

## **Czech and Slovak Garden of Peace Opens during a Ceremony Held in Neuville-Saint-Vaast, France**

**Arras, France, 11 June 2019 – The Czech and Slovak Garden of Peace has been unveiled during a ceremony held in the presence of Czech Ambassador to France Petr Drulák, Slovak Ambassador Igor Slobodník, Trustee of the Karel Komárek Family Foundation Jitka Přerovská, and representatives of the Haut-de-France Region and the Pas-de-Calais Prefecture.**

The Gardens of Peace project is overseen by Art & Jardins – Hauts-de-France, a French organization dedicated to building gardens in Hauts-de-France, near military cemeteries that serve as the last resting place for soldiers who died in the First and Second World Wars. The gardens pay homage to heroes who paid the highest price in bringing peace to France and its people. The purpose is to create tranquil areas conducive to reflection. The project was initiated by the French government during the celebrations and remembrance events held on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWI. Apart from the recently opened Czech and Slovak garden, gardens have been built in the name of Australia, Belgium, England, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, New Zealand, and Scotland.

Assistance for the execution of the Czech and Slovak project, including technical support, has been provided by the Karel Komárek Family Foundation. *"The foundation's Management Board has decided to support this project because it brings together efforts to honor the legacy of our ancestors and to improve the quality of the public space. These topics are the focus of our long-term endeavors. I very much appreciate being able to serve as a member of the jury that selected the best project from the nine high-quality entries submitted by Czech and Slovak garden architects,"* said Jitka Přerovská, Member of the Management Board of the Karel Komárek Family Foundation.

The authors of the Czech and Slovak Garden of Peace are Lenka Dřevjaná, Zuzana Němečková, and Miroslava Staneková, who won an architecture competition. Their entry was selected by a jury consisting of representatives of the French government, the Czech and Slovak embassies, the Hauts-de-France region, the City of Arras, and Art & Jardins.

*"We decided to join the project after visiting an area where a concentration camp was located during wartime. Our impression from the locality resonated with the space that was to be developed in France. The ensuing concept was prepared in response to the tragic historical events as an effort to use the space to create something new, respectful, and at the same time beautiful and positive in nature. Taking part in the project has allowed us to gain new experience and see how the same things we do in the Czech Republic are done abroad. It is an honor and joy to be part of this effort," said Zuzana Němečková from the Project Team responsible for the Czech and Slovak Garden of Peace.*

**Les Jardins de la Paix Project (*Gardens of Peace Project*)**

Damaged by the brutality of 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts, the Hauts-de-France Region has chosen to celebrate the heritage of tomorrow and to affirm its resilience through landscape art and artistic creation. There will be 15 gardens of remembrance created near the memorial sites of the First World War. Art & Jardins – Hauts-de-France and the Great War Centenary Mission, who are managing the project, will bring a strong and lasting memorial project in the colors of the nations involved in this global conflict. Over the years and through the creations of gardens, this project will illustrate the diversity of countries that were engaged in the war and have chosen to embrace the cause of peace in the contemporary world.

**Additional information:**

**<https://www.artetjardins-hdf.com/en/directory-project/jardins-de-la-paix/>**

**Czech and Slovak Garden of Peace**

The space below the crowns of trees is traversed by the organic outline of a pathway that gently crisscrosses an adjacent grass belt. The setting is accentuated by solid oak benches that allow visitors to rest and observe the cemetery and the surrounding landscape. Groups of lime trees at the beginning and at the end of the layout symbolize the Czech and Slovak nations. After passing through the enclosed forested area, the pathway and the green belt disappear; the space ends with a broad view of the open landscape. On the horizon, the ruins of a church destroyed during the First World War remind onlookers of the region's tragic history.

# Karel | Komárek Family Foundation

## **Karel Komárek Family Foundation:**

The mission of the Karel Komárek Family Foundation is to inspire courage in people to transform their bold ideas and visions into reality. The foundation is a long-term supporter of the Proměny Foundation and the Dvořák Prague Music Festival. In addition, the foundation is an important donor to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., where its focus concentrates on such efforts as organizing performances by Czech and international artists at this prestigious American venue. Apart from these long-term endeavors, the Karel Komárek Family Foundation lends support to individual and community projects with a positive impact on society as well as people's attitudes and deportment in the Czech Republic and abroad. The Karel Komárek Family Foundation was founded by Karel and Štěpánka Komárek in 2017.

**Additional information: [www.komarekfoundation.org](http://www.komarekfoundation.org)**