijenjenih umjetnosti i dizajna

09:30 | 11:00 Dječje predstave - Recikloman

10:15 – 12:15 Dječja štafeta za vrtičke skupine (prijave zatvorene)

16:00 – 19:00 Radionica izrade hotela za kukce - za male i velike posjetitelje

16:00 – 19:00 Radionica oslikavanja višekratnih vrećica – za sve uzraste

17:00 – 17:30 Vodstvo i priča o utvrđi

17:00 – 18:30 STEM radionica - istražuj, stvaraj, zabavi se

17:00 – 19:00 Dječja potraga za tajnom tvrđave i eco radionica

FORT CASONI VECCHI (MONTE PARADISO)

16:00 – 19:30 Kreativne radionice: restauracija namještaja, izrada eko kozmetike i izrada "vrše" za skupljanje PVC ambalaže - za sve zainteresirane

17:30 – 19:00 Klaun Marek i Cigo One Man Band Show – vesela dječja predstava

19:00 – 19:30 Ples na svili – Manuela Rossi

19:30 – 20:30 Zbor Cantus Populi

20:30 – 22:00 DJ Ferdinand

Interreg  Co-funded by the European Union

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NOF 2025 in Vieste

The Municipality of Vieste participated in the Night of Fortresses 2025, organizing activities across three sites: Vieste Castle, Norman-Swabian city walls and Porticello Tower

The program included:

- A guided tour of Vieste Castle, inviting visitors to explore ancient architecture, sustainable urban planning, local traditions, and panoramic views.
- A sustainable walk along the Norman-Swabian city walls, emphasizing conservation, storytelling, and harmony with nature.
- A visit to Porticello Tower, where participants can learn about historical preservation efforts, the surrounding environment, and the connection between heritage and eco-friendly tourism.

The first two visits were particularly important, as these sites are not always open to the public: the Porticello Tower has only been accessible since 2024 and it is used for exhibitions and cultural events, while the Castle of Vieste, still a military area, can be visited only on special openings.

Each activity invited participants to reflect on the protection of natural and cultural resources as a shared responsibility.



NOF 2025 in Cervia

In Cervia, visitors explored the city's defensive quadrilateral, San Michele Tower, rediscovered fortifications in the salt pans, and WWII bunkers.

The program featured a free guided tour titled *“Cervia Nuova: A Unique Fortification... Let's Discover It Together!”* The visit began with an introduction in the panoramic hall of San Michele Tower, presented by UNIBO researchers Marco Cavalazzi, coordinator of the “Archeologia a Cervia” project, and Paolo Forlin. Their presentation traced the evolution from the fortification of the old town to the creation of Cervia Nuova.

The tour continued through the Cervia quadrilateral, a rare example of an early modern fortified urban layout, and proceeded to the Magazzino del Sale Torre and the Darsena, historically used for storing and protecting Cervia's “white gold”—salt. Along the route, guides shared historical anecdotes, local stories, and curiosities connecting past and present.

The visit concluded at the MUSA – Salt Museum, where participants were invited to enjoy a free visit of the exhibits and a sustainable aperitif provided by Cervia Social Food.. Participants could join the workshop “My Very Own Mascot”, led by Cooperativa Atlantide. The activity encouraged creativity and sustainability by guiding children and families in crafting playful animal figures using recycled materials. The workshop added an interactive and educational component to the museum visit, particularly appealing to younger audiences.

A key highlight was the opportunity to enter the large Regelbau 668 World War II bunker, fully outfitted with original period equipment, as well as to visit the Tobruk bunker and the “dragon's teeth” fortifications. The tour was conducted in collaboration with the cultural association **CRB 360°**, whose guidance provided valuable historical context and interpretation.

The program concluded with a talk by historian **Luca Bagnolini**, titled *“From the Ashes to Union... The Birth of the European Union,”* offering participants a broader understanding of Europe's post-war reconstruction and integration.



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NOF 2025 in Korčula

For the fourth year in a row, the Night of Fortresses event was successfully held in the City of Korčula, taking place over two days, on May 9 and 10, 2025.

The program included a range of activities aimed at highlighting the importance of preserving cultural and natural heritage, and once again, Korčula proved to be an ideal setting for showcasing historical sites through a contemporary approach and strong community engagement.

The event opened with an educational eco-quiz for primary school students titled Night of Fortresses Goes Green, held at the Korčula Culture Centre. This activity offered students a fun and interactive way to learn more about environmental issues, sustainability, and the importance of protecting local natural resources.

As part of the event, two guided city walks were organized. The first, held in Croatian on May 9, introduced participants to the most significant palaces in Korčula. The second walk, held in English on May 10, provided international visitors with insights into the history and architecture of the city of Korčula. Great interest was also shown in the expert lectures held at the Korčula City Museum. Sani Sardelić gave a talk on the role of dry-stone walls as part of the landscape and their potential as symbols of identity. Maro Grbić discussed the island's quarries and their historical significance, while Tonko Barčot presented valuable archival records on stonemasonry from the Stonemasonry Centre in Korčula-Lastovo.

The event concluded with a lecture by Ivan Tabain and Maja Šunjić on the theme of play and creativity in stone carving, further emphasizing the connection between tradition and art in the local context.

A highlight of the evening program was a striking visual installation – the illumination of the Revelin Tower. Using advanced technology, video mapping, and laser effects, a spectacular light show was created, accentuating the symbolic and historical importance of this fortification and offering visitors a truly memorable nighttime experience.



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Promotional videos of the event 2025

Promotional videos of the NOFGG were created by each city as part of project deliverables:

- The promotional video for NOFGG in Pula is available [here](#).
- The promotional video for NOFGG in Cervia is available [here](#).
- The promotional video for NOFGG in Vieste is available [here](#).
- The promotional video for NOFGG in Korčula is available [here](#).

Final conclusions

The 2025 edition of the Night of Fortresses represents a major milestone in the development of this international cultural initiative, particularly thanks to the cross-border cooperation enabled through the FORTIC project. For the first time, the event expanded to new locations in both Croatia and Italy—Pula, Cervia, and Vieste. Moreover, the Night of Fortresses branding strategy, developed by PP3 and with inputs from project partners Municipality of Vieste and Municipality of Cervia, served as the main strategic frame for implementing and spreading the event towards other Italian cultural heritage sites that participated in the 2025 programme, strengthening the visibility, coherence, and reach of the initiative across the Adriatic.

Night of Fortresses is more than a cultural event - it is an initiative that promotes:

- Sustainability – linking heritage protection with environmental awareness.
- Inclusivity – offering all programmes free of charge and accessible to local communities.
- Cross-border cooperation – strengthening ties among cultural institutions across Europe.
- Education – engaging both children and adults in interactive activities that combine history with ecology.
- Community identity – turning fortresses from just static monuments into vibrant cultural hubs.

This year's theme, Night of Fortresses Goes Green, further elevated the event by introducing a strong environmental component. Across all partner cities, programmes highlighted the interdependence of cultural heritage, sustainable development, and ecological responsibility. From eco-workshops for children and green-themed educational quizzes, to nature-focused guided walks and historical interpretations that connect past conflicts with today's efforts toward peace and sustainability, the 2025 edition showed how heritage can serve as a platform for shaping more responsible tourism and community behavior.

The scale and diversity of activities—from Pula's creative programme and Cervia's comprehensive heritage route, to Vieste's rare-access sites and Korčula's expert lectures and multimedia installations—demonstrated the relevance and vitality of fortified heritage in contemporary cultural tourism. Thousands of visitors participated in more than 190 activities across 75 sites in 10 European countries, confirming the event's growing importance at the international level.



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As the event grows year by year, it demonstrates how culture can become an active driver of ecological awareness and sustainable practices, while also bringing local communities together around shared heritage and traditions. The success of Night of Fortresses Goes Green confirms that Europe's historic sites are not only guardians of the past, but also places for building a more sustainable future.

The Night of Fortresses initiative will continue to build on this momentum, encouraging new partnerships, supporting sustainable cultural tourism, and strengthening the role of fortified heritage as a bridge between the past and a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future

