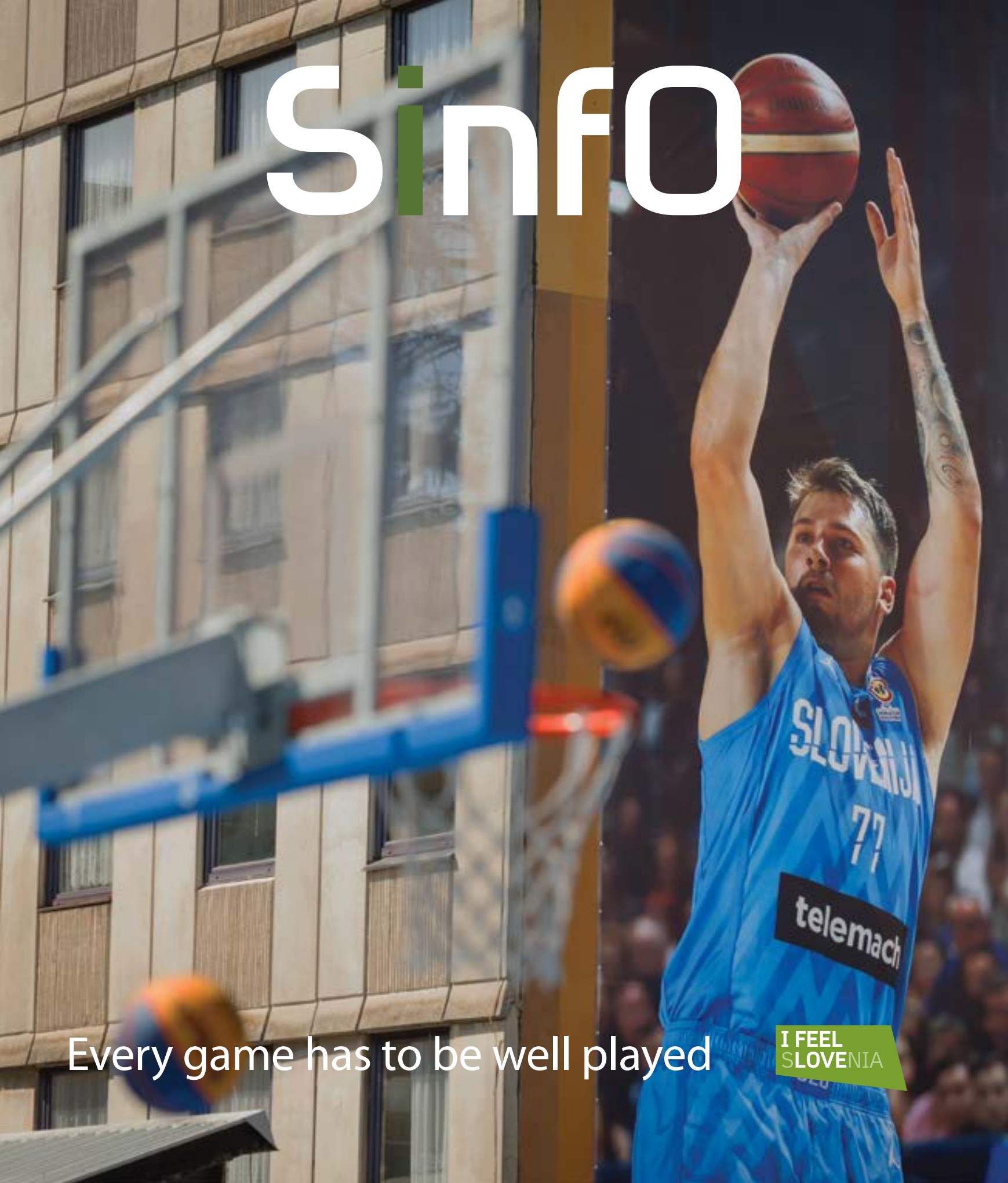


# Sinfo

Every game has to be well played

I FEEL  
SLOVENIA





**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**

# Sinfo

SINFO - SLOVENIAN INFORMATION  
2023

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Photo: Bruno Toič

## SLOVENIA IS NOT STANDING STILL

This year could indeed be called a sporting year, and it will certainly be a sporting year of great rankings, but it will not be just that. We will also pay a lot of attention to Slovenia's appearance as a guest of honour at the most important international book fair in Frankfurt. This is important not only in terms of the long-term visibility and positioning of Slovenian authors and literary creativity, but also in terms of wider cultural creativity as well as cultural, tourist and economic potential.

Luka Dončić is one of Slovenia's most visible ambassadors in the world, especially in the United States. Slovenia has therefore decided to deepen the promotion of the national brand I Feel Slovenia in the American market. In early April, several business and tourism activities were organised in Dallas, as well as an 'I Feel Slovenia night' game, which also featured a performance by the Slovenian basketball star. In addition, the Government Communication Office organised two side events, basketball tournaments for young people. Slovenia is certainly a country of world-class athletes, but it is also a country of recreational sports enthusiasts, something Slovenians have been cultivating since childhood. Sport is in the genes of Slovenians.

We Slovenians are creative, we can express our perception of the world through the written word or on a film screen, and we can express ourselves through the design of space with building materials. Our creativity is evident in many areas. There's also a lot of young people – dynamic, ambitious and motivated. Some of their stories you can read in this edition.

A good vision is open and spontaneous and leads to success through small goals. In Slovenia, we know how to set goals and that's why we are recognised in many places. The key to success is to focus on the things we want. In Slovenia, we do not stay still, we chase opportunities. Every game has to be well played, regardless of the venue.

Tanja Glogovčan Belančič, Editor-in-Chief



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“I FEEL SLOVENIA NIGHT”

## Side Events also in Celje and Novo mesto

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIĆ AND DANILA GOLOB



Photo: Rok Mlinar

The Communication Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (UKOM) is participating in a project to promote Slovenia on the US market in Dallas, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, SPIRIT Slovenia, the Slovenian Tourist Board and the Ljubljana Tourism Board.

In addition to other promotional activities taking place between 6 and 8 April in Dallas (business conferences and a presentation of Slovenian tourism), on 7 April 2023 in Dallas there was also a basketball game between the Dallas Mavericks and the Chicago Bulls, called “I Feel Slovenia Night”.

**Luka Dončić, a Slovenian who plays for the Dallas Mavericks in the NBA, is one of Slovenia’s most visible ambassadors in the world. Anything to do with him is therefore immediately recognisable and, as a result, means a significant promotion for the country.**

The event was named “I Feel Slovenia Night” because Slovenia is represented at home and abroad by the I Feel Slovenia national brand, which is managed by UKOM. Therefore, the events in Dallas were also a promotion of Slovenia’s breakthrough solutions, Slovenia as a country of top sporting achievements, culture, art and Slovenia as a boutique tourist destination.



Business Investment Conference and the Slovenian Tourism Workshop - “Texas Feels Slovenia.”  
Photo: Rok Mlinar



Photo: Rok Mlinar



Chicago Bulls vs Dallas Mavericks. Photo: Rok Mlinar



During halftime, fans watched a performance by Slovenian acrobats Dunking Devils and cheered with the Ljubljana Dragon. Photo: Rok Mlinar



Fans from Sevnica, Slovenia. Photo: Rok Mlinar



A scarf I Feel Slovenia for tha fans at the game. Photo: Rok Mlinar





A race to win at the basketball playground in Celje. Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

## SIDE EVENTS

Together with the municipalities of Celje and Novo mesto and the support of the Basketball Federation of Slovenia and others, UKOM organised two youth basketball side events. With these two events, Slovenia also wants to send the message that sport and a healthy lifestyle are values that Slovenians swear by. We get to know these values during our education and leisure activities. In addition, the country also grants significant support for sports infrastructure projects, as Slovenia is not only a country of top sports performers, but also home to many recreational sports enthusiasts. Movement energises us and gives us the drive to achieve our recreational and business goals. Slovenia's incredible natural conditions, good sports infrastructure and the upbringing of young people in a healthy lifestyle from kindergarten onwards contribute significantly to this.

**A basketball tournament for primary school pupils in the last three years of school was held in Celje along with a demonstration match in Novo mesto.**

At both events, young people also had the opportunity to test their knowledge about Slovenian and international basketball as well as basketball heroes Luka Dončić and Goran Dragić.

Typically, Slovenian athletes such as Dončić and Dragić, as well as many others from other sporting disciplines, are very happy to personally encourage young people to take up sports where they are successful, or to move and live a healthy lifestyle in general.

## THROWING HOOPS AT MAVS BASKETBALL COURT

Last year, Celje was provided with two basketball courts (Mavs and Dončić), the renovation of which was financially supported by Dallas Mavericks Basketball Club.

**That is why the event in Celje took place at Mavs Court.**

Director of the Slovenian Government Communication Office Petra Bezjak Cirman, and Matija Kovač, the mayor of the municipality of Celje, emphasised that such an event is first of all a



In Celje, the II. Primary School Celje team won and received Luka Dončić national team T-shirt and professional basketballs. The awards were presented by Petra Bezjak Cirman, the Director of the Government Communications Office. Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA



Matjaž Smodiš, Dalibor Đapa and Jure Balazič cheer on young basketball players. Photo: Katja Kodba/STA

sign of support for young athletes to be active, enjoy sports and achieve their goals, and is a motivation for a healthy life. Ministry of Education representative Aleš Ojsteršek added that the system of sports education, physical activity and sport is integrated into the national education system.

Young basketball hopefuls from 10 primary schools competed on the court in the Mavericks' blue colours bearing their logo.

**The event was also attended by some well-known Slovenian athletes and supported by the Basketball Federation of Slovenia.**

Guests included Slovenian national women's team basketball players Blaža Čeh and Mojca Jelenc and snowboarder Gloria Kotnik.

In Celje, the II. Primary School Celje team won and received Luka Dončić national team T-shirt and professional basketballs.

DJAmirko provided the music to liven up the event and at the end of the event competitors and fans could enjoy rap music by Murat&Jose. The event was also featured on the Dallas Mavericks' social media (Dallas off Court, etc.) and in media coverage.

### **EXHIBITION BASKETBALL MATCH IN NOVO MESTO**

The Novo mesto School Centre was delighted to accept UKOM's invitation to host the basketball event for young basketball players on its basketball court, which was also supported by basketball players Goran Dragič and Matjaž Smodiš.



At the basketball event in Novo mesto the young athletes were addressed by Dr Petra Robnik, Acting Director of the Sports Directorate, Gregor Macedoni, the Mayor of the Novo mesto Municipality, Dr Mitja Veber, the Head of the Inter-company Education and Training Centre of the Novo mesto School Centre, and MA Polona Prešeren, representative of UKOM.

**The common message was that Slovenia has excellent conditions for the development of professional sports, that sports are**

**in our blood and we are passionate fans.**

Young basketball players from the Žoltasti Troti Basketball Club and the Krka Women's Basketball Club took part in the exhibition basketball match. They all won and thereby proved the importance of cooperation, the joy of sport and the spirit of sportsmanship. Dancers from the Novo mesto Dance Studio created a great atmosphere with their dance performance. The programme was followed by basketball games in which young visitors showed their skills and received 'I Feel Slovenia' products as prizes.



Young basketball players from the Žoltasti Troti Basketball Club and the Krka Women's Basketball Club. Photo: Katja Kodba/STA

SLOVENIA – GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

## Honeycomb of Words

TEXT BY AMALIJA MAČEK



Press Conference at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2022 - Slovenia: Guest of Honour 2023 . Photo: Holger Menzel / Slovenian Book Agency



In October 2023, Slovenia will be featured as the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2023, the most important international book fair in the world. Visited by 6,400 journalists a year, 60% of whom mention the guest of honour country in their articles, it is one of the events with the most media coverage in Slovenia's history and the largest presentation of Slovenian culture abroad to date.



Project »Slovenia – Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book Fair 2023, a model for sustainable international promotion of Slovenian literary creativity« is co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund.

Once considered a professional and business meeting of literary agents and publishers, the Book Fair now also addresses a general audience and is increasingly expanding to locations across the city.

been underway for several years now, ever before the contract was signed in 2018. Since 2013, the number of translations into foreign languages has increased by 100%, which is a great success.

**In the year of holding the Guest of Honour status, Slovenia is expected to hold around 300 cultural events in Germanophone countries, a feat in which it is strongly supported by the Slovenian cultural centres in Berlin and Vienna.**

### **A LOT GOING ON AHEAD OF THE FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE 2023**

The project is managed by the Slovenian Book Agency in close cooperation with the management of the Frankfurter Buchmesse, which has to approve everything from the slogan to the programme. The purpose of Slovenia's guest stint is to present authors whose works have been translated into foreign languages, especially German, in recent years. Preparations have

While specific events have already started to take place since January 2023, the biggest event during the preparation period will be the Leipzig Book Fair in late April, where a number of new translations of Slovenian works into German will be presented. In May, the annual meeting of the European Council of Literary Translators' Associations – CEATL will take place in Ljubljana (in cooperation with the Slovenian Association of Literary Translators – DSKP), and in early June, Slovenia's capital will host around 70 prominent German authors, members of the renowned German Academy for Language and Literature from Darmstadt. On 15 June, an important press conference will be held in Frankfurt, where the

Slovenian pavilion's design will be revealed, along with the programme set to unfold during the Frankfurter Buchmesse (all of which must remain secret until that date).

**Being a Guest of honour presents an unique opportunity not only for Slovenin book authors, but has also broad-implications for culture, sustainable tourism and other forms of economic cooperation. There will be no such opportunity in next few decades.**

The project is being closely monitored and supported by the Ministry of Culture, with other ministries participating in the inter-ministerial group and contributing to the successful preparations. The Slovenian Tourist Board and its branch in Germany will also play a key role.



Slovenian National Stand at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2022.  
Foto: Slovenian Book Agency





# SLOVENIA

GUEST OF HONOUR AT  
FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE 2023

HONEYCOMB OF WORDS



Katja Stergar, Acting Director - Slovenian Book Agency, Jürgen Boos, Director - Frankfurter Buchmesse, dr. Asta Vrečko, Cultural Minister of the Republic of Slovenia and Erwin Köstler - translator for Slovene language. Photo: Holger Menzel / Slovenian Book Agency

YOUNG POETS

# Poetry gives meaning to life

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



Slovenia's largest and longest-running publishing event, the Slovenian Book Fair, started at the end of November. Photo: Domen Grögl/STA



“Art is the contact between two human beings. The gates of poetry, through which a speaker, reader, listener enters, represent the moment when a human being opens to another. Such other becomes someone who is close. Poetry brings out humanity, puts it into our words, places it within our relationship with the world, and thus humanizes the world and ourselves. Poetry never takes itself too seriously, always doubts, and knows how to laugh,” wrote the poet Srečko Kosovel.

**It also raises questions of whether poetry can still change the world in the present times, what social role its creators play, and whether they are sufficiently visible and respected in society?**

Slovenians are a nation of poets. Our social essence is based on poetry rather than warfare. This has been confirmed by Slovenian poems and, through them, by poets of various generations, including the current and youngest one, who demonstrate an exceptional vitality, freshness, a European level that makes many people around the world pause in awe. The Mexican poet Octavio Paz wrote that we will return to primordial chaos if we stop reading poetry. That poetry opens us to what is most important: mystery, slowness, moments of elevation and beauty. It actually leads us in a very different direction from the one in which the world is rushing. It is its freest form, not only is it a place to play, but also an inerascable mark of individuality and creativity.

**YOUNG PEN**

Two years ago, the culture editorial office of Delo, in cooperation with the Ljubljana UNESCO City of Literature office, conceived the project called “Young Pen”, which has survived the pandemic, developed into a prize and become a recognised name in literary circles. Young Pen was born with the aim of bringing young Slovenians’ literature into publication, and in two years, the project has developed into a unique community of authors, which also serves as a nexus between the writers and editors of fiction publishing houses. Despite the saturation and the 21st century

technology, young generations are striving to keep reading and books popular.

**The presented authors are actually the next generation of Slovenian literature writers, which is also one of the elements creating the national spirit of the current time.**

The column presents a number of young poets: fiction and poetry writer Hana Bujanović Kokot, literary critic and translator Sašo Puljarevič, poet, fiction writer and playwright Nika Šoštarič, literary, theatre and film critic Neža Dvorščak, poet Neva Lučka Zver, editor and critic Maja Kovač, fiction writer Julija Lukovnjak, literary critic Lara Lovrič, fiction writer Jona Levar, fiction writer Sara Štern, playwright and poet Žiga Hren, poet Tadeja Logar Surina, poet, fiction writer and playwright Nika Šoštarič, fiction writer Julija Lukovnjak, and literary critics Anja Zidar, Tinkara Uršič Fratina, Matevž Rems and Hana Podjed. Ela Potočnik, Kristjan Rakar, Nika Šoštarič, Mija Kramar, Lara Gobec, Matjaž Jamnik and Izabella Rajh



“Young pen” was born with the aim of bringing young Slovenian’s literature into publication. Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA

discussed their work and beginnings as writers, Slovenian young literature, systemic advantages and disadvantages, working with editors, the importance of reading and the role of literary critics and mentors. Same as last year, the season will be finished atop Rožnik, where the Young Pen Award will be presented in addition to the Kresnik Award in June; last year, two prizes were awarded for the first time to the poet, fiction writer and translator Tanja Božič (1995) and the literary critic and translator Sašo Puljarevič (1995).

Some time ago, in an interview for Delo, the writer Sebastijan Pregelj said that the Young Pen project “has given young people their own page in an era when the attention paid to cultural content is constantly shrinking. This is how it should be. We should be hearing from and learning about those who are coming. In a few years, we will be reading their books. Moreover, criticism should have its place alongside literature, because the two are not separate worlds, although I sometimes have a feeling that we writers are convinced that we don’t need criticism.”



UNESCO first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999. Practiced throughout history, poetry includes various forms of language, expressions and signification. It is often accompanied by music and performed during special occasions. World Poetry Day celebrates one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expressions. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA





Since 1991, the Kresnik Prize, also known as the Kresnik Award, has been awarded by the newspaper Delo for the best Slovenian novel of the previous year. For the last few years, the award ceremony has been held at Rožnik above Ljubljana. Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

Hana Bujanović Kokot believes that such projects not only allow young authors to publish their work, but also enable them “to create and strengthen a community of young authors through publication. Participation therefore means a lot to me; besides publishing, I also have the opportunity to meet with and listen to others, to socialise, to get feedback and to develop through experience.”

Poetry, the best form of metaphysical and theological reflection in the present time, will find its true place in the Harfa v Vetru (Harp in the Wind) international centre and museum of poetry, which is currently being built in the village of Medana in Goriška Brda and will be ready by the end of 2024.

## SLOVENIAN COMICS FOR CHILDREN

# When pictures and speech bubbles say it all

TEXT BY DANILA GOLOB



The authors present 30 names from Slovenian history (France Prešeren, Ivana Kobilica, Jože Plečnik, etc.). Photo: Danila Golob



Miki Muster is considered to be one of the best Slovenian comic strip creators in Slovenia and a pioneer of the form. Who doesn't know his beloved fox Zvitorepec, the comic book hero who continues to enthrall young people to this day? As time passes, he is joined by more and more new comic book heroes, created by brilliant comic artists.

In Slovenia, we boast a growing number of writers and illustrators creating high-quality comics. The kind that entertain, make you laugh, but also teach, because comics can be a simple and engaging way to introduce a particular topic to a child.

**Many comic books have been awarded the Golden Pear Award, a sign of the quality of youth books.**

Every year more comics appear, delighting the organisers of the Tinta Festival where they hand out Zlatirepec awards for the best comics of the previous year.

#### **KAM PA KAM, MODRI MEDVEDEK? (THE WISE BLUE BEAR)**

The comics starring the Wise Blue Bear, created by Marjan Manček, have been published in Ciciban and Cicido magazines, and have been collected and published in the book entitled Kam pa kam, Modri medvedek?. Friendship, play and peer relationships play an important role in the comics, the animal characters experiencing the world around them in the same way children do. They hang out, have fun, squabble, play a lot and explore.

**This brings out the characters' different personalities.**

The illustrations and the minimal text convey humorous observations that highlight the fun quirks and perceptions of reality that resonate with children.

#### **ŠNOFIJEVA DRUŠČINA (ŠNOFI'S GANG) AND THE TWO BANDIT PIGS**

Matej de Cecco and Boštjan Gorenc – Pižama are a duo of scriptwriter and cartoonist who produce children's comics. Šnofi's Gang first delighted generations of PIL magazine readers, with the exciting adventures of primary school pupil Pilko, his friend Čopka, Šnofi the puppy and his curly-haired love interest, Pepca.

**The stories also found their place in hard-back book form.**

Kapo and Bundo are bandit pigs who are always playing pranks and trying to evade Inspector Jože. Writer Majda Koren provided the humorous text for the Kapo and Bundo series of comics, while Damijan Stepančič put his own stamp on the lively illustrations.

#### **COMIC STRIP FAIRY TALES**

Illustrator and comic artist Izar Lunaček has been telling his son his own bedtime stories for many years, and when he has a particularly good one, he writes it down. Therefore, the book Lahko noč, sine: 7 pravljic v stripu, which happened to win the Zaltirepec award for Best Original Children's Comic, is the result.

#### **A NEW INTERPRETATION OF SLOVENIAN HISTORY AND FAMOUS SLOVENIANS**

How can we present Slovenian history and famous Slovenians to children in the simplest and most entertaining way? In comics, of course.

The book *Zgodovina Slovenije v stripu* presents 37 entertaining stories by the youth writer Žiga X. Gombač and illustrator Ivan Mitrevski. With our heroine Živa and the time-travelling villain Razpoka, young people learn about important events that have taken place on Slovenian territory from antiquity to the modern age. As we travel through the historical eras, the reader learns about their defining characteristics and some fascinating facts associated with them. The comic book features actual exhibits from the National Museum of Slovenia, and with its entertaining descriptions invites you to pay a visit. The book has been awarded the Golden Pear Award, a sign of the quality of youth books.

**We Slovenians are proud of our famous personalities, who are also featured in the comic.**

Žiga X. Gombač and illustrator Jaka Vukotič together created the book *Znamenitni: imenitne zgodbe znamenitih osebnosti v stripu*. The authors present 30 names from Slovenian history who, with courage, daring and a strong sense of purpose, helped make the world a better place for everyone. The comic is also a winner of the Zlatirepec award for Best Original Children's Comic.

The story of how Jurij Dalmatin first translated the complete Bible into Slovene and of how Adam Bohorič produced the first Slovene grammar is presented in comic strip form in *Reformatorji v stripu*. The authors Boštjan Gorenc – Pižama, Jaka Vukotič and Dr



A presentation of Slovenian history through the comic strip.  
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



Žiga X. Gombač and illustrator Jaka Vukotič created the book *Znamenitni: imenitne zgodbe znamenitih osebnosti v stripu*. Photo: Danila Golob



KozmaAhačič guide us through the stories of the great figures of the Slovenian Reformation.

The picture book Slovenski klasiki v stripu is a comprehensive collection of short, one-page, mostly satirical comic depictions by various Slovenian comic artists, dedicated to our great national artists and their works, as well as to certain developments in Slovenian culture in general. Slovenski klasiki v stripu 2 is a book written by a single author, Tomaž Lavrič, who won the Zlatirepec award for Best Original Comic for Adults at the last Tinta Festival.

## HOW TO CREATE A COMIC

Najmanjša velika enciklopedija stripa is the work of comic artist Ciril Horjak, also known as Dr. Horowitz. It is an entertaining but also educational comic book that introduces young people to the art of the comic strip. The author explains the history of the comic strip, its basic characteristics and distinctive features, and touches on the creative process involved.

The comic shows us, in pictures and text, everything that a novel might only convey in many thousands of words.



Reformatorji v stripu (in comics).  
Photo: Danila Golob



Author Ciril Horjak's Najmanjša velika enciklopedija stripa introduces young people to the art of comics. Photo: Danila Golob

JOKER OUT TO REPRESENT SLOVENIA AT EUROVISION

## Life is more than meets the eye

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN



Joker Out - a young, dynamic and very popular band in Slovenia - will represent Slovenia at Eurovision Song Contest.  
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



This year, Joker Out, a young, up-and-coming, dynamic and very popular band in Slovenia, will represent Slovenia at the Eurovision Song Contest. The boys will compete in the second semi-final, which is scheduled for 11 May.

National broadcaster, RTV Slovenia, conducted this year's selection of a Slovenian representative for Eurovision in a different way than in previous years. This year, they put their trust in Joker Out to prepare a Slovenian song.

**With the song released in February, we got to experience its sonic and visual identity.**

The members of Joker Out – Bojan Cvjetičanin (vocals, guitar), Kris Guštin (guitar), Jan Peteh (guitar), Nace Jordan (bass) and Jure Maček (drums) – premiered the song, Carpe Diem, in a special show.

The young musicians, who are extremely popular in Slovenia, admitted they were feeling the pressure, because they did not want to let people down. However, they have done something completely different with the song, a symbiosis of youthful energy and mature ambience. They are convinced that there is no universal recipe for a great song, but what is important to them is that they “did something that they themselves really liked”.

**Carpe Diem is a call to all who know that there is more to life than meets the eye.**

This shagadelic dance anthem is a reflection of the band members' year-round gigging performances and their enjoyment of life. The message is simple: for whatever life throws at you, music and dance are always the answer.

Joker Out recorded the song in Hamburg in December, where the band literally locked themselves in the studio for ten days with their producers Žare Pak and Todd Burke. “We only came out every few days to get some air, so we didn't see much of the city,” say the youngsters, who did manage to visit the memorial to the Beatles, who (like many other musicians) began their global journey in Germany's second largest city.

The video is set in a mystical hotel, where a seemingly ordinary and dreary world mingles with the crazy and magical. You never know what is waiting for you in the next room or around the corner. The only question is: do you dare to surrender to the magic? The video was shot at the end of January in the disused Stol Hotel in Kamnik and at the Union Hotel in Ljubljana, under the direction of in-house video guru Marko Pirc and another very experienced director, Bonin Englar (Matter, MRFY), with a crew of 50 people and just as many extras. “The atmosphere on set was so energetic and vibrant that we forgot we were actually filming the party and didn't even have to act to really enjoy it,” say the Jokers, who are already preparing for their Eurovision performance following the premiere.

**At Eurovision, the song Carpe Diem will be performed in the Slovenian language. The boys' first priority was to come up with a song they liked and to stay true to themselves.**

“We didn't want to step out of our skins, because then it wouldn't be us anymore, it wouldn't be sincere anymore,” they said. Prior to Eurovision itself, they will go on a tour of European cities.

KARST

# A place of inspiration

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN



Štanjel at Kras.  
Photo: Dejan Šuc/[www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info)



The Karst is a remarkable region that covers two-fifths of Slovenia's territory. It is a world full of secrets and of fascinating natural phenomena. A world that has intrigued adventurers, scientists, explorers and, of course, artists throughout history.

Perhaps less well known is the fact that the Slovenian landscape of Karst also gave its name to the scientific field of karstology. The technical term comes from the name of this region of Slovenia, called Kras by the Slovenians, Carso by the Italians and Karst by the Germans. Karstology as a scientific field occupies a special place for Slovenians among all scientific disciplines, with the oldest documented research on karst in the present-day territory of Slovenia dating back to antiquity.

**In Slovenia, the first person to study karst phenomena was Janez Vajkard Valvasor, a nobleman from Carniola, who became an honorary member of the Royal Society of London with his study of the intermittent Lake Cerknica.**

In his most important work *Slava Vojvodine Kranjske* (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola) (1689), he described the karst, its sinks, springs and his visits to the caves in several books, and explained how the karst works. Among other things, he published descriptions of thirteen caves that were previously unknown.

Not only did Valvasor write about the Karst region, but many great names of Slovenian culture have been active there. With its enigmatic creature, unforgiving landscape and remarkable people, the Karst has inspired many artists who have either come from there or found inspiration for their work there.

**One of the most beautiful works of Maks Fabiani, the greatest Slovenian architect after Jože Plečnik, is the Ferrari Garden in Štanjel.**



One of the most beautiful works of the architect Maks Fabiani is the Ferrari Garden in Štanjel. Photo: psgt\_123/depositphotos.com



Poet Srečko Kosovel.  
Photo: wiki commons

#### KONS 5

*Gnoj je zlato  
in zlato je gnoj.*

*Oboje = 0*

*0 = ∞*

*∞ = 0*

*AB <*

*1, 2, 3*

*Kdor nima duše  
ne potrebuje zlata  
kdor ima dušo  
ne potrebuje gnoja.*

*Manure is gold  
and gold is manure.*

*Both = 0*

*0 = ∞*

*∞ = 0*

*AB <*

*1, 2, 3*

*He who has no soul  
has no need of gold;  
he who has a soul  
has no need of manure.*

*I, A.*



Igo Gruden's street in Basovizza. Photo: wiki commons

Maks Fabiani (1865–1962) was born in Kobdilj in the Karst region. He was the first architect of his time to receive a doctorate in urban planning. University professor in Vienna, architect, landscape architect, painter, writer, innovator, humanist, traveller, politician and visionary.

The poet Igo Gruden, a native of the Karst, left a tangible impression of his time there, with his first collection of poetry called *Narcis* (Narcissus). Although his poetic work was not extensive, he was labelled 'The Folk Singer of the Karst, Goriška and Primorje regions'.

Certainly the most famous literary name from the Karst region is Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926), a poet, publicist, and the foremost exponent of Slovenian modern poetry. He left an indelible mark during his short but highly prolific life. He pursued Romance studies, Slavonic studies and pedagogy, but died before his time.

**At first, his poetry was influenced by modernism, and the dominant motifs were the Karst landscape, maternity and death, often with a symbolic meaning.**

The Karst lay at the centre of his poetry (e.g. in his poems *Balada* (Ballad), *Bori* (Pines), *Vas za bori* (Village behind the Pines), *Slutnja* (A Premonition)), which is why he was called the lyricist of the Karst. Later he moved into Expressionism and developed visionary, social and religious themes with the central notion of a personal and collective apocalypse. Among his best-known works is the constructivist poem *Kons. 5*, published in the *Integrali* collection.





Literary festival in Vilenica is one of the Europe's most prominent festivals. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

The Karst region is also home to Vilenica, which is not only another Karst cave, but is also known for its literary festival. Vilenica is certainly one of those festivals whose presence in literary circles is as permanent as the words of the authors who take part in it. Over the decades, Vilenica has become one of Europe's most prominent festivals, bringing together authors, translators, literary agents, publishers and, of course, readers from all over the world. Vilenica is a kind of crossroads of many creative paths - it encourages lively exchanges, new literary works, and at the same time enriches the local environment (Karst and Primorska).

GRANNY'S SEXUAL LIFE

# Animated film about women's voices overheard throughout history

TEXT BY DANILA GOLOB



Multi-awarded short animated documentary film, *Granny's Sexual Life*, by director Urška Djukić, received the César in the category of best animated short film. Photo: Boštjan Virč/STA



Granny's Sexual Life by directors Urška Djukić and Émilie Pigéard is a powerful testimony about the sexual lives of women in Slovenia in the previous century. The film, which reveals an often overlooked aspect of Slovenian history, has won many accolades, including the European Film Award and the César Award.

The Slovenian short animated documentary film is based on the testimonies of women from the book by Milena Miklavčič entitled *Ogenj, rit in kače niso za igrače* (Don't Play With Fire, Ass and Snakes). The book, which leaves no reader indifferent, proved to be an excellent basis for the animated documentary, a Slovenian and French co-production. Animator, illustrator and director of animated films, Émilie Pigéard, was invited to participate in the film by director Urška Djukić. The scenario was written by Urška Djukić, who also edited the film, and Maria Bohr.

### **OVERCOMING OLD TABOOS THROUGH ANIMATION**

Granny's Sexual Life features the history of intimacy of a grandmother living in the countryside who epitomises the atmosphere in which women found themselves in the first half of the 20th century, when they were often regarded as objects for satisfying the sexual desires of their husbands under the tyranny of strict religious teachings and general social conventions. The testimonies of women about their sexual lives, violent husbands and abuse are presented through innocent, children's and humorous drawings that allowed animator Émilie Pigéard straightforward access to the viewer's consciousness, as it is easier to process such a difficult theme through humour.

**Individual images of pain, suffering, fear and fatalism overcome the old taboos with imaginative moves and strokes.**

The film discusses women's voices "that have been overheard, rejected and suppressed throughout history. Today, we have the opportunity to talk about this and also feel the full effect of the pain that women had to endure in the past due to patriarchal structures," director Urška Djukić highlighted.

### **RECIPIENT OF PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS**

The multi-award-winning animated documentary received the European Film Academy Award for Best Short Film. In her response to the nomination among five short films for the EFA Award, Urška Djukić said that she had been secretly hoping to receive the award since the film premiered. "More people will get to see Granny's Sexual Life because of the award, which is the biggest gift for us, the creators of the film, and for all the women who, in the past, and still today, suffer in a subordinate position in violent relationships," she added.

The creators of Granny's Sexual Life have already celebrated at the César Awards, which are considered the French Oscars. The film was awarded the César in the category of best animated short film. The awards prove that Slovenian filmmaking belongs at the very pinnacle of European film production.

**Granny's Sexual Life presents a part of our history and focuses on the Slovenian woman in a patriarchal society, her suffering and submission.**

At the same time, it serves as a reminder that, even today, many women are still in a subordinate position and suffer in violent relationships. "Covert domestic violence against women is very much alive and an important theme which must be addressed. We must fight against the normalisation of such slaveholding relationships between men and women as have applied over the course of history," emphasised Urška Djukić, the director of the film, who has given a voice to the grandmothers from the past and wishes to give it to all the daughters and granddaughters as well.

2023 - THE YEAR OF THE ARCHITECT EDVARD RAVNIKAR

# Commemorating the 30th anniversary of his death

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



Ravnikar promoted his tradition in the most delicate and original way.



On the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, the Government declared 2023 the Ravnikar Year to mark the 30th anniversary of the death of the architect Edvard Ravnikar. He was born on 4 December 1907 in Novo Mesto. Ravnikar began studying architecture in Vienna and continued in Ljubljana with the architect Jože Plečnik. He remained his closest collaborator for two years after graduation. His path then took him to Paris, to the studio of the pioneer Le Corbusier, where he stayed for a few months.

**The Ministry of Culture stated that although Ravnikar is considered to have formally parted ways with Plečnik's architectural style, he continued to promote his tradition in the most delicate and original way.**

With absolutely original interpretation of the fundamental principles of classical architecture, Ravnikar later succeeded in designing modern works with a unique cultural identity that is surprisingly self-evident given the space it was created in. This kind of respect for the site is an expression of locally adapted architecture, which Ravnikar understood as every person's existential and spiritual need.

#### **ARCHITECT EDVARD RAVNIKAR'S WORKS IN LJUBLJANA**

The first important building that he designed independently was the ossuary for the fallen in World War I at the Žale cemetery complex in Ljubljana (1937-1939).

Petrol gas station at Tivolska (1969).

He designed the canopy covering the gas station's platform as a series of three concrete "umbrellas".

Moderna Galerija/Museum of Modern Art (1939-1951) – The gallery's design follows Plečnik's traditional style: the building is axisymmetric, with an elevated central cube housing the main exhibition hall.

Stavba Ljudske Pravice/People's Rights Building (1961), also called the Canary, is designed as a simple oblong block, with a lightweight prefabricated façade made of yellow plastic.

The three-sided skyscrapers TR2 and TR3 (1976), on the axis of the symbolic gates of Ljubljana, in a design typical for the structuralism of the time.

Maximarket (1975) The department store's façade is very diverse; full segments made of stone slabs are split by recessed vertical glazed strips, which bring daylight into the interior.

Cankarjev Dom (1983) - The design of the building's body is diversified and follows the spatial organisation of the interior. A uniform façade wrap made of white marble panels gives the building a peaceful and homogeneous appearance.

Ferentovi Bloki (1975) The unit along Slovenska ulica is raised above the street level and reveals the remains of the Roman Emona. It is not well known that Plečnik's birth house once stood on the edge of the former Roman Forum, not far from the basilica, at the location of today's Ferantov Vrt neighbourhood. When designing the new urban fabric of the city, Ravnikar erected a pillar in his memory at the junction of Slovenska ulica and Gregorčičeva ulica.

Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering: The block is slightly raised above the ground and placed on a narrower ground floor base marked by triangular 'capitals'.

In Kranj, he built the Town Hall, the bank on Slovenski Trg, the Creina Hotel and the Globus Department Store, which is now a library.

## ONE OF THE LAST UNIVERSAL ARCHITECTS IN SLOVENIA

Although he was an advocate of modernism, he is nowadays considered one of the last universal architects in Slovenia. He took upon himself all the tasks of architect and urban planner, discussed them in professional disquisitions, strived for the reform and modernisation of the Ljubljana School of Architecture, and tried to encourage the development of Slovenian industrial design and graphics.

**Within the Yugoslavian architectural scene, he established the primacy of the Ljubljana School of Architecture.**

Ravnikar's universal architecture is an unusual author's synthesis, based on Plečnik's locally nuanced classicism, Le Corbusier's brutalism and vernacular architecture, as well as ancient and other models, from Scandinavia to Japan. His initiatives were not always well received due to a lack of understanding, unwillingness to undergo radical changes, and envy. The undisputed pinnacle of his international reputation was his competition piece in 1964 for the development of the artificial island of Tronchetto in Venice, for which he was awarded the first Ex Aequo prize. Unfortunately, like many of Ravnikar's other prize-winning projects, this successful project was never finished.



The complex represents the finest example of Slovenian Structuralism, and originates in Ravnikar's composition exercises in B - course the minor degree program at the Ljubljana School of Architecture in 1960s. Photo: Bor Slana/STA





Gallery of Modern Art. Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



The three sided skyscrapers TR2 and TR3.  
Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA





LIPIZZANER HORSE BREEDING ON UNESCO LIST

# When you touch a Lipizzaner, you touch history

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIĆ

There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man. (Winston Churchill)  
Photo: Boris Pretnar/[www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info)





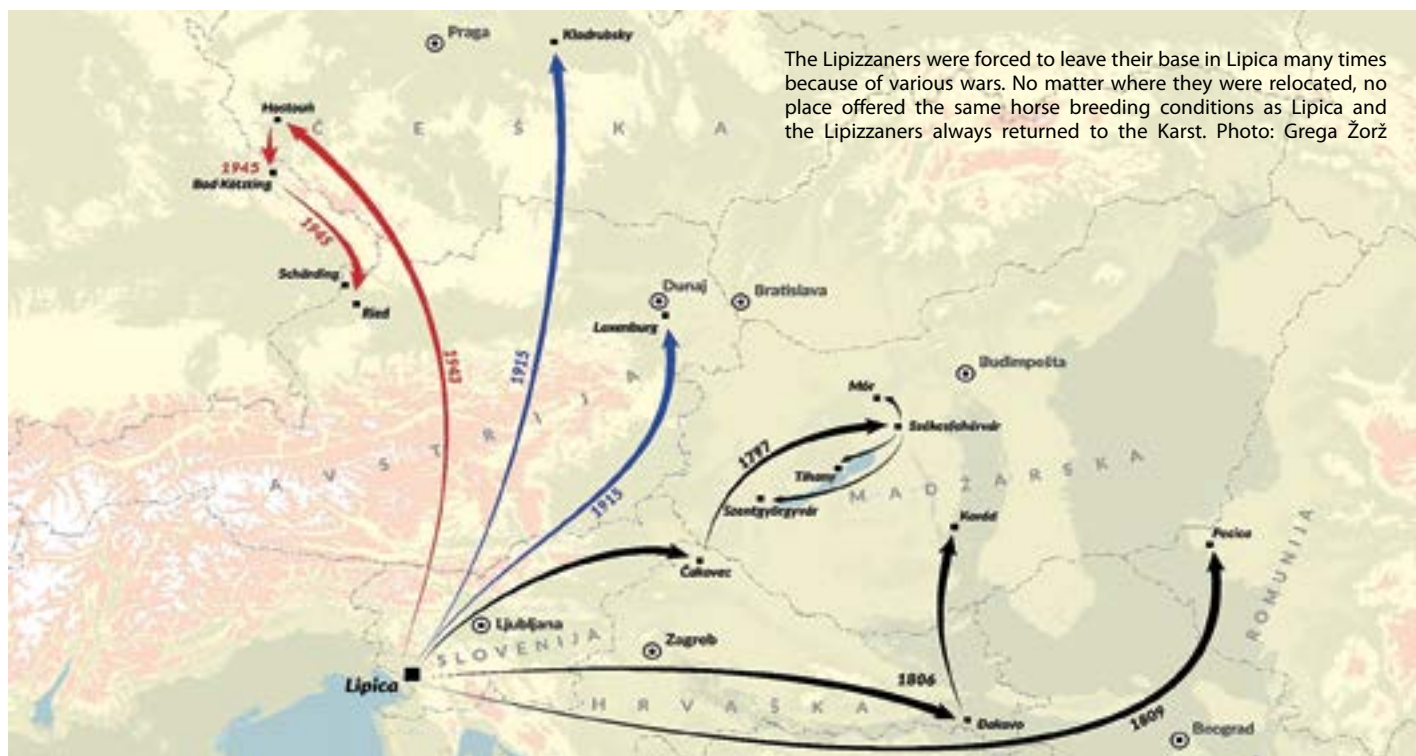


On 1 December last year, the tradition of breeding Lipizzaners was added to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The representative list includes the breeding tradition of Lipizzaners in all eight countries that have participated in the listing. In addition to Slovenia, this includes: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Slovakia.

Edvard Kocbek poetically expressed the nobility and dignity of the white horse, the Lipizzaner: "Others worshipped sacred cows and dragons, thousand-year-old turtles and lions with wings, unicorns, double-headed eagles and the phoenix. Nevertheless, we chose the most beautiful animal, one that has proved itself both on the battlefield and in the circus, carrying princesses and the gold monstrose. That is why the emperors of Vienna spoke French to the diplomats, Italian to the actresses, Spanish to the infinite God, and German to the uneducated servants, but they spoke Slovenian to the horses."

### LIPIZZANER BREEDING IS TRADITIONAL

This means that it is based on experience and a way of doing things that has persisted since the second half of the 18th century. A prerequisite for breeding such wonderful horses is the combining of the knowledge and skills of all those involved in the breeding process. These include the owners, riders, trainers, coach drivers, breeders, veterinarians and many more.





**Traditional breeding encompasses centuries of experience – knowledge of the breed, daily practice and routine.**

The local environment has always played an important role. In all these countries, families and individuals are involved in the various aspects and phases of breeding and riding. This is particularly true for Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary and Romania.

#### **THE SLOVENIAN NOMINATION PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER COUNTRIES**

The international preparation of the nomination of the Lipizzaner Breeding Tradition for inclusion in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was led by Slovenia's Ministry of Culture together with representatives of the Lipica Stud Farm and the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

**The multinational project is a mosaic of shared European heritage and represents a common cultural origin.**

It brings together the eight countries party to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Under Slovenian leadership, the countries have come together to showcase the cultural diversity and practices of social relevance associated with the breeding of the well-known horse breed. All eight countries are also committed to taking joint action to safeguard this intangible heritage, as they have pledged to do with their nomination.

Cultural heritage and tradition bind us together in a European context.



The stallions are 155–158 cm tall, with a medium-sized, slender, moderately convex-shaped head. The eyes are large, dark and lively, the ears medium-sized and the nostrils large. The neck is of medium length, high set, arched and muscular. The body is long and broad, and the legs are sturdy and slender. Photo: Gabriele Boiselle/Edition Boiselle

**The role of Lipizzaners is also associated with sustainable tourism, equine therapy, compassion for animals and empathy for fellow humans. Horse and man have long been connected.**

This relationship is based on trust.

“Remember, my child, how mysteriously nature and history are bound together, and how different are the driving forces of the spirit of each of the world’s peoples. You know well that ours is the land of contests and races. You, thus, understand why the white horses from Noah’s ark found a refuge on our pure ground, why they became our holy animal, why they entered into the legend of history, and why they bring the life pulse to our future.” To a poet, Lipizzaners have a special significance.

The Lipica Stud Farm was founded by the Austrian Archduke Charles, then Regent of Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Istria and Trieste. He wanted to breed elegant, carriage and riding horses at the farm. In 1578, he chose the abandoned summer manor house of the Bishop of Trieste in Lipica for the location.  
Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info







Enjoy a show full of music, harmony, and elegance in motion, amid the enchanting Karst landscape. Lipica's riding masters will perform all the elements the Lipica riding school is noted for. The capriole, levade, grand quadrille, and other higher-level movements that only the best Lipizzan horses can handle, are the result of many years of work and trust between the rider and the horse.

Photo: Gabriele Boiselle/Edition Boiselle

**Moreover, it is a fact that enrolment has been a resounding success for all the participating countries.**

The Lipizzaners are noble and proud. The listing is a huge endorsement for each of the countries, but especially for those who have been personally involved with these horses for centuries and who have passed on their breeding expertise from generation to generation.

SLOVENIANS ONCE AGAIN DECORATE ST. PETER'S BASILICA

# The beauty of roses, Matthiola flowers, carnations and hydrangeas captivates the world

TEXT BY TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIĆ



The final view at the altar in st. Peter's Basilica.  
Photo: ANSA/STA



Sabina Šegula and Peter Ribič again had the honour of decorating the Vatican, this year the altar in St. Peter's Basilica. This is a special achievement, as more than 500 million people around the world watch the Easter festivities. It was an opportunity to showcase Slovenian horticulture and floristics to the world.

In addition to Vatican's regular gardeners and the Dutch, who are traditionally entrusted with decorating St. Peter's Square, the two Slovenians are the only ones to be granted the privilege of decorating the sacred places of the most famous city in the world.

### **This also allows them to open the doors to their Slovenian businesses partners.**

For last year's Easter and Christmas decorations, they used Slovenian orchids and Slovenian poinsettias.

### **INSPIRED BY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THORNY FLOWER**

The common thread in this year's decorations was the rose. They used about 15,000 different varieties of floribundas, from white to various shades of rose and purple.

### **The pastel range of roses was complemented by Matthiola flowers in white, light yellow and purple pastel colours.**

Their flower arrangement also incorporated white and yellow-green carnations. The 10-meter decoration on the main altar additionally featured 30 blue hydrangeas. The garden-shaped arrangement was designed in a vegetative decorative style. The decoration on the main altar was 80 meters long. The area where the Pope sits during the traditional Easter Mass was also decorated.

### **VIBRANT NATURE**

Spring brings an abundance of colours, with wondrous shapes and compositions coming alive again. And when we lay our eyes on all this, we cannot help but admire and appreciate nature.

### **Our two Slovenian gardeners aimed to recreate the appearance of this vibrant nature.**

Everything awakens in spring, and flowers grace our walks, table vases or windowsills. Flowers, especially in spring, are beautiful and inspiring.

**ROSE:** a traditional symbol of love, heavenly beauty and perfection.  
**MATTHIOLA FLOWER:** happiness and a long, content life.  
**CARNATION:** A divine flower expressing the favour of the gods.  
**HYDRANGEA:** gratitude, mercy and beauty.



Sabina Šegula and Peter Ribič with the Vatican's regular gardeners.  
Photo: Sabina Šegula archives

PROSCIUTTO AND TERAN

# The Karst's greatest gastronomic specialities

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

Karst prosciutto (Kraški pršut) is a  
Slovenian culinary masterpiece.





Karst – a region on the dreamy side of Slovenia – with its intense aroma of bora-dried prosciutto and intoxicating Teran wine, which draws its flavours from its red Karst terroir. Karst prosciutto (Kraški pršut) is a Slovenian culinary masterpiece. The typical rocky landscape of the classical Karst, with its diversified windy climate, provides natural conditions that the locals have skilfully learned to exploit for drying and curing meat. Such cured meats have built up their reputation due to their exceptional taste, top quality and excellent sensory qualities.

Kraški pršut is labelled with the European quality symbol, the Protected Geographical Indication, which guarantees the quality and authenticity of the product.

**The protected geographical indication means that Karst prosciutto has a special quality, reputation and other distinctive characteristics and that it is produced solely in the strict region of the Karst.**

The border of the geographical area for the production of Karst prosciutto follows the geographical demarcation of the Karst itself. It runs from Kostanjevica na Krasu to Opatje Selo, from there to the state border with Italy and along the border to the Lipica border crossing, up to and including the village of Lokev and along the road to Divača, and from there in a straight line to the village Brestovica near Povirje, to the villages Štorje, Kazlje, Dobravlje, Ponikve, Kobdilj and after that in a straight line across Mali Dol to Škrbina in the direction of Lipa and Temnice back to Kostanjevica na Krasu.



## PROSCIUITO PRODUCTION

The producers of Karst prosciutto, organised in the EIG Kraški pršut – Kras d.o.o., Pršutarna Lokev na Krasu and Raouber Kovačič Pršutarna from Dutovlje, buy fresh pig legs in Slovenia and in other EU Member States. The entire technological process, from salting to readying products for sale, is prescribed in detail. Fresh pork thighs (without the hocks) are modelled into their specific shape and chilled to between -1 °C and +4 °C. No more than 120 hours may pass between the pigs' slaughter and the start of production. Fresh thighs are hot-branded with the date of production and the batch code to ensure traceability. Top-quality Karst prosciutto is known for the dry-salting process with sea salt. Salting is performed at temperatures of up to + 6 °C. Salting and initial drying at lower temperatures (up to +7 °C) mimic winter conditions. The longest and most important curing period is drying with simultaneous ageing.

**For lighter thighs, the entire production process takes at least 12 months; for heavier thighs, the time is extended accordingly.**

During this time, the prosciutto's characteristic sensory qualities develop: colour, aroma, texture and eating quality. Drying and maturing take place at temperatures below 18 °C, which is why matured prosciuttos are rich in nutritional value and contain valuable proteins, vitamins and minerals. After the drying/maturing process, the sensory characteristics and physical and chemical parameters are tested. Finished products that meet the prescribed conditions are entitled to use the name Kraški pršut and are hot-branded with the Kraški pršut logo.

**In spite of modern technology, the traditional method of producing Karst prosciutto has been preserved in the Karst region, and the bora wind, which now and then blows very strongly, plays an important role in creating the unique taste.**



## TERAN – KING OF THE KARST

Teran is an indigenous Slovenian wine protected with recognised traditional denomination, produced from the grape variety called “refošk”. Its qualities can be admired in its intense ruby red colour, its unique fruity aroma, fullness of flavour, high extract and a higher share of lactic acid than in other wines. Teran has a moderate alcohol level and slightly higher levels of total acids and lactic acid, which gives the wine its velvety softness. It is also considered to have more medicinal properties because it on average contains more polyphenols than other red wines.

**The high content of these natural antioxidants is partly a varietal characteristic and partly the result of traditional production methods. It can justly be proclaimed the King of the Karst.**

Teran is traditionally associated with Karst prosciutto. It is usually served with strong and spicy cheeses, salami, pancetta, red meat and game.

Another unique experience and an old secret of the Vipava and Karst regions are the so-called “osmice”, whose popularity has been constantly increasing among the locals and the visitors since the times of Maria Theresa when they were first introduced. In the 18th century, winegrowers and farmers were granted an 8-day licence (“osmica” means “the eight”) to sell their homemade beverages and other local delicacies tax-free. Today, these osmica events are held twice a year on every farm. They can be recognised by an ivy branch hung on the farmhouse or on signs placed along the routes leading to the farmhouse hosting an osmica from nearby towns.



Teran's qualities can be admired in its intense ruby red colour, unique fruity aroma and fullness of flavour. Photo: Mankica Kranjec/www.slovenia.info

NORDIC WORLD SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Side events organised by the Government Communications Office during the World Championships in Planica

TEXT BY VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



Photo: Anže Malovrh/STA



During this historic sports event hosted by Slovenia, a number of side events took place in Planica alongside the competitions. The state was intensively involved in the promotion, which was an important addition to the event and gave it extra weight.

The Government Communications Office (UKOM) has also planned six panels for journalists in the Media Centre on a variety of topics.

### The first panel was entitled “Slovenia’s sport successes are no coincidence”.

Guests Petra Majdič, Slovenian cross-country skier and Olympic bronze medallist, Andrej Hauptman, former coach of the Slovenian national cycling team and sports director of the UAE Team Emirates, and Jernej Slivnik, Slovenian para-skier, participant in the Para-Olympic Games, talked about their successes. A day later, UKOM held a panel discussion entitled “High-Quality Life in the Alps for All”, with speakers Uroš Brežan, Minister of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, and Matej Ogrin, President of the NGO CIPRA Slovenia. They asked questions on how to keep young people in the region, on what opportunities there are for people in the Alps, on sustainable tourism that does not compromise values, local food and more.

“Sport is power, knowledge is in the book” was the title of the third topic, in which the guests Katja Stergar, Acting Director of the Slovenian Book Agency, Tadej Golob, writer, mountaineer, columnist, journalist, Klemen Bauer, biathlete, and Sara Isaković, swimmer, Olympic silver medallist, discussed Slovenia’s reading promotion campaign in relation to sport. In recent years, Slovenia has also put itself on the global map as an excellent organiser of major sports events. We can boast of an excellent infrastructure

that follows sustainable principles. In the panel discussion, Matjaž Han, Minister of Economy, Tourism and Sport, Metod Ropret, Vice President of the Slovenian Olympic Committee, and Franci Petek, President of the Slovenian Volleyball Federation, discussed the impact of such events on the economy and promotion, as well as sustainable infrastructure, using Planica as an example.



Slovenia can boast of an excellent infrastructure that follows sustainable principles. Photo: UKOM archives

Slovenia presents itself at home and abroad with the national brand I Feel Slovenia, which goes beyond mere tourist attributes and natural beauty.

**It tells the story of Slovenia and Slovenians, our roots and traditions, Slovenian breakthrough solutions, our care for the environment and coexistence with nature, and our desire to overcome the impossible.**

The I Feel Slovenia brand was discussed by Petra Bezjak Cirman, Acting Director of the Government Communications Office, custodian of the I Feel Slovenia brand, Rok Capl, Acting Director of SPIRIT Slovenia, the public agency for the promotion of entrepreneurship, internationalisation, foreign investment and technology, and Maša Puklavec, Head of Content Digital Marketing at the Slovenian Tourist Board.

**In Slovenia, sports are with us starting in early childhood.**



Slovenia presents itself at home and abroad with the national brand I feel Slovenia. Photo: UKOM archives



Cene Prevc - SLOfit ambassador. Photo: UKOM archives



"Sport is power, knowledge is in the book" was the title of the third topic. Photo: UKOM archives



Gregor Jurak, Full Professor at the Faculty of Sport. Photo: UKOM archives

Slovenian children are involved in a wide variety of sports activities from as early as kindergarten, and most children in educational institutions are involved in sports programmes (swimming, mountaineering, running, dancing, etc.). Gregor Jurak, Full Professor at the University of Ljubljana - Faculty of Sport, head of the SLOfit Research Group, Mirjam Bizjak, Headmistress of the France Prešeren Grammar School in Kranj, where students can also study in the school's sports department, and Cene Prevc, former ski jumper and silver medallist in the team event at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, and SLOfit ambassador, spoke about sports education for young people.

The main commitment of the Championships was a sustainable and green Planica. The sports events were completed by a very diversified accompanying programme, which included the bands Šank Rock, Xequtifz, Avseniki, Tabu, King Foo, Peter Lovšin in Španski Borci, and Siddharta for the grand finale.

THIS YEAR WILL ALSO BE MARKED BY SPORTING EVENTS

# Slovenia is a country of sport

TEXT BY POLONA PREŠEREN



Slovenians value quality of life and like to spend it outdoors. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik/www.slovenia.info



Slovenia as a country of sport is recognised worldwide not only for the outstanding achievements of its sportsmen and sportswomen, but also as an excellent organiser of major sporting events. This year is also marked by major events – starting with the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships, continuing with the women’s basketball team competing at home at the EuroBasket tournament, and the youngsters at the European Youth Olympic Festival.

We Slovenians are strongly attached to sport and we like to spend our free time taking part in various sporting activities, be it outdoors in nature or inside. Our story is also a sporting story – movement fills us with vigour and gives us the drive to pursue our recreational and professional goals. So it’s no surprise that we excel in sport.

**Movement is something we have within us, we associate it with quality of life, and it offers us a harmonious way of living.**

The rich geographical diversity and the many recreational sporting events that take place throughout the year provide a wide range of activities for all sports enthusiasts.

When we were designing the I Feel Slovenia national branding in 2007, we also carried out several in-depth analyses that led to the creation of our Slovenian brand identity. President of the Slovenian Volleyball Federation, discussed the impact of such events on the economy and promotion, as well as sustainable infrastructure, using Planica as an example.

**When we asked people in Slovenia in a survey how they would describe themselves, they chose “enthusiastic for the**

**things we love to do”, “hard-working” and “active” as the most important. Traits that are also important for sporting success.**

According to the respondents, Slovenians are also characterised by orderliness and individuality. We value quality of life, we love our leisure time, and we love nature. In sport, we push the boundaries, we are adventurers. We are true explorers and have brought many discoveries and inventions to the world’s treasure chest of knowledge. We are investing a lot of effort into sustainable development, and we are committed to organic development, the circular economy and going green. This green colour is so much a part of who we are, both literally and figuratively, that we have even called it “Slovenian green”. It illustrates our commitment to the elemental and to preserving nature for future generations. All this is the Slovenian DNA.

Let us not forget that historical circumstances have certainly added their own. Living in this draughty part of Europe, at the crossroads of many routes, lots of people have been drawn to our country. Throughout history, we Slovenians have had to fight for our language, our culture, our place under the sun and our own nation. We do not take success for granted; we have always had to fight for it. Our results reflect this.



Slovenian ice hockey team will compete this year at the top division world championship. Photo: Anže Malovrh/STA



Zala Friškovec and her fellow basketball players will represent Slovenia at EuroBasket. Photo: Aleš Fevžer

### WHAT'S IN STORE FOR US THIS YEAR?

Our Nordic skiers, having competed in their home countries for the first time this year, have already packed away their equipment. Alpine skiers too. However, Slovenian hockey players are surely already thinking about their competitions for when they head to Riga in May, as Finland and Latvia are hosting the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, where our hockey players qualified last year after a convincing victory in Division IA. Matjaž Kopitar's squad is ready for the challenge of remaining among the world's hockey superpowers. Of course, we all want Anže Kopitar, the captain of the LA Kings, to join the Slovenian hockey team, but his appearance depends on the outcome of the NHL playoffs.

Next up will be the women basketball players representing Slovenia at EuroBasket, which Slovenia is co-hosting with Israel. Slovenian women's basketball has progressed tremendously in recent years, and we have world-class individuals playing in Europe's biggest clubs.

### In the summer, Slovenia will also host EYOF - The European Youth Olympic Festival, which will take place in Maribor.

This will give young people the opportunity to test their skills and gain much-needed competitive experience at the highest level they can in their age category.

In the summer, the Slovenian men's national basketball team will compete at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in Japan. The star of our national team is also one of the hottest players in the NBA right now – Luka Dončić, a member of the Dallas Mavericks.

Go, Slovenia!





Slovenia offers many opportunities  
for leisure activities in nature.  
Photo: Ciril Jazbec/[www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info)



Learn something new about Slovenia!

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IFEELSLOVENIA

**"I feel Slovenia night" also in Novo mesto and Celje**



IFEELSLOVENIA

**Texas Feels Slovenia: Successful Presentation of Slovenian Economy and Tourism**



LANGUAGE

**Dialects enrich the Slovenian language**



HISTORY

**World's oldest wheel found in Slovenia**



TRADITION

**Kurent - Traditional Slovenian Carnival character**



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**What are Slovenians like?**



ART

**Stories from beehive panel**



HISTORY

**The Neanderthal flute from Divje babe**



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**Some interesting facts about Slovenia**

