On 16th November 1972 the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Convention aims to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the cultural and natural heritage of global importance.

The Škocjan Caves were included on the List of World Heritage on 28th November 1986.

Man and nature have found their common space by respecting the mysterious forces that have strengthened the sense of belonging to these areas. By becoming acquainted with them we are preserving both the memory of our forefathers and an exceptional natural creation so that the existence in the common space will be worthy of the respect entrusted to us in the future as well.

There are well explored archaeological sites in the protected area. These include cave posts, fortified settlements and burial sites which testify to the settlement of this area from the Mesozoic, the Neolithic, the Eneolithic, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the Roman Period up to the migration of peoples and the Early Middle Ages.
The underground canyon of the Reka River is over two kilometres long, at some places over 140 metres high and up to 120 metres wide, making it unique in the world. Picturesque cave entrances and exceptional dimensions of the underground tunnels greatly distinguish the Škocjan Caves from other caves. Altogether, there are over 6 kilometres of explored tunnels, where the silence is only interrupted by drops of percolating water or the torrential river. The Martelova dvorana (Martel’s Chamber), with its 2.2 million cubic metres of volume, is the last dwelling of the Reka River in the Škocjan Caves. Along the route to the springs of the Timava River, the river has created mysterious underground routes in the karst world. Persistence and dedication have been instrumental in the development of the Škocjan Caves, where the local inhabitants have assisted the experts in their exploration of the underground world. With their belief in the success of their work which was not shaken even by the variegated history of this area, they have created this unique heritage of research work.

The Škocjan Caves area has been of fundamental importance for the research of karst and karst phenomena from the beginning of the 19th century up to the present. It is from this research that the two international geomorphological terms “kras” and “dolina” stem.

Biological diversity which can be observed on limestone rocks testifies to the living conditions of plants and animals from the time of both glacial and warmer periods of Earth’s history. This small area which brings together numerous rare species is a unique natural textbook which reveals to us nature’s sensitive life force in cave ecosystems.

Due to particular geomorphological and microclimatic conditions, an exceptional ecosystem has developed in the sinkholes in the protected area in which the Mediterranean, Sub-Mediterranean, Central European, Illyrian and Alpine floral elements co-exist. Velika dolina is the typical locality of the endemic species Campanula justiniana Witasek. The copepod Elaphoidella karstica that is endemic to the Škocjan Caves has been discovered in the percolating water in the cave.