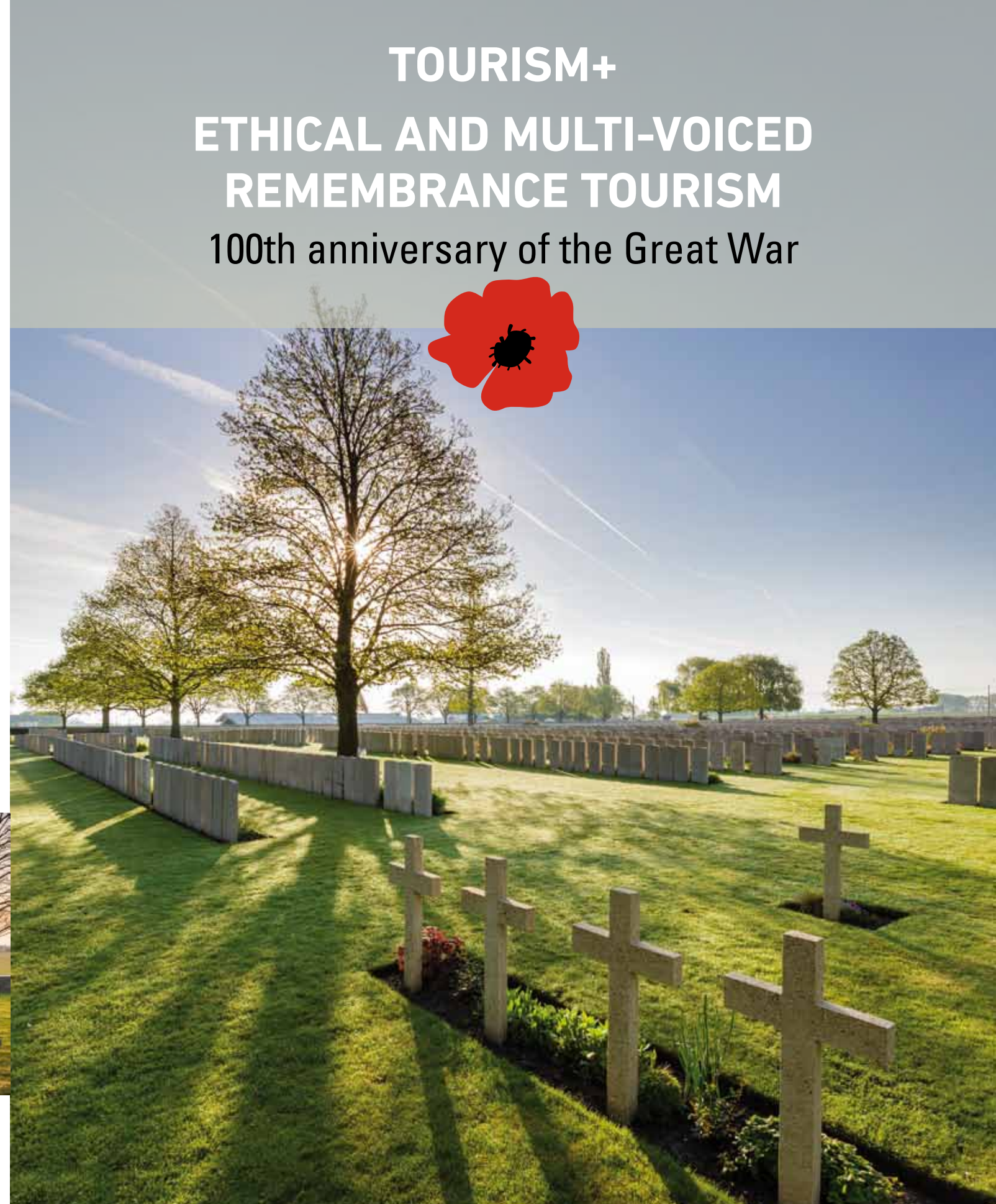


This means that there are a number of considerations we need to keep in the back of our mind with regard to the development of initiatives to perpetuate the remembrance of the First World War.

- 1 Importance of correct historical facts**
Remembrance requires a clear interpretation of the historical context. The general public is becoming less and less familiar with the basic facts of what happened during the war years. Out of respect for the history of the war and its victims, it is of major importance that we should take the correct historical facts as the starting point for the development of any remembrance initiative.
- 2 Importance of a respectful remembrance**
The respectful remembrance of something as immense as the human grief of war has to be approached as soberly and serenely as possible. This means that it is necessary to adopt a cautious and critical stance towards the development of commercial initiatives and/or products. Promoting existing consumer goods within the context of the remembrance ethic, without any provable connection with the First World War, is inappropriate.
- 3 Importance of the multi-voiced approach**
The war influenced every section of society and confronted everyone, each within his or her own personal context, with the horrors of war and battle. Multi-voicing means that it is important that all these many different stories about the First World War are being told. Multi-voicing also means having respect for the various forms and traditions of remembrance. The stories of the First World War can be told from different points of view: you can use a military-historical approach, a people-based approach or even a landscape-related approach.
- 4 Importance of an adapted and appropriate use of language in communication**
Tourist jargon makes use of certain specific concepts, such as attraction, product, marketing, etc. The use of these concepts is problematic when dealing with the remembrance of the First World War. When communicating about remembrance initiatives, it is better to talk about visitors, sites, communication and promotion, remembrance events, etc.
- 5 Importance of using correct statistics**
Statistics are often used to support or illustrate a particular position. Statistics also encourage people to jump to conclusions or see trends that are not always clearly defined. The importance of using correct and unambiguous statistics is therefore essential in the reporting of remembrance. It is equally important for allowing a correct estimation of the (excessive) pressure on heritage sites in relation to the good spread of visitor flow. Please see www.flandersfields.be for the correct numerical data.



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In 2014, we will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. For the past several decades, people from every corner of the world have travelled to the Westhoek to visit the many cemeteries, monuments and museums, which testify to the tragic and dramatic events of the past. The number of these visits will not decrease during the centenary celebrations. Quite the reverse. For this reason, it is important to be well prepared, so that we can offer our many visitors a high quality visit with first-rate accommodation. It is crucial to strike the right note. We need to approach the stories and the inheritance left to us by the First World War in the right manner.

Seven basic principles set out the framework for an ethical and multi-voiced remembrance tourism programme during the centenary commemorations of the First World War.



Multi-voiced means that we will seek to do justice to the complexity of the history of the First World War by using as many different stories as possible. A multi-voiced approach also implies that we must once and for all abandon the outmoded dichotomy between 'winners' and 'losers'. Last but not least, multi-voicing means that the different forms of remembrance have to be distinguished and respected. This will lead to a new debate and provide alternative insights into the importance of the First World War for our region, its population and for remembrance tourism itself.



Respect is the basic requirement for qualitative remembrance. Respect for the more than 600,000 victims of the war who died in our country. Respect for history, which requires that all remembrance initiatives should take the correct historical facts as their starting-point. Respect for the landscape, as the final witness of those terrible and tragic events. Respect must also lead to restraint and caution with regard to the development of commercial initiatives related to remembrance.

The substantive deepening of our knowledge of the First World War is also important. There needs to be additional scientific-historical research. This type of research contributes to the multi-voiced nature of the many stories related to the history of the war. Through a series of study days and study tours, discussion forums and further reflection on remembrance tourism, we should be able to provide the deepening process with a concrete interpretation.



Public interest will be immense during the 2014-2018 remembrance period. Providing good hospitality demonstrates a high degree of respect for the visitor. Good hospitality is therefore essential and must be translated into a warm and first-class welcome, supplemented by proper explanations of the relevant content at the various visitor sites. By using effective visitor management processes, we will ensure that visitor flows are spread as evenly as possible, both in time and place. In this way, we hope to contribute towards the serenity of tourist visits to our war heritage sites.

Today, the First World War and its remembrance are pre-eminently a subject of international interest. In the Westhoek, soldiers from over 50 present-day countries waged war. More than half of today's visitors have an international profile. With a view to the internationalization of the centenary commemorations, we think it is appropriate to make Europe the central geographical focus of remembrance.



The remembrance programme and the remembrance sites must be accessible for a wide range of target groups – local people and visitors, young and old, the general public and experts, as well as people with a limitation or disability. By working with information at different levels and by using an abundance of story lines, we hope to reach these diverse target groups in an appropriate manner. This means that war heritage sites must strive for an optimal accessibility.

It is not only important to understand the peace message from a historical point of view, but also - perhaps more so - to place it in a future perspective. What are the key elements of a modern peace message? It certainly has to contain some of the following components: encouraging peace education, self-participation in conflict control, appealing for diplomatic solutions in contemporary international conflicts, etc.