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**SLOVENIA ACTIVE
IN FORMULATING
THE NEW GLOBAL POLICY
ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Veronika Stabej

High time for a new global agreement in the fight against climate change

From 7 to 18 December, Copenhagen and its Bella Center will host over ten thousand delegates of governmental and non-governmental organisations and journalists, who will be attending the 15th conference of signatories to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Time to adopt a new global agreement in the fight against climate change is indeed inexorably running out. This is therefore a precious opportunity to halt the current trend of climate change. And for the Kingdom of Denmark, this will be the biggest event to date in terms of organisation and logistics. The conference signifies a key step in the global negotiations to conclude an agreement on replacing the Kyoto Protocol, which will expire in 2012.

We also write broadly about the ageing of the population. Indeed forecasts indicate that by 2030 the number of people older than 65 in the EU will grow from 71 million in 2000 to 110 million. Ageing therefore occupies an important place in the national policies of all European countries. Each European country is trying to respond to the challenges of population ageing by ensuring adequate conditions and through specific policies. Imbalances will also need to be eliminated through reform of the pension system.

Slovenian football coach Matjaž Kek has composed a new Slovenian sports fairy-tale. In the additional play-offs for a place at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, over two legs Slovenia ousted the big team and favourites Russia, and for the second time in history, after almost exactly eight years, it has secured a berth in the biggest world tournament. "I don't just congratulate the lads, I bow deeply to them, their glory is earned. We made our own story, for the fans, and for Slovenia. We showed that we know how and are capable," said Kek right after the match.

November is the month of maturing wine and giving thanks for the vintage. After a year's hard work in the vineyards and cellars, countless wine growers can hardly wait for November, when the workers can rest and assess the quality of the wine. The real winemaking and folk holiday is on St. Martin's Day, which is celebrated on 11 November. Martinovo, as Slovenians call it, is a happy and relaxed holiday, and has become a kind of Slovenian day of thanks, when people in any way associated with the land give thanks for all the produce given by the land, especially of course a noble drop of wine. For this occasion countless winemaking cottages and of course homes and inns draw all those who helped in this work and also crowds of relatives and family friends. We have no doubt that they enter with a smile, and in doing so they see beauty, as our guest in the People section of this issue, photographer Ubald Trnkoczy, would say.

Sinfo – Slovenian information

Editorial: Government Communication Office, Director: Veronika Stabej, Gregorčičeva 25, 1000 Ljubljana, tel. +386 (0) 1 478 2630, fax + 386 (0) 1 251 2312, www.ukom.gov.si
Editor-in-Chief: Vesna Žarkovič, vesna.zarkovic@gov.si
Editorial Board: Albert Kos, Mateja Malnar Štembal, Valerija Mencej, Jože Osterman, Polona Prešeren, Andreja Šonc Simčič, Andrej Savelli, Branko Vidrih
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Andreja Šonc Simčič

Former US President Bill Clinton visits Slovenia

31 October – Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States of America, in Slovenia at the invitation of the American Chamber of Commerce Slovenia and Diners Club Slovenia, delivered an address on accepting common responsibility for humanity at Ljubljana's Cankarjev Dom. In his address President Clinton underlined the need to strengthen positive interdependence in the world, citing as an example the negotiations between prime ministers Borut Pahor and Jadranka Kosor on resolving the border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia. President Clinton believes that Slovenia has succeeded in building a country which is one of the richest in the world and, more particularly, in this region, which has seen so many political disputes. 'Slovenia is a country which is increasingly connected with the world. For me, this country is a model for the world which I tried to create as President and, in a different way, am still trying to build today,' he added. Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor and President of Slovenia Danilo Türk were among those who listened to President Clinton's address.

Former US President Bill Clinton during his address in Ljubljana.



The prime ministers of Slovenia and Croatia sign an arbitration agreement

4 November – Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor and Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor have signed an Arbitration Agreement in Stockholm in the presence of Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, currently President of the European Council.

After more than eighteen years of negotiations, the signing of the agreement represents an extremely important step on the road towards a final resolution of the border issue. This joint

achievement is the fruit of renewed trust and negotiations in good faith, with the aim of achieving a fair solution which will take into account the vital interests of both parties. Slovenia and Croatia have decided to resolve the border dispute with the help of a third party and in this way ease mutual relations. This will enable a further deepening of good-neighbourly relations and all-round cooperation.

At the signing Mr Pahor commented that 'this is a historic event not only for Slovenia, Croatia and the European Union but for the entire international community, since something has happened that solves problems rather than creating them.' Ms Kosor commented that the signing of the agreement represents a 'new chapter' in relations between the two countries and new hope for our neighbours to the south. Before it can be finally implemented, the agreement must first be ratified by the parliaments of the two countries, a process which will involve wider discussion.

Prime Ministers Borut Pahor and Jadranka Kosor sign the arbitration agreement in the presence of Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt



President Danilo Türk visits Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan with a business delegation

9–11 November – President Danilo Türk, along with a large business delegation, has visited Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan where he met the highest representatives of the two countries. The main themes of the talks in Baku and Astana were the strengthening of economic cooperation and energy security. President Türk was received in Azerbaijan by President Ilham Aliyev. The two presidents agreed that political relations between the two countries are very good and that considerable potential exists, particularly in the field of economic cooperation. Among the most promising sectors the presidents identified tourism, infrastructure, energy, information technology, telecommunications and pharmaceuticals. They also attended an Azerbaijan-Slovenian business forum where they addressed members of the business community from both countries. In Kazakhstan the Slovenian President was received by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. He thanked President Türk for his support for Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010 and presented his vision and agenda for the chairmanship. During the

talks, representatives of Slovenia and Kazakhstan signed agreements on economic cooperation, international road transport of passengers and goods, and the waiving of visas for holders of diplomatic passports. They also signed a memorandum of understanding between the economy ministries of Kazakhstan and Slovenia. President Nazarbayev also expressed Kazakhstan's interest in the Port of Koper and goods transport via Slovenia. The delegation of the Republic of Slovenia included the foreign minister Samuel Žbogar. During the visit he met his Kazhak counterpart Kanat Saudabayev, with whom he mainly discussed OSCE issues.

President Danilo Türk visits Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.



Second meeting of the Slovenian-Italian Ministerial Coordination Committee

9 November – The second meeting of the Slovenian-Italian Ministerial Coordination Committee has taken place in Brdo pri Kranju. Particular attention was devoted to the role and position of the two national minorities. These represent a particularly valuable tie between the two countries, and protecting their existence and activity is a great responsibility for the two states. In this light, the Slovenian side expressed its concern over the envisaged level of funding of activities of the Slovenian minority in Italy for the coming year. In the context of the bilateral meetings the Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar met his Italian counterpart Franco Frattini to exchange positions and views on numerous current European and international topics – the Lisbon Treaty, the European External Action Service, the Western Balkans (agreement on a new joint letter regarding visa liberalisation), the current situation in relations between Slovenia and Croatia, migrations, the UN Security Council and Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Borut Pahor on an official visit to Libya

10–11 November – During his first official visit to Libya, accompanied by a delegation from the Slovenian business sector, Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor met Libyan Prime Min-

ister Baghdadi Mahmudi. The two prime ministers expressed their satisfaction at the success of talks on deepening cooperation between Slovenia and Libya in the fields of construction, energy (oil and natural gas), telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, drinking water supply, tourism and other areas. The two prime ministers agreed that an increased presence of Slovenian businesses in Libya is possible, above all in the construction sector, since Libya is planning numerous infrastructure projects in the field of road connections. Mr Pahor pointed out that trade between the two countries topped 150 million euros last year and emphasised that now is the time to take advantage of the fact that the Libyan authorities are well-disposed towards Slovenian companies, since this could lead to a tenfold increase in trade over the next ten years. A Slovenian-Libyan business conference also took place during the visit, and the two countries' economy ministers signed a memorandum of understanding in the sphere of economic cooperation. At the proposal of members of the Libyan business community at the business conference, an agreement was also signed on the establishment of a Libyan-Slovenian business council bringing together the business enterprise sectors of the two countries. Mr Pahor also met the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi.

Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor is received by Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi.



Slovenia and Russia sign an agreement on the South Stream gas pipeline

14 November – Slovenian Economy Minister Matej Lahovnik and Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko have signed a cooperation agreement on the construction and use of the South Stream gas pipeline in Slovenia. The agreement was signed in Moscow in the presence of the prime ministers of the two countries, Borut Pahor and Vladimir Putin. The two prime ministers also took advantage of the meeting to hold bilateral talks. The agreement between Slovenia and Russia completes the route of the pipeline, which will also pass through Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary. The South Stream is due to begin operating in 2015, when it will also supply gas to customers in Slovenia. The agreement still has to be ratified by the National Assembly.

Zoran Kus, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning

SLOVENIA ACTIVE IN FORMULATING THE NEW GLOBAL POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The past two years have seen accelerated negotiations which should lead in December this year in Copenhagen to the adoption of a new, comprehensive, global agreement on combating climate change after 2012, when the first target period of the Kyoto Protocol will come to a close. Together with the EU, Slovenia is committed to the adoption of a single, legally binding global agreement. Negotiations are being pursued under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The inducement for this was adoption of what are called the Bali Road Map and the Bali Action Plan at the conference of signatories of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol in December 2007 in Bali.

photo: Alenka Mihorčič

A global agreement will enable the medium and long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions necessary to limit average global temperatures to below 2° C relative to the pre-industrial period. Slovenia is participating actively in the negotiation process. At the beginning of November the fifth international negotiations of this year on climate change were held in Barcelona. The EU's negotiating position, its stance regarding individual issues and the EU strategy are formulated jointly by all the Member States within the EU Working Party on International Environmental Issues, the Environment Working Group, the Working Group of the Committees on Economic and Financial Issues, Coreper I and II, the EU Environment Council and the EU Economic and Financial Council. The European Council provides political guidelines.

There is a twin-track process involved: one track is for Kyoto, and the other for the Convention. The aim of the Kyoto track is to determine new obligations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries after 2012. Negotiations on the Convention track are aimed at the five building blocks defined in the Bali Action Plan. The new global agreement should set out in what way developing countries and those developed countries that are not signatories to the Kyoto Protocol (the USA) should be involved in action to combat climate change.

Slovenia's position regarding each of the five building blocks of the Bali Action Plan, which are elements of the new agreement, are defined under the following chapters:

Shared vision

Slovenia's position together with the EU is that the shared vision must define the long-term global target for emission reduction that will facilitate limiting the rise in average global temperatures to less than 2 °C relative to the pre-industrial level.

photo: Zdenko Purant



Mitigation of climate change

Measures to reduce emissions as part of a global climate agreement must be based on historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions and the financial capacity of individual countries to act. Preventing the worst consequences of climate change will require the cooperation of all countries, while among them the greatest responsibility is borne by the developed countries. The EU has set as its goal a 20% reduction of emissions (or 30% in the case of the comparatively ambitious goals of other countries) by 2020 relative to 1990. Global emissions must peak no later than by 2015, and then they must start to drop steeply. Slovenia believes that 1990 should be kept as the baseline year, and the length of the target period should remain 5 years, although the other proposal of 8 years is also acceptable.

Enhanced action on adaptation

Slovenia's position is that as part of the Copenhagen agreement, an agreement is needed on the level and dynamic of financial aid and on the method of providing it. Slovenia believes that adaptation measures are a public responsibility, since experience shows that the private sector cannot implement them so effectively. Equally, we cannot expect developing countries to finance measures for adapting to the negative effects of climate change that are to a great extent a consequence of emissions from the industrialised countries.

Development and transfer of technology

Slovenia supports the efforts to achieve progress in the transfer of new, cleaner technologies to third countries. We are

photo: Matej Lipar



photo: Albert Kolar



photo: Albert Sokol



photo: Albert Kolar



photo: Albert Kolar



photo: Albert Kolar

aware that as one of the smaller countries, Slovenia can achieve more within the framework of the EU, and can be more effective in the context of joint European efforts than on its own.

Finance and investment

The EU as a whole should contribute its fair share to help developing countries, specifically on the basis primarily of two criteria: capacity to pay, and emissions. Slovenia supports the provision of a certain amount of financing prior to the start of the second target period, i.e. from 2010-2012, which could have an important influence on negotiations in Copenhagen.

The agreement will need to define the manner and dynamic for collecting these funds and the basis for managing them, while within the EU we can agree on the internal rules for sharing the burden adapted to the situation in the EU, although these rules should not deviate significantly from the international ones, so as not to undermine the credibility of the EU.

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)

Slovenia supports the position that the possibility of taking account of sinks should also apply in the coming target periods, but in such a way that countries claiming sinks for the fulfilment of their obligations to reduce emissions will

allocate the equivalent value of sinks for domestic adaptation to climate change. The Slovenian forestry profession has determined that the most favourable approach for Slovenia was the gross-net approach; in applying derivatives with the scale calculated on the basis of historical data, the more favourable versions for Slovenia are those where data from earlier periods are used.

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD)

Slovenia supports the halting of gross deforestation in developing countries. It supports aid for developing countries in such activities, and here aid recipients should establish adequate sustainable forest management. We oppose the establishing of new institutions dealing with the financing of REDD.

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

The flexible Kyoto mechanisms must be strictly separated from financial support for climate measures in developing countries. We need to define specific limiting criteria to ensure that there will be no use of these mechanisms for activities with low costs or for “win-win” projects which developing countries can implement with their own funds for achieving a variance from the envisaged emissions.

Surplus allocation units (AAUs)

The transfer of these units to subsequent target periods should be restricted, but of course in this we need to take into account the legitimate right of countries with units to dispose of them. We agree that talks can start on possible restrictions on transferring surplus AAUs to the next target period, for instance through the use of the discounting factor. If the affected countries do not agree to this, a good solution in Slovenia’s opinion would be to adopt as a starting point for the next target period their current emissions.

Emissions from international air and maritime transport

Slovenia supports the goals of reducing emissions in the air transport sector by around 10%, and in the maritime sector by around 10-20% by 2020 relative to 2005.

The campaign Act Now! Appeals for immediate climate measures

A month ago in Ljubljana the initiators of the campaign Act Now!, with the help of volunteers, sympathisers and signatories of the petition of the same name and random passers-by created the living slogan Act Now! [In Slovenian: Ukrepaj zdaj!] In this way they joined **more than 4,800 actions around the world** whereby the civil society is drawing attention to the need for immediate action to combat climate change.

As reported from Umanotera, the Slovenian foundation for sustainable development, the purpose of the campaign is to present the living slogan to the Slovenian government and its Prime Minister, Borut Pahor and show them that the **inhabitants of Slovenia are concerned about climate change and that they want and expect action**. In this they are calling on the government and Prime Minister to commit to an ambitious and fair new climate agreement, and to have Prime Minister Borut Pahor personally attend the conference on the new climate agreement in Copenhagen, and that as proof of Slovenia’s credibility in international climate negotiations **our country immediately begins implementing measures for the transition to a low-carbon society**. To date these demands have been supported by almost 5,000 individuals signing a petition.



Saša Mlakar, Andraž Bobovnik, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, photo: Andrej Mück

AGEING AND DISABILITY – FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

The ageing population of Europe occupies an important place in the national policies of all European countries. Every country in Europe is endeavouring to respond to the challenges of an ageing population, by ensuring adequate conditions and adopting specific policies that include all relevant actors.

Forecasts show that in 2030 the number of people aged 65+ in the EU will have grown from 71 million in 2000 to 110 million. Average life expectancy is increasing: by 2050 the number of people aged 80+ will be 180% greater than today, while by 2030 there will be 34.7 million people in the EU aged 80+ compared to 18.8 million today. This means that the number of people

aged 65+ as a percentage of the number of people aged 15–64 will grow from 23% in 2000 to 47% in 2050.

In Slovenia, according to figures from the national statistics office, one in five people today is aged 65+, but in ten years' time this figure will be one in four. In the not too distant future, in around 2030, one in three of us will be elderly, with a particular increase in the number of elderly people aged 80+. That is when the currently active 'baby boom' generation born in the 1950s and 1960s will become elderly, while according to demographic forecasts the number of children will fall.

There are approximately 650 million people with disabilities in the world,

which is 10% of the global population. In Europe, people with disabilities account for 8–9% of the total population. Slovenia

currently has around 170,000 people with disabilities (disabled workers, children and adolescents with special needs, military and war invalids, people with moderate, serious or very serious physical or mental handicaps). Slovenia also has 230,000 patients suffering from chronic illnesses.

The countries of Europe are at different stages of economic and social development, which affects their progress in guaranteeing all the rights and support services for elderly people with disabilities and elderly people with special needs. The Council of Europe's Disability Action Plan 2006–2015 recognises this fact and states that Member States must endeavour to implement the plan 'within the framework of national financial resources,' (point 1.5, p. 8). On the route to implementation of modern social policies that guarantee all rights and necessary services for elderly people with disabilities and elderly people with special

needs, all countries encounter economic limitations. Slovenia is working for, among other things, the exercising and awareness of the rights adopted in 2008 with the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and maintains that the state has a duty to protect and promote the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, among whom we include the elderly and/or disabled.

Among the priority themes of Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of Europe is the design of a more people-friendly and inclusive Europe. There is no doubt that the elderly and the disabled, and in particular the disabled elderly, are groups towards which special attention needs to be devoted within this theme. Equal opportunities for all citizens, non-discrimination, respect and acceptance of disability as part of human difference are the foundations on which we can build a people-friendly and inclusive society. This is also why Slovenia decided to organise a conference on ageing and/or disability.

The European Conference on Ageing and Disability – Promoting the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly (Portorož, Slovenia, 26–27 October 2009) was organised by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in conjunction with the Council of Europe Directorate General for Social Cohesion under the aegis of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The overall aims of the conference were to inform the professional public and general public in Slovenia about:

1. the promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities and the elderly;
2. fostering the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015 (Recommendation Rec(2006)5) and the signing, ratification and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
3. promotion of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)6 on 'Ageing and disability in the 21st century: sustainable frameworks to enable greater quality of life in an inclusive society';
4. the Council of Europe report 'Enhancing rights of ageing people with disabilities and older people with disabilities: a European perspective';
5. the exchange of good practices in the provision of quality services for ageing and older people with special needs.

The conference was attended by over one hundred disability experts and decision-makers from Council of Europe member states, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Commission, international and national organisations of and for persons with disabilities, organisations of and for the elderly, academia and other interested bodies.

Effective and adequate measures need to be adopted

in order to enable elderly and/or disabled people to achieve and maintain the greatest possible independence and full physical, mental, social and professional capacity and full inclusion and cooperation in all areas of life. Naturally it is also necessary to strengthen reciprocal help and

intergenerational cooperation. Integrated services of habilitation and rehabilitation need to be organised, strengthened and widened, particularly in the fields of health, employment, education and social services.

The characteristics of both groups, the elderly and/or disabled, need to be defined and their needs identified. Ways must be found to identify the right strategy for the present and the future and to raise awareness. Innovative ways must be found to remove obstacles and in this way enable the maximum and most independent inclusion in the life of society. All areas of users' needs should be covered and the possibility of 'ageing well' guaranteed, including a high quality of life, a high level of independence, autonomy and dignity in the community. A basic precondition for this is awareness of needs and possibilities. Raising awareness is above all the responsibility of leading providers at the national, regional and local levels. Added value lies in the fact that these issues are guaranteed an important place in EU policy. Common visions, strategies and partnerships are necessary and must include all interested parties – the elderly and the disabled and their representatives, ministries and public bodies at the national and regional levels, institutes, the police and other institutions.

Access to public- and private-sector services and to the physical environment is one of the rights of all people with reduced mobility. In order to lead an independent life, elderly and/or disabled people need to be guaranteed not only access to the physical environment but also transport, access



to information and communication (the issue of lack of knowledge of ICT among the elderly), including information and communication technologies and systems, and access to other facilities, amenities and services designed for the public or provided for the public in urban or rural areas.

Owing to elderly and/or disabled people's fear of dehumanisation in institutional care and in order to provide greater freedom of choice, the number of smaller institutions (sheltered houses/flats, smaller units, self-help centres etc.) in the urban environment should be increased, so as to avoid segregation. These smaller units should be standardised with regard to the needs of individuals. The renovation of institutions will not in itself be enough. There is also a need to socialise and humanise the living and working conditions of users at the concrete level. Here, the following will need to be taken into account: individualised funding, decentralisation of planning for local needs, ensuring greater influence of users, replacing institution-type services with programme-type services.

There is a need to emphasise the greater role of family as a better quality and more natural primary environment for the needs of the elderly and/or disabled. Support for private carers and the use of new technologies can help people remain at home for as long as possible. Likewise coordination between health and social services is of key importance, since many elderly people with disabilities require daily regular care at home. All of this enables greater independence and inclusion of the individual in the community.

Elderly and/or disabled people need to be guaranteed security, protection and care whenever they need it in the future, regardless of where they live. This enhances the sense of security and an improved quality of life. Elderly and/or disabled people have the same right to human dignity as other members of human society. Various organised services and forms of help at home should allow as many



elderly people as possible to remain in their home environment. The number of services offering assistance to elderly and/or disabled persons needs to be increased and variety encouraged. It should be possible for elderly and/or disabled people to live independently in their home environment for as long as they wish to and are able to, with the help of non-institutional health and social care. It would also be useful to organise a network and a range of programmes and services to support self-help and family caring.

A longer life should not mean a less comfortable life. The elderly and/or disabled must have the opportunity to maintain a variety of social and individual activities. They must be able to live their lives as independently as possible, taking into account their state of health and their ability to live autonomously. Their privacy must be respected and they must be able to participate in decisions.

A network of assistance needs to be built and professionals systematically trained to provide help to victims of violence. Legislation in this field needs to be coordinated. The problem of violence needs to be mitigated through constant vigilance and by raising public awareness. This issue also needs to be considered by the state, the relevant professional organisations and NGOs.

It is vital to ensure that elderly and/or disabled people are able to lead an economically independent and autonomous life in a

manner compatible with human dignity. This can be achieved through lifelong learning, adaptations of the workplace and working conditions adjusted to the needs of elderly and/or disabled workers. Such measures as will prevent the exclusion of elderly and/or disabled workers from the labour market must be adopted.

An important part of socioeconomic development is the inclusion of people of all ages and states of health in a society from which discrimination on the basis of age and/or disability and involuntary isolation have been eliminated. The right to protection from poverty and social exclusion is particularly important for this group. It is therefore necessary to promote solidarity and reciprocal intergenerational help and cooperation. The preparation of the whole population for later life must be a constituent part of social policy and must contain interest-related, psychological, cultural, religious, spiritual, economic, employment, health and other aspects.

Slovenia is following the above conclusions and recommendations through legislation that is in the process of being enacted, in particular the Long-Term Care Insurance Act and the Personal Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, and anticipated changes in the 'mini-job' field. On the basis of the findings of this conference the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs will draw up a supplement to the Disability Action Programme 2007–2013.

MODERNISATION OF THE PENSIONS SYSTEM IS URGENTLY REQUIRED

The basic aims of the modernisation of the pension system are decent and adequate pensions, the financial sustainability of the pensions system for future generations, an increase in the share of active insured persons, establishment of the principle of dependence of payments on contributions, the preservation of solidarity and transparency of the system. Modernisation of the existing pensions system in Slovenia is urgently required chiefly because of the need to ensure the financial sustainability of the system after 2020. Despite the positive effects of the 1999 pension reforms, adjustments must be made now; if they are not, the pension fund will find itself in deep difficulties after 2020. According to long-term projections, pension fund expenditure will reach 11.2% of GDP by 2020 and 18.4% of GDP by 2050.

The first phase of modernisation, which is slated to begin on 1 January 2011, will feature a process of adjustment of the existing pensions system aimed at securing the financial sustainability of the pension fund and aligning the system with current

demographic trends. In the period of establishment of the new system from 2015, which will apply to all generations born after 1960, a new system of fictitious accounts will be established that will lead to greater transparency and fairness in the pensions system. All changes will be gradual, with appropriate transitional periods; they will not have a significant effect on those that have already retired or are shortly to do so.

The more visible proposed measures for compulsory pension and disability insurance are:

a legally prescribed raising of the full and minimum age to 65 and 60; a more restrictive policy of bonuses and maluses; the abolition or reduction of time-dependent bonuses; expansion of the possibility of voluntary accession to compulsory insurance; the establishment of greater flexibility and openness of the institute of partial pensions; and extension of the calculation period for pension assessment and the separation of net social transfers.

In compulsory supplementary pension insurance, the proposal foresees the establishment of a special institute of professional

insurance aimed at those working in jobs that are harmful or hazardous to their health or in jobs that they are unable to do after a certain age. Voluntary supplementary pension insurance is an attempt, through a reorganisation of the system of supplementary pension insurance, to bring about a more efficient and transparent insurance system by making conditions uniform for providers of supplementary pension insurance, separating individual and collective supplementary pension insurance, making a distinction between the 'savings' and 'insurance' parts of the system, setting supplementary pension insurance premiums, determining tax and similar incentives to increase inclusion in the system more clearly and establishing supervision of providers by members.

The introduction of the new pension system will establish a system of fictitious pension accounts that will include all citizens born after 1960. The new system will retain the multi-pillar structure in place up to now, where a zero pillar will be added to the first pillar. The system of fictitious accounts will be introduced into the compulsory pension insurance system, where all contributions paid in for an individual insured person shall be recorded on their personal account. The level of a pension upon retirement is dependent on the level of contribution paid in or recorded. The new system will retain the basic principle of solidarity, which is to be embodied in the form of a zero pillar (universal pensions), to which everyone will be entitled upon satisfaction of the retirement conditions, while the direct link between payments in and payments out also will place emphasis on the principle of fairness.

The debate on modernisation of the pensions system does not foresee reform of Slovenia's current three-pillar pensions system arrangement or of its basic principles, with retention of the importance of the first pillar or 'pay-as-you-go' system. This also preserves a certain level of social security, which is a basis of the 'social state'. The pensions system must be returned to its roots, to the purpose for which it was created in the first place – insurance for old age and prevention of the risk of poverty in old age.



Jože Osterman, photo: Barbara Jakše Jeršič

SLAVKO PREGL:

Books – a kind of holy relic from our history

Even today – despite the fact that the direct political engagement of literature is for the most part history – the attention paid by cultural policies towards Slovenian books and literature is considerable, and among the various art forms perhaps still the highest, at least in the declarative sense. After Slovenia gained independence, when at least in the early period public attention on literature was most distinct, direct concern for this field was exercised quite effectively by the Ministry of Culture, and for the increasingly important scientific literature by the Ministry of Science. The idea that literature is a medium which it makes sense to handle in a coordinated and uniform way, led last year to the establishing of a public agency for literature, which combined concern for artistic and scientific literature (and of course digital media for literary content), and this should regulate comprehensively the path from author to publication and distribution of the book. Such an arrangement is quite unique in the world. At a time when Ljubljana is set to become the World Book Capital next year, we asked Slavko Pregl, director of the agency, about how Slovenian literature is faring.

What is the state of Slovenian literature and how do you feel as the first director of the Agency for Literature?

The question about the state of Slovenian literature demands a very complex answer, which I cannot give on my own. The public Agency for Literature should bring together the efforts of several subjects which previously, each for itself, implemented measures to benefit those books that are in the public interest, but not all of which are yet in the agency's circle and probably never will be. The functioning of libraries, which are extremely important for literature and which in Slovenia are truly well organised and are almost world record holders in book lending per capita, does not fall within the competence of the agency, while equally, there are certain fields outside it, such as education, where literature is of course an exceptionally important element. This is not a problem, if we are all able to cooperate and to arrive at harmonised and effective solutions to benefit literature, but of course it is not always so.

Where does it get stuck?

Even within the agency we can feel, because we are a new entity in this field, certain difficulties in the non-harmonised legal and formal foundations for our work, which differ considerably for instance between the fields of science and culture, and for the moment we need to bridge these differences through compromises. Moreover the establishing of an agency as a new provider of measures to benefit literature also generates great and often unrealistic expectations, about how things can be settled overnight and no one will have any problems any more. Unfortunately, practice is slightly different: at the agency today we have around 7.5 million euros in funding at our disposal, which is actually a little less than the sum of funding allocated to the field of books and magazines by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and this means that at this moment our room to manoeuvre in order to improve issues that require primarily greater funding (and of course these are the most numerous) is small. And of course the agency started operating at

the outbreak of the economic crisis, and has less staff than otherwise planned. In view of this it is involved in checking the substantive and formal basis for its work. We wish to simplify this, and to introduce as much transparency as possible, to link up with a wide circle of interest groups and in this way make the support system for literature as effective and friendly as possible to authors and others in this field. I myself have been at the agency since 1 February this year; the agency itself started operating on 15 December last year.

My feelings of course reflect that. Almost all my life I have worked in publishing, I have been involved in work with young readers, and apart from that I am also a writer, so I suspect that I know this field. The difference between publishing operations and the work of director of this agency is of course enormous: the former is full of daily economising and cost permutations, organisational details, rapid business challenges and decisions, while the latter is more general, tied to cooperating with many subjects and in terms of results quite long-term; yet both fields are interesting and motivating. Since I have been at the agency, when I wake up in the morning, I ask myself: is our work headed primarily in the direction I planned and will it benefit literature in the long term, or are the day-to-day details swamping us and clouding our view – and for the moment I am satisfied, despite everything. I did not imagine that we would be delving so soon into private interests and odd rights, which can be very nicely packaged in the glitter of principle; but procedures that are the same for all, and consistency in decisions, all this helps a lot to provide balance in work. I have excellent co-workers. I feel good and I gladly get stuck into what I do.

What does the agency want to change in the existing system, or where are shifts needed most urgently in the short term?

This is most certainly the position of the author. The creative process starts or fails with the author. As an illustration, I will give you just the fact of how authors have fared in the past 20 years in terms of their fees. Thirty years ago, the author's fee as a folio rate was equal to the average Slovenian wage. At this moment,

according to our data the fee has fallen to a quarter of the earlier value: the folio rate fee today averages just a quarter of the average Slovenian wage, and authors who want to earn in a year the average annual Slovenian wage would have to write (and sell!) as many as 75 such text folios, in other words more than 6 a month (these folios are around 16 pages with 30 lines per page). I frequently repeat the simple, but little known truth: more than 5,000 people in Slovenia live directly from books (in libraries, publishing houses, printing presses, bookshops and elsewhere), yet not even 10 authors in Slovenia can live from writing. My personal experience is the same: I received the biggest fee of my life from writing for my first book as a young and unrecognised writer! This means that there is something really badly wrong, and that at first glance it is in fact the author that faces the greatest discrimination in the entire chain of literature.

In what way do you as an agency encourage authors?

In particular by increasing the number of annual working grants for writers. This year we allocated 13. Not much, but all the same ... We prescribed minimum author's fees for subsidised books. We wanted the amount for literary remuneration to increase. Book lending from school libraries, which for the moment is not being accounted, would justify increasing the amount threefold. Currently this involves around 850,000 euros for 1,000 originators of literary material, which in public libraries is lent out for free. This money is allocated such that half goes to pay the authors directly, and half for grants which are awarded for this work by professional associations. The amount for authors, which of course amounts to significant help for writers, is comparatively small. Just the difference between the planned and final price of the road tunnel in Šentvid is the same as the amount that would allow 200 Slovenian writers to receive a monthly stipend of 2,000 euros for 20 years. You should know that the most successful Slovenian author has more than 65,000 of her books loaned each year, yet she receives around 6,500 euros a year in compensation. This is certainly too little!

What is the general state of

publishing? How much does support for books in the public interest influence the general status of publishing and the book market?

As for publishing houses, their development over the past 20 years has been a mirror image of the changed status of literature generally. With the entry into a free market system, 20 years ago literature became merely a market commodity, for which reason book production increased primarily with publications of the kind that sell well. These are the lighter weight genres. It is understandable therefore that in the early period there was a dramatic increase in the number of publishing houses, the majority of which, since they had no adequate programming, execution and distribution lines, did not survive the harsh competition and for that reason only the most successful held out, with a lot of

the book trade is harder to lift out of the abyss than other retail trades. Lately there has been increasing talk of how the sales particularly of “books in the public interest” have declined markedly, partly owing to a lack of money in libraries. The crisis at the selling end then spreads to publishing companies, since less books sold stops the publishing of new ones, and finally there is again the author, who actually in the present circumstances has not much more to lose. But this is no consolation, this is a serious problem both for literature and the language in general.

One possibility that would really do a lot for literature here is probably the introduction of zero VAT on books with repayment in the previous phases of paid tax. Definitely. This would significantly

discrimination for books in the public interest (including new criteria in public libraries) a new foundation for the life of good literature would be established. And there are a lot of other ideas. Publishers are really warming to the proposal for instance that libraries buy light translated literature with a certain time lag and in smaller quantities, so the publishers’ current bestsellers are not also the main subject of purchasing and lending in public libraries.

Libraries are a very important factor in the functioning of Slovenian literature, they are the cornerstone of the reading culture, and they contribute a great deal to the popularisation of Slovenian authors and reading in general. At times of economic crisis, they could seriously support high-quality publishing and could leave lighter reading to a greater extent in the care of

Like the majority of Central European nations, the Slovenians compensated for the sense of deprivation at not having their own state and not being responsible for making their own nation-building decisions by emphasising their cultural identity, where literature in particular often served as a means of spreading national and political agendas. In that kind of social set-up, writers often found themselves in the position of the most responsible political leaders, while on the other hand literature was the consecrated bearer of the spirit guiding the life of the national community. It is understandable that this kind of historical role of literature today still arouses reverential emotional responses and often still represents for people the indicator of a society’s cultural and spiritual development. Even though currently Slovenian reading habits have deteriorated considerably, and have slid down to around the European average.

them collapsing and many reappearing. There is nothing wrong with this. Yet the proportion of books in the public interest, concern for which is provided chiefly by the state through subsidies and certain other measures, has in this time shrunk considerably as a proportion of published books.

For the majority of publishing companies, 2008 was relatively successful, book production did not fall, and profits rose by around 7- 8%, which is quite successful for a year marked in the final quarter by recession. I think that 2009 will be significantly worse: first to be hit have been the booksellers, since they have sold less than previously, although I also hear the theory that in a time of crisis, the number of readers grows, and book sales do not fall as drastically as sales of the majority of other everyday consumer items. I hope this might be true, for experience indicates that

increase the accessibility of literature, improve the position of publishing and ease the burden on the small language area, as well as promote all the processes of book production. I am very happy that the Minister of Culture, Majda Širca, is determined to place this issue once again on the “European level”; cultural policy, where of course literature belongs, must be in the hands of individual countries, especially the “small countries”, through which the big countries during the globalisation period have cut a swath with their economic steam rollers. Today there is zero tax in this sector in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Poland, and outside the EU there is no tax on books for instance in Russia and in neighbouring Croatia. It would be right for others to introduce a zero rate, too. In this way “commercial literature” and the whole publishing sector would be winners, but with urgent financial measures of positive

individual buyers. Of the total public money allocated to libraries in Slovenia, a smaller portion is for book purchases, so it is all the more important what and how they buy.

What presence does Slovenian literature, especially pure literature, have abroad?

Quite a considerable presence, given the characteristics of our literary output. Around 70 authors have been translated into foreign languages, which given the size of the country is not at all small. The agency issues tenders to support translations of Slovenian literature into foreign languages, and here the possibilities for obtaining public money are really extensive. We are also planning a bunch of new approaches. I would like to mention the fresh and changed appearances at the main book fairs abroad, which are important. Here there is a constant need for prudent

allocation of money, since these events, “distinguished” by the high costs of fair space and for furnishing that space, must be exploited as far as possible for business and cultural purposes, in short, we need to cleverly delineate rational and emotional approaches. We must establish a good IT system and then pick out the paths that have turned out well for others, from translator meetings with authors to training literary agents. We are interested in a rational, well organised and focused appearance, where Slovenia can present itself as a credible and capable publishing partner. As for promoting Slovenian authors, it would be good to focus on a small circle, on one or two authors, whom we could bring to the fore on the international level, for effective promotion of the individual ultimately brings gains for the entire literature of the country that author comes from. Of course we get grey hairs when we face the question: who is that author? Well, that’s why we have experts and readers.

As for Ljubljana as the World Book Capital next year (April 2010 – April 2011), we are happy this is taking place. The agency has signed an agreement with the Ljubljana organisers and the Ministry of Culture under which we will co-finance a distinguished publishing congress, a major literary festival and special prize editions of good books. Naturally through the World Book Capital, which is a prestige event on the world scale, we will try as much as possible to increase the significance of literature in everyday life here, and of course to corner the world for our good literature.

Aside from being the director of the Agency for Literature and until recently the president of the Slovene Writers’ Association, Slavko Pregl is primarily one of the most popular writers for young people, a story teller, fable writer and at one time also an editor and publisher. He headed the unique literary campaign to promote reading among young people, the Reading Badge [Bralna značka], between 2004 and 2008, and in this period he succeeded in obtaining sponsorship support for 300,000 books provided as gifts to young readers. His stories for young people have been translated into 12 languages, and some of his works, such as *Geniuses in Shorts*, *The Green Dragon’s Expedition*, *Olympiad in the Zoo* and *Silver from Blue Cave* have become veritable legends of Slovenian youth literature.



Vesna Bertoncelej Popit, DELO, photo: STA

At a time when the number of unemployed in Slovenia is already approaching 100,000, which is 5% of the population, the lists of the richest Slovenians published by Manager magazine have attracted particular attention. A number of Slovenian managers occupy high positions on these lists. Even so, this year's rich list is quite different from those in previous years, since falling exchange rates mean that many have seen their wealth cut in half. First place on the list is still occupied by Mirko Tuš, the father of Celje's Tuš Group. In 2008 his wealth was estimated at over half a billion euros, but in the space of a year it has apparently fallen to 340 million euros. He is followed by Igor Lah, Darko Horvat, Dari and Vesna Južna, and so on. Sixth place is occupied by Tomaž Lovše, among other things the organiser of the recent visit to Slovenia by former US president Bill Clinton. Joc Peččnik, the director of Elektronček, a company that produces gaming machines and exports them all over the world, is also famous in Slovenia for his plans to renovate Ljubljana's main football stadium. He appears in ninth place on the list of richest Slovenians in 2009. The top ten is completed by Jože Anderlič, whose planned new complex on the site of today's Kolizej building will contain, among other things, an opera house.

On the other hand, people are also asking the question: how much bigger should the salary of a company director be than the average salary in that company? While company directors are very reluctant to reach into their pockets to pay their workers a decent wage, when it comes to how big their own salaries should be, they want to take a lead from Europe and the rest of the developed world, with the result that some of them believe that salary 30 or even 50 times higher than that of the average worker in their company is justifiable. It has come to light that company owners have given the majority of directors contracts guaranteeing them high salaries and redundancy packages irrespective of the results they have achieved through their work. This has caused considerable dissatisfaction among the Slovenian public. Even greater dissatisfaction has



First place on the list of the richest Slovenians, published by Manager magazine, is still occupied by Mirko Tuš, the father of Celje's Tuš Group.

been caused by the revelation that quite a number of employers or company managements have not been paying pension insurance contributions, or even health insurance contributions, for their workers. This came to light when some individual workers wanted to take retirement and as a result received lower pensions.

According to some figures, companies have failed to make these payments – which are compulsory – for approximately 50,000 workers. Other figures suggest that the number is almost twice as high. The fact is that at the start of October employers had not paid social contributions for 52,808 workers, while 3,081 companies owed more than 4,000 euros per employee. Owing to a lack of money or for other reasons, company managements have preferred to maintain social peace through salaries and retain their directorial positions rather than pay compulsory contributions. Many workers are still not aware of this. The government initially promised that it would pay these contributions for state-owned companies, but then back-pedalled, since there is apparently no legal basis for this. They are however working on a law that will provide for this. It turns out that some companies that have gone into bankruptcy had not paid contributions for their employees for,

on average, five years, and the same is also true of some companies that are actually performing relatively well but have been taken over by their managements.

It is surprising that those for whom this money should have been earmarked, i.e. pension and health funds and the tax administration, have failed to notice that something was missing and call in their debts. Instead, the tax administration has allowed citizens to verify with them whether their employer is paying everything necessary for them.

It is probably also for this reason that the survey on the image of Slovenian managers showed an unusual picture: while the majority of employees trust the management of their own companies, only a tenth of them trust managers in general. In this regard, the economist Rado Pezdir comments that people work with their own management every day in their workplace, and if the latter wish to ensure normal operation of the company they have to have suitable relations with their employees. On the other hand, Slovenia has seen a number of notorious management buy-outs in recent years which have damaged the reputation of managers as a class.

The government is attempting to impose order with regard to the salaries of top management in state-owned companies.



The economist Rado Pezdir.

Salaries are apparently to be reduced – something which has caused considerable dissatisfaction among the directors of these companies, who have begun to warn that their knowledge will start to flee abroad. This however does not appear to worry the government overmuch, since they know that there will hardly be much demand abroad for directors who run companies that either operate as monopolies or have major losses.

Samo Hribar Milič, the director-general of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, says that he does not underestimate the critical relationship between net salaries and gross labour costs. As he points out, however, the public has the impression that Slovenia generates enough

Samo Hribar Milič, the director-general of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.



income, but that this is unfairly distributed. The truth is, says Hribar Milič, that according to figures from the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES), managerial salaries, which are received by approximately 4% of employees, account for 12% of the total wage bill. If we were to stop paying all managerial salaries, and not just the six-figure ones, this would not be enough to increase wages as the trade unions demand, explains Hribar Milič. Meanwhile, the dissatisfaction of employees in many companies is actually with the trade unions themselves, because they believe that their representatives are better at reaching deals with company managements than defending the rights of their members.

All observers of economic movements in Slovenia predict an improvement and slight growth in 2010. But since companies are apparently still reluctant to invest, and in some cases do not have the money to do so, unemployment is expected to continue to rise for the next two years. Despite this, in the third quarter of this year there has been a steady increase in the number of companies that have returned to a 40-hour working week, and companies have recently been reporting that orders are once again increasing.

As the economist Dr Jože Mencinger pointed out at a recent local forum, we still do not have any ideas for a solution to the crisis. We will need to come up with new products that we can sell, since up till now companies have to a large extent produced products that no one buys. In Mencinger's opinion the original sin behind companies' difficulties lies in the certificate-based privatisation scheme, which meant that instead of owners of companies we got owners of property, who care little how a company operates as long as it brings in capital gains. Mencinger himself advocates not counting land as part of a company's property, since many managers have reduced the value of their companies to zero in order to then gain through the sale of land on which factories previously stood.

The government is preparing for the taxation of immovable property, which should come into effect in 2011. One of the important bases for this will be the census of the immovable property carried out two



The economist Dr Jože Mencinger.

years ago. On this basis a property register was established in the middle of this year. The urgent need for change in this field is also highlighted by numerous constitutional complaints that it is not possible to keep taxing immovable property through charges for the use of building land. A considerable reaction can also be expected when people are informed of the estimated value of their property – something which is due to happen before the end of the year.

Given that membership of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) ceased to be compulsory some years ago, initially leading to quite a number of members leaving (they have since gradually returned), members of the business community are now demanding that membership of the Chamber of Crafts and Small Business also cease to be compulsory. The GZS agrees with them and has announced a review of the constitutionality of the Small Business Act. In times of crisis every euro is valuable, and annual membership of the Chamber of Crafts and Small Business apparently costs 600 euros. As well as being members of the GZS, many large companies are also members of the Chamber of Crafts and Small Business. The Chamber of Crafts and Small Business, which last year raised 5.5 million euros through membership dues, cites the fact that the state decided to maintain compulsory membership of the chamber in order to facilitate communication between a large number of small businesses and the state.



photo: personal archive

Anita Hugau, Ambassador of Denmark to Slovenia The Way to Copenhagen

The countdown to 7 December is approaching rapidly, and failure at the UN Copenhagen Climate Conference COP15 in December is simply not an option. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) takes place in Copenhagen from 7–18 December 2009.

If the world fails to deliver a political agreement in Copenhagen, the entire global democratic system will become unable to deliver results in one of the defining challenges of our century. And that is and should not be a possibility. "It's not an option," said Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard in November.

The Danish objective as host of the UN Climate Conference is to achieve one agreement with a twin approach. The first is to provide political guidance for the UNFCCC negotiations on the new legal climate agreement, negotiations that will stretch far beyond COP15 in Copenhagen. The second is to adopt a binding political agreement that would enter into force immediately and hence provide for immediate action to combat global warming.

The substance of the "one agreement" will give solid direction to negotiations on a legal framework and serve as a basis for immediate action.

We need an agreement which is ambitious in its objectives, as well as practicable and results-oriented in its functioning. Two overarching elements should be commitments to reductions and actions, on the one hand, and an effective global framework for financing and governance on the other. The agreement must be robust and contain all the necessary elements to become operational as of January 2010.

To reach this objective, Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen in October foresaw an urgent need for support and involvement at the highest political level, and therefore launched the "Copenhagen Commitment Circle". During November, this initiative brought together a small core group of dedicated Heads of State and Government and the UN Secretary-General committed to the twin approach. The group met on a weekly basis via video conferencing to continuously assess progress in negotiations leading to COP15 in December, to build a common understanding about the way ahead, also based on the specific commitments that countries are willing to undertake as part of an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen.

Pursuing a political agreement in Copenhagen is not an expression of lowered ambitions. On the contrary – it demonstrates our willingness to achieve results with immediate impact. It is most important not to combat symbols, but emissions. The transition of the world economy onto a low-carbon path is already under way, and with the expected progress we shall pave the way for leaders to meet in Copenhagen in order to seal the deal.

In accordance with the slogan "think globally, act locally", the Danish Embassy in Ljubljana has since January 2009 tried to "walk the talk" when it comes to reducing carbon emissions. We have joined a network of Danish embassies around the world that have "gone green".

The Green Embassy project is a project launched, for the time being, by 28 Danish embassies around the world in

an attempt to reduce energy consumption, thus reducing CO2 emissions. This has led to the Embassy of Denmark in Ljubljana reducing its energy consumption quite substantially (more than 25% compared to the same period last year). In Ljubljana, the initiative has already spread to, amongst others, the Nordic embassies, which are now also going green, trying to reduce their CO2 emissions. Under the umbrella of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies in Ljubljana and various Slovenian institutions will try to find ways in which we all can cooperate in order to make our contribution to reducing climate change.

It is also our hope that going green can boost our bilateral cooperation in enhancing trade between Denmark and Slovenia. Denmark is home to several mechanical and electronic companies that are experts in producing energy-saving and environment-protecting products. Examples of such companies are Danfoss A/S, a leader in the development and production of mechanical and electronic products and controls, and Grundfos A/S, the leading manufacturer of pumps. Danfoss A/S is also one of the largest and most successful foreign investors in Slovenia, with two factories in Slovenia: Danfoss Compressors and Danfoss Trata d.o.o. Danfoss Compressors has located one of the world's most highly automated factories in Črnomelj, with more than 1000 employees.

Also, when it comes to building materials and products, there are several Danish companies on the Slovenian market, such as Velux A/S, Rockwool A/S and Icopal A/S (Decra), which are gaining significant market share in Slovenia and are known for their energy-saving materials.

The most known Danish brand in the Slovenian market remains Lego, but the main imports from Denmark are healthcare products, such as Novo Nordisk A/S, Lundbeck A/S, Coloplast A/S, Oticon A/S, Widex A/S and GN Resound A/S.

Denmark is also known in Slovenia for Danish design, which is acknowledged and acclaimed globally. Companies like Bang & Olufsen A/S, Royal Copenhagen A/S, Louis Poulsen Lighting A/S, Normann Copenhagen, Fritz Hansen A/S and many others are all present here. Danish companies in the fashion business have positioned themselves to deliver good design at a competitive price, and brands such as ECCO shoes, Peak Performance, H2O, Hummel A/S, Bestseller A/S - Jack & Jones and Vero Moda are well represented in Slovenian retail shops.

Political relations between Slovenia and Denmark are also very good, and there are no unresolved issues. Economic cooperation has increased intensively in recent years, and Slovenia and Denmark maintain lively economic ties. Trade between Denmark and Slovenia is already increasing: bilateral trade went up by 60% in 2008 compared to 2003, and taking the increased focus on renewable energy and energy saving into account, there are good chances that this rise can continue in the years to come.

We also have to keep in mind the people-to-people relations between our two countries: in political circles, on the level of civil servants, on cultural matters and, last but not least, the exchange of students.

Bogdan Benko, Slovenian Ambassador to Denmark

Countdown to Copenhagen

As I write this article for Sinfo, the stopwatch on the website of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) indicates that the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2009 (COP 15), due to convene in the Danish capital on 7 December, will begin in precisely 15 days, 11 hours, 45 minutes and 52 seconds. Other digital stopwatches on giant panels outside the Bella Center, Scandinavia's largest exhibition and conference centre, just outside Copenhagen, and in the city itself, are counting down the days, hours, minutes and seconds to the start of the conference with the same relentless precision. Copenhagen is telling the global public that the time to adopt a new global agreement for the fight against climate change is inexorably running out. The world will have an opportunity to halt the current trend of climate change in December, when Copenhagen and the Bella Center host more than ten thousand delegates from governments and NGOs and an army of journalists at the 15th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, from 7 to 18 December 2009. In organisational and logistical terms, this will be the biggest event ever held in Denmark. For the world, it is the content of the event that makes it so significant. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will be a key step in global negotiations to reach an agreement on a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The new agreement should enter into force in January 2013. Even in the case of a world climate agreement being reached in Copenhagen, the IPCC estimates that the world only has a 22% chance of avoiding a rise in temperature of more than 2°C by 2050. If the increase in temperature is above or close to 2°C, it is the generally held belief of scientists that climate change will be violent and unpredictable.

The hope and expectations that a new, all-encompassing, balanced and effective agreement on the fight against climate change to succeed the Kyoto agreement will be reached in Copenhagen are very considerable. As the host country, Denmark hopes that the conclusion of the Copenhagen conference will be attended by heads of state and government from around the world, whose presence and words would demonstrate the highest level of political commitment to a new global climate treaty.

Why has Denmark been entrusted with the demanding, complex and exceptionally important role of host of COP15? The answer is simple: because through its model of economic and social development over the last decade and a half, Denmark has proved that it is possible to achieve constant economic growth and social prosperity while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because it is one of the world's leading countries in terms of the use of renewable energy sources, in particular wind energy, and because it successfully projects its own national experience into international activities, particularly in the framework of development aid. Last but not least, Denmark has already proved in the recent past that it is an excellent organiser and mediator capable of hosting historic meetings such as the meeting of the Council of the European Union in Copenhagen in 2002, at which a decision of European and global significance was taken to proceed with the biggest EU enlargement to date, an enlargement which also included Slovenia.

Slovenia is actively engaging with climate change at the

national and international level within the limits of its capabilities. Energy and climate are at the centre of key decisions of the Slovenian government and competent state authorities. In this context, on 17 June 2009 the Slovenian government established the Climate Change Office, which is responsible for developing and achieving targets for mitigating and adapting to climate change in cooperation with all relevant subjects such as local communities, NGOs, the business enterprise sector, research institutions, and EU and UN institutions. The Office will also promote and collaborate on climate change awareness programmes and training/education programmes. The fact is that the Slovenian public is very responsive to all issues relating to the environment and climate change, and therefore these issues are among the key areas of activity of NGOs in Slovenia. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force in Slovenia on 29 February 1996, and the Kyoto Protocol on 16 February 2005. Under the latter, Slovenia is obliged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2008–2012 by 8% compared to 1986. As an EU Member State, Slovenia also contributes its share to the meeting of EU targets relating to climate change. During its Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2008, Slovenia actively coordinated the negotiation process that led to the formulation and later adoption of the climate and energy package of EU measures. In this way Slovenia has actively contributed to the realisation of the objective of the European Union of becoming a low-carbon society in the near future and maintaining a leading role in international negotiations for the regime after 2012.

Slovenia and Denmark hold similar positions with regard to the urgency, all-encompassing nature and balance of the new global agreement on climate change, where they particularly stress that the EU must maintain a leading role. In this context Slovenia decisively supports Denmark in its activities and efforts to achieve a new international climate treaty in Copenhagen this December, for the good of all humanity. Slovenia is particularly interested in the transfer of Denmark's good practices in the field of overcoming the consequences of climate change, the introduction of green technology and the exchange of information and experience obtained in the process of organising COP15.

The Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in the Kingdom of Denmark is cooperating actively with the Danish organisers on preparations for the participation of the Slovenian delegation in COP15. Intervention in the exchange of opinions, views and information regarding current issues that are raised during the process of negotiations leading to Copenhagen is a constant element of the work of the embassy. The embassy also looks after the organisation of meetings and regular contacts between Slovenian and Danish counterparts on various aspects of the consequences of climate change.

I would like to conclude by emphasising that for its commitment and full engagement in the organisation of COP 15, Denmark deserves all our support, thanks and recognition, irrespective of the final outcome of the international climate conference in Copenhagen. We are all responsible for the success of the conference in Copenhagen and we hope that it will be as successful as possible, since this will be the most precious Christmas gift we can give to future generations all over the world.



photo: personal archive



BORŠTNIK MEETING 2009 THEATRE FESTIVAL

**THIS YEAR NO SELECTED PERFORMANCE FROM THE
PERMANENT SLOVENIAN THEATRE OF TRIESTE**

Albert Kos , photo:STA

The concluding ceremony at which this year's Borštnik Ring for life work in the theatre and Borštnik Prizes for supreme creative achievements in the past theatrical season were awarded, marked the end of this year's 44th Borštnik Meeting, the annual Slovenian theatre festival in Maribor named after Ignacij Borštnik (1858-1919), the stage actor and theatre teacher and one of the key founders of the modern professional Slovenian theatre at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The gallery of eminent Slovenian actors and actresses who have to date received the highest award for their life work was joined by this year's Borštnik Ring recipient, the actress Minu Kjuder, who spent several decades of her active theatre career in the theatres of Celje and Maribor, where she created a range of dramatic roles that ranked her among the most prominent modern Slovenian stage performers.

Of the 11 theatrical productions placed by this year's festival selector Barbara Orel in the competition programme, the official festival jury judged the best production to be *Macbeth After Shakespeare* by Heiner Müller, in a co-production of the Ljubljana Mini teater, Cankarjev dom, Zagreb's Novo kazalište and the Zagrebačko kazalište mladih, directed by Ivica Buljan, while the best as judged by the Slovenian society of theatre critics and theatre writers was the production of *Aeschylus's Oresteia*, directed by Jernej Lorenci and performed by the main national theatre Drama in Ljubljana. Three of the five prizes for acting achievements were also awarded to actors in these two productions: Polona Juh for the role of Clytemnestra and Igor Samobor in *The Oresteia*, for which director Jernej Lorenci also received the Borštnik Prize for directing, and Marko Mandić for his role in

the production of *Macbeth After Shakespeare*, while the other two big acting prizes went to Nataša Matjašec Rožker for her part in the production of *Veter v vejah borov* [Wind in the Pine Branches] and Branko Šturbej for the lead role in the production of *Peer Gynt*, both performed by Drama Slovenskega narodnega gledališča [Slovenian National Theatre] in Maribor.

Sadly this year's Borštnik Meeting programme was not carried out in full, since the staging of *Daughter of Air* by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, performed by the Stalno gledališče [Slovenian Permanent Theatre] of Trieste was cancelled in unfortunate circumstances. This theatre of the Slovenian minority community in Italy, to which the Italian government has granted the status of permanent theatre with the right to regular public subsidy from the Italian authorities, is this year facing financial hardship hindering its operation and putting it into increasing debt. This year owing to the unwillingness of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia regional authorities, the Trieste provincial authorities and the city of Trieste to provide adequate, legally provided funds for continued operation, the constraints on the theatre have become so acute that the theatre's management and management council could no longer sign annual contracts with the artistic ensemble and technical and administrative staff employed at the theatre, which has prevented the start of this year's theatre season.

The continued fate of this theatre remains uncertain, so there is a real danger of Slovenian dramatic creativity under the roof of an independent theatre institution breathing its last after more than a hundred years in Trieste. This would signify for the local Slovenian minority the loss of one of the fundamental

pillars of their cultural identity, and for the Slovenian arts as a whole the loss of an important and indispensable constituent part. Both the Slovenian government and Slovenian cultural circles, as well as minority umbrella organisations of Slovenians in Italy, have lobbied the Italian authorities strongly to rescue the Permanent Slovenian Theatre in Trieste, while the initiative for a rescue solution has also been taken up by staff at the theatre, with the aim of changing the decision that has meant that after decades of continuous operation the theatre had to close its doors this autumn, and with the aim then of ensuring regular fulfilment of its financial obligations by the Italian state to the Slovenian theatre in Trieste and thereby more broadly to the Slovenian minority living there.

There was also a demonstration of support for the Trieste theatre at the Borštnik Meeting in Maribor, where in place of the cancelled Trieste performance there was a meeting of Trieste actors with actors from other Slovenian theatres and with the audience of the Borštnik Meeting, at which all those present unequivocally demanded that the conditions be provided at all costs for the continued existence of the Permanent Slovenian Theatre in Trieste.

With the bitter taste left on this year's theatre festival in Maribor by the regrettable gap in the programme and the discomfort at the uncertain fate of one of the oldest Slovenian theatres, as in every year, the festival presented a week of theatre celebration with an overview of the best currently offered by Slovenia's theatres, in the desire to use its great achievements to open up even more into Europe and the world and strengthen cooperation with foreign theatres and their stage artists. In this light, greater emphasis on "internationalisation" of the festival is predicted both by the president of the festival council, the writer and dramatist Tone Partljič, as well as by the new festival director Alja Predan. An unforgettable step in this direction was taken this year with the invitation to the famous German director Peter Stein, who recited scenes from Goethe's *Faust*, to the accompaniment of a pianist, at a special evening as part of the Borštnik Meeting.



PUBLIC COMPETITION FOR A NEW GRAPHIC IDENTITY SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SLOVENIA

Vesna Žarkovič, photo: Michele Drascek

The Gigodesign agency from Ljubljana has won the public competition for a new graphic identity system for Slovenia's public administration. The winning entry is on display in the foyer of the Ministry of Culture, along with the other 16 projects that were submitted to the competition and met the conditions for entry.

The winning project to design a new graphic identity system for public administration bodies is based on the undisputed symbol of Slovenia and all things Slovenian – Triglav mountain. It appears in graphic form in the Slovenian coat-of-arms and was thus used first by Jože Plečnik in his plans for the Šverljuga Column, then as the symbol of resistance to occupying forces in World War II and, in paraphrased form, as the symbol of the struggle for human rights during independence. Not least, Triglav has been adopted by sports fans at matches featuring some Slovenian national teams.

In the opinion of the Ministry of Culture, the winning project meets the communication and graphic requirements, is cost-effective and simple to use, and technically universal. It establishes a clear and recognisable system of visual messages for today's means of communication, enables the substantially easier management of the visual identity of state administration bodies, saves time in everyday processes and optimises the costs involved. One sample

calculation shows that the new graphic identity system will save EUR 488,376 a year simply by introducing a single uniform envelope.

The chairman of the jury that assessed the applications, Ranko Novak, from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design:

Very few of the 17 projects made use of any element other than Triglav as the basis for their solution, which clearly shows that is a common point of contact for all Slovenes. The winning project is very simple and straightforward, completely consistent and very clearly shows how it might be used in future. Cost implications were also very important; the simplicity of this project brings down costs considerably.

The public competition to design a graphic identity system for Slovenian public administration bodies and compile a plan for its execution was drawn up by a working group at the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Culture and the Government Communication Office, following a Government resolution issued on 17 June 2009. Design professionals were consulted for their recommendations when the anonymous competition was drawn up. The competition was published on the public tenders website on 28 July, with the deadline for submissions set for 15 September. Twenty-one applications had been received by the deadline. Three were rejected because they did not meet the competition requirements. The appli-






cations were assessed by an international jury comprising, in addition to Ranko Novak, Maja Gspan (Slovenian Chamber of Design), Kim Meyer Andersen (creative director of the Danish Kontrapunkt agency), Stojan Pelko from the Ministry of Culture and Veronika Stabej from the Government Communication Office.

The jury selected the three best bidders on 18 September on the basis of the competition criteria. They were then given until 15 October to supplement their entries with additional creative solutions. The jury met again on 16 October and selected the winning entry, which was submitted by Gigodesign.

The winning prize was EUR 12,000 (including VAT). The three bidders that received the highest number of points in the first round will have their material costs reimbursed (EUR 2,400 gross). The winning applicant will receive up to EUR 72,000 (including VAT) for the plan and six-month execution of the project. Second place went to the Maribor-based company Higra, with the Kontrastika design studio from Ljubljana coming in third.

According to the Government-approved timetable, implementation of the new graphic identity system will start on 3 January 2010 and be completed by 1 June 2010. The winning proposal can be viewed at www.gigodesign.com/si09.



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| 4. NIVO |  | REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA MINISTRSTVO ZA PROMET DIREKCIJA ZA VODENJE INVESTICIJ V JAVNO ŽELEZNIŠKO INFRASTRUKTURO Sektor za investicije Oddelek za planiranje in analize |
| 3. NIVO |  | REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA MINISTRSTVO ZA PROMET DIREKCIJA ZA VODENJE INVESTICIJ V JAVNO ŽELEZNIŠKO INFRASTRUKTURO Sektor za investicije |
| 2. NIVO |  | REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA MINISTRSTVO ZA PROMET DIREKCIJA ZA VODENJE INVESTICIJ V JAVNO ŽELEZNIŠKO INFRASTRUKTURO |
| 1. NIVO |  | REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA MINISTRSTVO ZA PROMET |
| DRŽAVA |  | REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA |

We asked international jury member Kim Meyer Andersen for an opinion on our visual identity.

KIM MEYER ANDERSEN PARTNER IN THE DANISH DESIGN FIRM KONTRAPUNKT

Slovenia held a competition involving proposals for a new and consistent visual identity for its state administration. The competition was a success, and so was the subsequent exhibition of the submitted proposals. A winner has been chosen, and the winning proposal will be developed further to reach the final result. Great expectations are linked to seeing the winning design brought to life and the process of implementation set in motion.

Exhibition of other countries' visual identity

The competition was preceded by an excellent initiative. There was an exhibition of visual identities of other countries' state administrations with several examples, especially from other European countries. This exhibition, as well as the accompanying written documentation, was organised by a group of designers from Slovenia who wanted to highlight the importance of the visual presentation of the country's administration. This international exhibition showed that different countries have different starting points and different ways of tackling challenges. The visual identities of countries that have successfully completed the process demonstrate consistency and a high level of design.

The ways of dealing with the country's visual identity as an overall brand also varies from country to country. Below is a list of different ways, "staircases", of developing a state's modern visual identity. Each point represents a step of recognition up to the stage where we find ourselves today. Value staircase to visual cohesiveness: from uniformity of visual expression, to a desired value-laden aesthetic expression, to value-loading at the strategic level, to a comprehensive understanding of branding of the public sector.

Efficacy staircase: from individual arrangements of visual identity in each institution and for each communication medium to the arrangement for the departments and divisions within each ministry, which ensures the possibility of continuous change or mobility of administrative units to a monolithic structure where all ministries, departments and administrative units in the country are based on the same technical/technological platform and where as many communication media as possible use the same type of software.

The two staircases lead to the same place. Both the strategic value loading and the efficient handling positively affect each other in the overall perception of public design.

Historical perspective

Since ancient times, the heraldic expression of different countries has governed the imaging of the state. What the Danish and Slovenian coats of arms have in common is the fact that they both consist of a shield on which symbols and various value-laden characteristics are placed, distinguishing them from those of other countries. Ultimately, it was the Danish royal crown that represented the power of the king and later of the

state. If a traveller in Denmark was in possession of a letter bearing the king's crown, it meant that the king was behind the project and guaranteed to support it financially, and, if necessary, to back it up with force.

The Danish crown, which initially represented the king, now represents the modern democracy. For many years, therefore, Danish ministries were represented only by the Danish royal crown, with the name of the ministry centred below it. Nothing else was required, and up to the present it has been generally assumed that the central government should identify itself, but not brand itself. The logic behind this is the fact that there are no competitors in a monopoly, and that the public administration and government areas have historically been separated from public activities and are therefore self-explanatory.

Public branding

In our time, the need to be able to distinguish the public from the private has increased. According to the EU, all public companies should in principle be privatised. In the public perception, it is therefore necessary for a public service to demonstrate effectiveness and accessibility, and the quality of the services provided should at least be as good as those provided by private businesses. The need to brand efficient and user-friendly public services has become urgent for the state. However, to legitimise such branding is not an easy communication task.

Citizens are split in half

In many ways, the perception of what is required is divided into two camps. The two camps are often equally large, but there can also be a division

within an individual – who can see both kinds of logic and necessity.

One view is frugal or introverted, while the other can be called reflective or extroverted.

A frugal person believes that branding is something for private companies. State administration has nothing to sell, but consists only of public servants who perform their jobs to perfection but do not advertise this. This also means that that all visual marking which is more than absolutely necessary is superfluous and ultimately means wasting public funds.

A reflective citizen believes that public branding is a necessity for a modern state. The state represents the country in many international contexts. The nation and individual citizens depend on this being done successfully. Also internally in the country, the efficiency and authority of the state depend on how convincingly the case is presented, including the visual display of the best design that the country can offer.

Both of these conceptions have their own logic, and each contains some truth. As the branded perception of reality also represents strength and consistency, a state that faces competition, for example like the EU countries, will always choose to brand itself and present itself as being as efficient, competent and as transparent as possible.

Visual expression of culture is a symbol of power and influence

Throughout our history, visual symbols have been important to those exercising power. Architects and artists have from time immemorial been employed to produce works of the highest artistic and cultural value. The greater the wealth and power, the greater the concentration of su-

perb architecture and art.

These demonstrations of power and influence were not restricted only to architecture and art – design has also been a valuable symbol of power.

In the past, letters were handwritten by selected writers whose only task was to write beautifully and artfully. The more beautiful the design, the more authority was reflected in the letter. Then, as well as today, there has been moreover a concept of sense of propriety which influences the visual appearance that a communication from the authority implies. A letter, a PowerPoint presentation, a website must be appropriate and closely aligned with the recipient's and sender's expectations. It must therefore not be boastful or overloaded with visual symbols. Conversely, the recipient of a given communication will also interpret a timid appearance either as a lack of understanding of the situation or an expression of an insufficient cultural level.

A behavioural design

If public communication, therefore, intends to regulate behaviour, which is probably always the case, it is important that the design for the Slovenian state administration be contemporary and aesthetic, that it appear to be readily accessible, that it reflect the latest technological developments and fall in the visual consensus that both Slovenian citizens and European states represent.

The competition and the exhibition of proposals constitute a cultural manifesto

In this design competition, it is not only the winning proposal that has an opportunity to become significant. All the proposals together represent a

cultural contribution of 2009. Several exhibited proposals offered surprisingly original solutions and several could be used or developed further to achieve an excellent result.

The exhibition is therefore important as a marker of not only the visual level, but also of an energetic administration and government.

It would be a loss if these proposals were put aside. They should be compiled into a book and looked at tomorrow, in 10 years and in 20 years – they are also a historical testimony that will tell of Slovenia's quest for parts of its own identity and self-understanding.

The jury has chosen a winner who will continue working in cooperation with a state administration task force. In the opinion of the jury, the winner achieved a visual expression that, all in all, appears to be the right one. The winning proposal was very professional and well thought out, and provides for effective implementation of the design.

With the winning proposal, Slovenia has an opportunity to overtake several neighbouring countries with state-of-the-art expression and with the use of the latest technology for managing and implementing the new identity. How simply can it be implemented? How easily can it be installed? How clear is it to use, even for average users? And last but not least, how well and how easily can this language subsequently be used in daily communication?

If Slovenia wishes to continue after this success, this could be the beginning of a service design project where public rules and methods are also revised with design in mind, with the aim of achieving greater fulfilment of goals and increased citizen satisfaction.



ART & ©ultu®ε

FRANKFURT AFTER FRANKFURT: BOOK TRENDS IN LJUBLJANA

Polona Prešeren, photo: STA

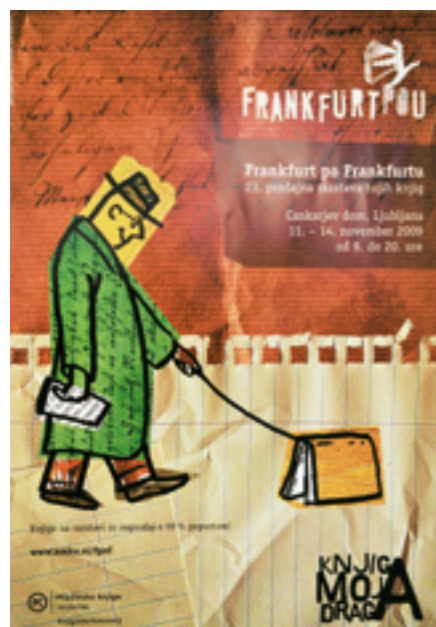
Ljubljana's Cankarjev dom cultural and congress centre has hosted the exhibition and sales book fair Frankfurt After Frankfurt. The Konzorcij bookshop, which has organised this event for more than two decades now, worked once again this year to familiarise the public with the entire year's production of books in all genres and fields. "One well-spent day is more than a badly spent year. Help in spending a day well is provided by the 10,000 exhibited books," said the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Gregor Golobič, at the opening of the exhibition.

The Frankfurt After Frankfurt exhibition is defined primarily by professional literature, yet the selection still offers something for everyone. The largest number of exhibited books were in English, followed by German, Spanish, Italian and French. After the model of the last Frankfurt Book Fair, the guest country was China. At the opening, visitors were welcomed by the Chinese Ambassador to Slovenia, Zhi Zhaolin.

China wants its culture, including literature, to become familiar to as many people as possible, while at the same time it would like to become familiar with other cultures close up.

As Minister Golobič said in his speech, in the coming year, when Ljubljana is the world book capital, at the Shanghai Expo Slovenia will have a pavilion symbolising an open book. This year the country has allocated a third more funds for purchasing professional literature, which is a step in the right direction. Just like Frankfurt After Frankfurt.

Special highlights of the exhibition include Slovenian authors working with foreign publishing houses, and most prominent among them are the philosopher Slavoj Žižek and writer Boris Pahor. Another highlight was the recipients of literary prizes and the five best books as selected by the Konzorcij bookshop in the fields of social sciences, humanities, art, professional literature, manuals, tourism and literature.



MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WITH A MAKEOVER

Polona Prešeren, photo: Michele Drascek

Lately the renovated Ljubljana Museum of Modern Art has been opening its doors again to visitors and art lovers. The eagerly awaited opening was accompanied by a retrospective exhibition of Zoran Mušič in public and private collections in Slovenia.

The renovation and reconstruction of the gallery, originally the work of Edvard Ravnikar, was designed by the firm BevkPerovič. The opening of the Museum of Modern Art was actually postponed for a month, since the renovation took a little longer, but the gallery programme was not entirely halted during the work. For two years the gallery was temporarily stationed in all the Slovenian premises devoted to modern art. For this very reason the opening was all the more eagerly awaited.

The idea of the Museum of Modern Art [Moderna galerija] was born in the 1930s, when it became apparent that the presentation of modern art would require a new building, a new institution, which would at the same time be a museum collection, a fine art exhibition space and an educational centre. Under the original concept, the Mu-

seum of Modern Art would also comprise an artwork sales room and a studio. Dr. Izidor Cankar, art historian, critic, writer and diplomat was the driving force behind the project, and he also played a decisive part in the gallery's conceptual design. Construction of the building, which was already roofed in 1941, was interrupted by the war, and work only continued four years later, with the doors opening in 1947.

The first director of the gallery was the painter Gojmir Anton Kos (1948-49), and then Dr. Karel Dobida (1952-57). In 1957 the position was taken by Zoran Kržišnik, who headed the work of the Museum of Modern Art as administrator right from 1947, remaining the director until 1986. From 1986 to 1992 the gallery was under the directorship of Dr. Jure Mikuž, and since 1992 it has been directed by Zdenka Badovinac.

Ms. Badovinac is very pleased with the work of the BevkPerovič architects, since they approached Ravnikar's building with a great deal of respect and sensitivity, while at the same time they added a "modern

touch". One essential feature is the optimal use of space, which now offers a lecture hall, a bar and certain other immediately noticeable new features. The building of the Museum of Modern Art was in fact quite dilapidated. The gallery now has a new central space, and it will be possible to pass through all the gallery spaces, while in its new guise the Museum of Modern Art meets current international standards.

The new and renovated Museum of Modern Art was opened with an exhibition of works by Zoran Mušič (1909 - 2005), thereby concluding this year of Mušič. There are 140 of Mušič's paintings on display, with major emphasis placed on his early work. The Museum of Modern Art has also to date staged a range of major exhibitions and other events that have on many occasions been decisive in the development of Slovenian art. One of such projects is the collection Artest 2000+, which brings together pioneering works by what are called neo-avant-garde eastern artists. Over the years it has also supplemented the national collection.

Polona Prešeren, Photo: Samo Vidic / Bohinj Park EKO Hotel

ECO IS THE TREND

In Bohinj you might have the feeling that time has stood still, but the latest capital projects will prove you wrong. Bohinj, the oasis of the Alps, as we call it, is the proud location of the first proper – and one of the most advanced – energy-efficient hotels in the Central European area. This is the Bohinj Park EKO Hotel in Bohinjska Bistrica, which is just by Lake Bohinj and the Triglav National Park. Eco is the trend. In tourism, too.



Eco concept

When I sat with Anže Čokl, manager of the Bohinj Park EKO Hotel, in the hotel lobby, I could feel the pleasant warmth of natural materials. Wood, glass, an evolved concept. First impression: nice. Really nice. The eco approach has also been applied in the interior, which has been envisioned in the spirit of natural materials. The wood itself is oiled with natural oils. This is a hotel with very little unnecessary concrete, let alone visible reinforced concrete beams. “There was no way we wanted visible concrete walls and construction. Even the roof is of entirely natural materials,” says Čokl. There is a veritable sea of modern technology in this hotel, but guests barely notice it. They experience only its advantages.

“This is in fact a pilot concept, since we don’t know of anything else like it,” explains Anže Čokl. “With this eco hotel the issue is mainly about what impact the building has on nature. And in this sense, in energy terms we are one of the most economic hotels around. The energy and the way we are saving it, which consequently has less impact on the environment, is truly something incredible.”

“The hotel was built with private capital and European funding. In fact this is a good example of the practice of cooperation with the European structural funds for regional development and the economy. In the tender we gained the

highest number of points and received 4 million euros in non-returnable funds,” adds Čokl.

The hotel has its own energy water well. This means that using its own energy structure, the hotel is heated in winter and cooled in summer. It has a special system for exploiting water. Even wastewater from the showers and washbasins is exploited. Instead of sending warm water into the drains, as usually happens, it is collected in special tanks, where heat pumps draw off the remaining heat and only then is the spent and cold water released into the drains. When the heat has been drawn off, it is returned to the system through heat exchangers.

The entire hotel is heated on the principle of a low-temperature regime with floor heating and cooling and heating beams. “If a room in a given section of the hotel is not occupied, the climate control is not activated at all. All the timetables for the operation of these devices are determined in advance and rule out the human factor. The same is true of the communal spaces – if the room does not receive input from the reservation system, the system is not activated and this gives us major energy savings. This is a smart-design environment-friendly system, and as such it’s unique,” explains Čokl. Furthermore there are no traditional climate control devices with rotating parts, which use more energy and which collect bacteria owing to moisture accumulation. “Our climate control system, which works on the nozzle principle, allows air circulation and this provides much greater freshness



OUR EXCELLENCE

of the air in the rooms.” And of course the guests are all the more satisfied.

And lighting? “We have power LED lights and our entire exterior, for instance, uses as much electricity as two kitchen light bulbs. All the corridors have this kind of lighting. In energy terms this hotel uses a tenth of the energy of a comparable building, and its impact on the environment is proportionately less, too. All the lights are set on a timer, since hotels have a kind of established rhythm and timetables and are set in the central control system. Manual switching on is also possible, of course. Furthermore we use mainly energy-saving bulbs, and in the corridors and other ‘always lit spaces’ we use LED lights.”

All the details are important, including things that would not seem at all relevant to ordinary people. “I calculated how we could save energy with closed curtains. All our rooms have curtains with silver ‘foil’ sown into them, and they are three-quarters closed. On an annual basis a little thing like that with the curtains can save several thousand euros! If the rooms are empty, we close the curtains. Every single detail is important in energy saving. You don’t just save money with every kilowatt, you also reduce CO2 emissions.”

Eco vision

“I would be lying if I said that only the environmental element was important first and foremost,” says Anže Čokl with sincerity. “The first thing is long-term investment in the context of sustainable development. This also means that the operating costs must be as low as possible. And at the cost of greater initial investment and higher quality materials, such as above-average insulation glass, insulation materials and similar, which are more expensive, we will save a lot in operating costs. Calculations show as much as 50% and more. Nowadays, with energy products getting more expensive, this will mean markedly lower final operating costs.” At the hotel they have decided, in view of the energy savings, to invest more in high-quality services and

food. (By the way, they have a sumptuous organic section.) The current responses from the guests show that they are on the right track.

Tourism trends show that the green concept is attractive and there is a market niche here. A lower impact on the environment is becoming increasingly important. “If we want Bohinj to remain unspoiled, we must all help in this. For this reason we didn’t build the hotel right next to the lake. We are following the European concept of shifting “heavy” tourism away from natural attractions. For instance, abroad quite a few parks are arranged so that they are near, but still slightly removed from natural features. Public transport is then provided to the feature in question, if possible by electric vehicle. In any event, an ordinary bus is still better than several thousand cars. Here we are tied to the local authorities by the same view, and we both advocate a clean environment.”

Guest responses

For guests, the advantages of the eco hotel are evident in its feel and setting. This is also helped by feng shui, which prefers natural materials. Although the hotel has only been open since the end of June, the first impressions from guests are extremely positive.

“In many aspects the responses from guests have surprised us. It actually meant something to people that commercial enterprises can also be responsible towards nature, and that private individuals at home are not the only ones sorting their waste. We are reaping approval as a socially responsible company with everything that’s eco-friendly. There are guests who really do study our environmental company and on that basis choose our hotel. Some come here for that reason, while others don’t pay much attention to it,” says Čokl.

Their guests are people who care about high-quality holidaying. The surrounding area offers a great variety of activities – fly



Anže Čokl, manager of the hotel



fishing, hiking, various other sports in nature, and the lake is close by. There is major emphasis on activities in nature. The hotel also provides biohealing. The hotel is also linked to a water park, which is itself extremely modern and ecologically designed, offering total spoiling for hotel guests. The hotel even has its own bowling alley and cinema.

Against expectations, the eco approach does not hit the hotel guests additionally in the pocket, since the approach has not raised prices. “It is important to us that the guests are happy. We have a slightly special approach to hotel management. We devote great attention to what is called employee empowerment. A full 70 percent of our staff are younger than 30. I put emphasis on this, so that the employees themselves can also decide on bigger issues in their areas – for instance the head of services or chef de cuisine. So up to a certain point they have a free hand. In this way we motivate them and encourage them to show initiative and develop,” explains Anže Čokl, who is himself one of the younger generation. He radiates energy and drive. And at the hotel he sees possibilities for numerous improvements, although the guest responses are fantastic and they can see that the hotel is on the right track.

The hotel was built in 16 months, and if there had not been some minor complications from massive snowfalls, the hotel would have opened earlier. The hotel has 102 rooms. And as far as Slovenia is concerned, this is the first and only such eco hotel. Their project partners have also said that they learned a lot with this project and are now familiarised with some new approaches. So this really is a pilot project.

This is a modern hotel that offers a pleasant warmth. The rooms are furnished in an unassertive way, and without materials that encumber the space. I saw for myself that they really are exemplary. As is the hotel wellness centre, which on a clear night offers views of the stars and Alpine peaks. It really is a shame that they are entirely sold out for their New Year special offer.

More information:

www.bohinj-park-hotel.si

Vesna Žarkovič, photo: Bisol archive

MAKING A GOOD PRODUCT IS ALWAYS THE FIRST PRIORITY

Dr Uroš Merc of BISOL, Entrepreneur of the Year 2009

The winner of the 2009 Entrepreneur of the Year award, selected by Podjetnik magazine and the Chamber of Crafts and Small Business of Slovenia, is Dr Uroš Merc, the majority owner and director of BISOL d.o.o. His company produces photovoltaic modules for solar power plants. In the opinion of the expert commission, Dr Merc deserves the award because of his company's international breakthrough in the high-technology sector. The commission explained its choice of Entrepreneur of the Year as follows: 'Through his know-how and work, he has placed Slovenia among the world's leading countries in the development of solutions for the use of renewable energy sources.'

BISOL develops and produces photovoltaic modules for solar power plants and in just three years of operation has brought annual sales to over 30 million euros. The biggest growth is still to come, with a planned income from sales of 200 million euros by 2011. The company has signed contracts worth 400 million euros up to 2015. The driving force behind BISOL is Dr Uroš Merc, the company's majority owner and director. How did a scientist without significant savings or enterprise experience manage to fund and develop a project on the scale of BISOL? Dr Merc explains that he managed to sell three quarters of a million euros' worth of products before production had even started. This was enough to secure a 100% bank guarantee from Dutch bank ING, on the basis of which the company acquired material to manufacture the first products. There is no doubt that solar energy is a business

of the future which is already starting to flourish. And Slovenia already has a company that is a world leader.

The objective is clear: to develop faster than the market

Uroš Merc has set some ambitious goals for the next two years. He wants to grow faster than the market is growing, and in this way regularly increase turnover and production capacity. In order to achieve this, he and his company are investing in new production capacities. They have set up a company in Belgium, their best market, and are also setting up a company in Italy. They are in talks with the fifth largest energy producer in the EU over some major contracts in the Czech Republic. They are also looking at the US market, where they are planning to open their own production units in 2011. At the moment they are in the process of certifying their products for the US market.

In Europe, BISOL's products have placed it in the highest quality bracket. This means that during a crisis they do not need to compete by cutting prices, as some companies are forced to do in order to save liquidity. Although BISOL appears not to have been touched by the crisis, Uroš Merc claims otherwise. 'You can always tell when there's a crisis. If there was no crisis, sales would be even better. The fact is, our sector is really feeling the crisis. The largest European producer of modules posted a 25 million euro loss in the first half of the year. We on the other hand made a profit of just under 500,000 euros.' In Dr Merc's opinion success depends on many factors: on the ability

to plan stocks, on the ability to focus on customers, on whether a company works via distributors or directly via fitters, and so on. Dr Merc believes that one of the reasons they have managed to navigate these difficult waters so successfully is that the company management has always been directly connected with production. 'If the management knows the products down to the last screw and is familiar with every single production process, it is considerably easier to defend a technological advantage,' he explains. What is the difference between an academic career and a business career? 'I must admit that at the moment my quality of life is not very good. Even so, business appeals to me more than working in a university faculty. Compared to the faculty, in the business enterprise sector you need to implement practical solutions as quickly as possible, although it is true that in the end you have less time left for in-depth scientific research.' How do his former colleagues at the faculty see him? 'With respect, I believe, and actually I think that many of them would like to be present in the business enterprise sector.'

How has a young entrepreneur managed to build such a powerful brand in just over three years when companies usually take years to establish themselves in the market?

Dr Merc explains that we have to take two facts into consideration. The first is that BISOL is operating in a relatively new sector, which means that it is easier



to build a brand and establish it in the market. The second fact is that the company has consistently built brand identity. This year BISOL exhibited at Intersolar in Germany for the fifth time. Since 2004, when he joined the project, Dr Merc has attended numerous conferences at which he has made a large number of contacts that are now proving useful to him in his business. But there is also another key element in the success of a brand: 'As someone whose doctoral thesis was on semiconductor structures, I would feel bad if I placed a poor product on the market. Making a good product is always the first priority, after which you have to optimise it in terms of costs and then market it well.' This is how Uroš Merc sums up his approach to product quality. Development is vital, and so Dr Merc is still actively involved in research. The company has its own research group and is collaborating as a partner on an energy project within the 7th Framework Programme which is co-financed by the European Commission. BISOL is continually carrying out activities in

the sphere of the development of new products and new business models. As regard his company's innovation policy, Uroš Merc believes that 'the minute we start to stagnate with investments and development, we will lose out. That is why it is worth taking part in projects like this framework programme, because this guarantees us a competitive advantage in the long term. In one way or another, we have to invest in development. And it is a lot easier if this development is co-financed.' He also firmly believes that renewable energy is the key to success and that in the future photovoltaics will compete with conventional energy sources.

The message he would like to get across is the restructuring of humanity in a slightly different way. Some people call this the third industrial revolution. Dr Merc believes this will happen and hopes to play an important role in it.

With his entrepreneurial courage and the successful strategy with which he and his

colleagues are implementing their plans at the global level, Dr Merc is without a doubt a fine example of the power of Slovenian enterprise.

Joining Merc on the shortlist for the title of Entrepreneur of the Year this year were Miran Mladovan of Lesimpex and Emil Marinšek of Maremico. The Entrepreneur of the Year award was created in 1991. To date it has been won by Edvard Golob (Edigs Pege), Jože Kogoj (A. J. Kogoj), Rudi Bric, Andrej Kuščer, Tomaž Schara and Zoran Zagorc (Hermes Softlab), Marjan Koščak (formerly Ikom, now Sauter Automatika), Jernej and Japec Jakopin (Seaway), Doro Erjavec and Janez Pogačar (Hyla), Jani Goltes (Goltes), Jadranka and Drago Lemut (Le Tehnika), Milan Čelan (Tipro Keyboards), Jože Angeli (Blues), Filip Remškar (Smart Com), Aleš Kristančič (Movia), Ivo Boscarol (Pipistrel), Igor Akrapovič (Akrapovič), Aleš Štrancar (BIA Separations), Miloš Urbanija (Ultra), Nataša Ratej (Rima), and Andrej Orožen and Jure Knez (Dewesoft).



Vesna Žarkovič, photo: STA

A Dream Come True, Our Footballers Have Conquered the World

SLOVENIA QUALIFY FOR WORLD CUP

The best Slovenian football players have exceeded every expectation, and even their own abilities, with their passionate and committed performances in the qualifications for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. "The footballers, who revealed all their cards at the key moment of the game against Russia, have taken their rightful place in sporting history and managed to do something that has never been done before – they have united Slovenia and helped the younger generations to build their national self-esteem." This was the verdict of commentators on yesterday's World Cup qualifying play-off second leg match between Slovenia and Russia, which ended in a 1:0 victory for Slovenia.

Slovenian manager Matjaz Kek described Slovenia's qualification for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa as a "dream come true...a fairytale ending from a Hollywood film," at the press conference after Slovenia's

stunning win over Russia in Maribor on 19 November. The outcome has sparked mass celebrations across Slovenia.

"This will go down in the annals of Slovenian sports," a beaming Kek told the press. He congratulated the Slovenian players "for leaving their heart on the field" and added that "the boys have become immortal" by achieving Slovenia's second-ever qualification for the World Cup.

Indeed, the win has drawn comparisons of the current team with the "golden generation" that delivered Slovenia its first World Cup place in 2001.

To add fuel to the debate, public broadcaster RTV Slovenia quoted the former Slovenian manager Srecko Katanec, who steered Slovenia to the 2002 tournament in South Korea and Japan, as saying that the current team is better than his.

The win ends a 14-month qualifying cycle in which the Slovenian team went from

strength to strength, losing only twice in 12 matches and conceding only 6 goals.

The increasingly solid performances have also sparked renewed interest in football. A capacity crowd of 12,000 was in attendance at Maribor's Ljudski vrt stadium and hundreds of thousands watched the match in bars, in public squares and at home.

The final whistle marked the start of ecstatic celebrations across cities and towns in Slovenia, with people streaming to squares and bars to revel in the glory.

An impromptu ceremony featuring the Slovenian team was staged in the centre of Maribor, with the players and the crowd of around 20,000 singing "We are the Champions" by Queen and jumping along to the traditional chant of "Those not jumping are not Slovene".

Among those celebrating were Slovenian officials, who watched the match in the company of the Russian President, Dmitry



Matjaz Kek, Slovenian coach: 'Our desires, our aims, our dreams have come true. I not only congratulate the lads, I bow to them. The celebrations are deserved. We have built our own story. For Slovenia, for everyone who believed in us, and also for our critics. We totally deserved the victory. It's all down to the lads: they gave it their all and they deserve to savour every moment of their triumph. At the end of the match they were all pushing forward as one. And I won't even mention the atmosphere. Today the southern end of the stadium was the heart of Slovenia.'

Zlatko Dedič, scorer of Slovenia's winning goal: 'Unbelievable. I don't know what to say. It hasn't really sunk in yet, but we are so happy, because what we have done is a big, big achievement. We were not afraid and we could see that we had opportunities. We kept on turning up the pressure and we got the goal. Then we started playing a bit more cautiously so as to hang on to our lead. It turned out well.'

Medvedev, in Maribor. President Danilo Türk and Prime Minister Borut Pahor were seeing smiling after the match and Pahor rushed to the locker room to congratulate the team.

Pahor also disclosed to the press that he had kept his promise of shining the players' boots: "I did a quick job, it was not the best shine, but enough for South Africa."

President Türk also made a cameo appearance at the team's celebrations in the centre of Maribor, even briefly taking the microphone and rousing the crowd with shouts of "champions!"

A crowd of around 10,000 gathered in the main square in Ljubljana to greet Slovenia's footballers one day after they qualified for the 2010 World Cup. The size of the crowd, massive for a country of only 2 million, is testament to the football fever that has gripped the country since it made it to the play-off for one of the last remaining spots in South Africa.

Prior to the ceremony in Preseren square, the team was received at the presidential palace by President Danilo Tuerk. Tuerk had been one of the most vocal supporters, even joining an impromptu celebration in the centre of Maribor with the team and taking the microphone to rouse the crowd with chants of "champions".

One of the aircraft that touched down in Maribor before the game was that of Russian billionaire Roman Abramovic, who owns the English Premier League club Chelsea.

Fans without tickets who planned to watch the match outside the stadium on a big screen had to watch it elsewhere as the Slovenian Football Association decided to cancel the gathering on security grounds.



Vesna Žarkovič, photo: STA

HOMAGE TO THE GREAT CERAR

The legendary Slovenian gymnast Miroslav Cerar, holder of an incredible 30 medals from major competitions – Olympic Games, world and European championships – and the greatest Slovenian sports person, reached the age of 70 at the end of October. Just a brief look at the list of sporting achievements of this perpetually modest and ascetic gymnast is more than enough to outline his greatness.

“Miroslav shone not only as a gymnast on the pommel horse, where he was in fact invincible, and for which he was also best known to the public, something that was perhaps a little amiss. This eclipsed his excellent performances on other equipment, when indeed he was the first person to succeed in winning twice in a row the title of European champion in the all-round event. As well as his achievements as a great fighter for fair play in sports. He consistently emphasised modesty and tolerance in sport,” as he is described by those close to him. Today they can still vividly recall the first impression upon meeting Miroslav, the future champion, at a joint training session in Ljubljana. “Even then he was clad with giant biceps like a bodybuilder, slender, elegant and gentle, and when he started his training on the horse, we thought: this is a revolution in gymnastics, it would be better for us to pack up and go home”. His life partner Zdenka Prusnik Cerar is delighted that together with their children they created the story that is now recorded.

Miroslav Cerar: “My close circle, with which I worked and trained for many years, is a distinct circle of people in which at any moment we can depend on each other. This commitment to each other taught us how to work, and everything we achieved, we achieved through our blisters, which also bled. We were all equals, although from different backgrounds and with different ideological outlooks. A supreme result was not what you would live on and delight in, but an activity that nurtured and taught you, and friendship is especially important. Sometimes the Russian competitors hinted at me that if I was in the Russian team, there might be a few more medals going.”



Through his example, Miroslav Cerar has set the bar extremely high for the younger generation of Slovenian gymnasts. For this reason Aljaž Pegan speaks with great respect about the achievements of his predecessor: “It’s hard to compare today’s gymnastics with the gymnastics of those times. They were different times and efforts, and achieving the kind of results that Miroslav and the other guys did was not easy. For myself I can say that I probably wouldn’t complete a single routine. I would like to thank all the gymnasts who made gymnastics popular enough for it to keep going and for the Slovenians to be a gymnastic nation.”

Cerar, born on 28 October 1939 in Ljubljana, is by far the most successful Slovenian sports person of all time. Alongside Leon Štukelj, the gymnastics legend between the two world wars, Cerar is the one who after the Second World War won the most medals at major competitions (from 1958 to 1970).

On his hallmark equipment, the pommel horse, in terms of the number of medals won it was only the Hungarian Zoltan Magyar who came close to him. The horse is the oldest piece of gymnastics equipment, and its original purpose was to develop martial skills. The technological development of the equipment also gave rise to the development of Miroslav Cerar’s mastery of it, and his exceptional performances on this equipment earned him some flattering nicknames, such as king of the pommel horse, the golden horseman and even the god of the horse.

Although Miroslav Cerar is famous for excelling on the horse, he was actually a very universal gymnast. He was in fact the first person to succeed in winning twice in a row the title of European champion in the all-round event – the combined performances on all equipment. At championships in Europe he also won medals on all the other equipment, winning the title of European champion on the rings, parallel bars and the bar.

He competed in three Olympic Games – in Rome in 1960, Tokyo in 1964 and Mexico City in 1968. He achieved his greatest success at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, where he won the gold medal on the horse and bronze on

the bar, while four years later in Mexico City he defended his Olympic title on the horse, although he himself says that in terms of his life he gained most from his first, unsuccessful appearance at the games in Rome.

His haul of 30 medals from major competitions includes 16 top distinctions: two titles of Olympic champion, four of world champion and ten of European champion. Cerar ended his extraordinary career with the title of world champion in 1970 in his home environment, taking his final leave of gymnastics arenas in Ljubljana’s Tivoli Hall with a gold on the horse. Yet Miroslav Cerar is not only distinguished for his sporting achievements, but also for his life outside of training and competitions. Alongside gymnastics he successfully studied law and for many years worked as a lawyer. There are few sports persons who can successfully combine studying with a career in top-level sports.

In addition to his sporting achievements, it is worth noting his important activities in the period when Slovenia gained independence. At the end of his career he became an active worker in sports, an exceptional champion of fair play, one of the founders of the Slovenian Olympic Committee and the Slovenian Olympic Academy, and he was an ambassador of Slovenia for sport, tolerance and fair play. Cerar also holds some high decorations, including the Olympic Order (L’Ordre Olympique), and the highest award of the former Yugoslavia (the AVNOJ Prize) and of Slovenia (Bloudek Prize). First and foremost, alongside all his domestic and international activities, he is a husband, father, grandfather and a role model for all younger generations.

To mark his 70th birthday, the Gymnastics Federation of Slovenia (GZS) published his biography entitled *Miroslav Cerar and His Times* [Miroslav Cerar in njegov čas]. On 19 October, the Slovenian President Danilo Türk awarded Miroslav Cerar the Gold Order of Merit for his great contribution in the field of sports and for the standing of Slovenia, as well as for his exceptional achievements in gymnastics.

slovenian delights



Janez Bogataj, photo: Tomo Jeseničnik

THE CUISINE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

In past centuries the majority population in the territory of present-day Slovenia was agricultural. It is therefore not surprising that so-called national cuisine is still dominated by a wide spectrum of dishes from individual regions of Slovenia and above all from rural culture. It would of course be wrong to stop with this social group when defining the national gastronomy, since the appearance and style of everyday and holiday dishes was also shaped by the urban middle class with their social position and culture. In feudal times the burgher class consisted of the inhabitants of towns and market towns who were personally free (i.e. freemen), were entitled to perform various economic activities, and had the right to administer towns. Their basic economic activities were crafts and commerce. It was above all through their participation in commerce, in particular through their trading contacts,

that a great variety of culinary novelties and values arrived in individual towns and regions from their immediate or more distant neighbourhood in central Europe. This applies in particular to influences from the Mediterranean and wider Alpine area and the Danube Basin. There were fewer influences from the Pannonian world and almost nothing from the Balkans. Influences from here are only found from the end of the Second World War.

Particularly in the 19th century, the concept of the burgher class began to take on more of a socioeconomic character. The members of the urban middle class were still involved in non-agrarian activities but were increasingly limited to ‘reputable’ professions. Thus the burgher class began to leave its mark on enterprise, commerce and crafts, while the ranks of the burghers produced state officials, teachers, members

of the liberal professions, etc. In this period the group gained new members even from villages, in other words former peasants. From the second half of the 18th century onwards, anyone who owned property in a town, was married and had proof of his activity, particularly a trade, could become a burgher. The whole of this broad spectrum of burgherdom was reflected in their culture and lifestyle. It is possible to talk about a specifically Slovenian burgher class and burgher culture, within which an important place is also occupied by food or cuisine. Given their higher level of education, the flow of various types of knowledge was much greater. This also applies to culinary knowledge, which at least from the second half of the 18th century spread more rapidly with the help of cookery books. In 2009 we are celebrating the 210th anniversary of the first cookery book in the Slovenian

language, written or rather translated from various German originals by the Slovenian Enlightenment poet Valentin Vodnik in 1799. This work, *Kuharske bukve*, with the slogan on the inside cover 'Good dishes for hungry people', is actually an excellent manual for getting to know contemporary central European dishes and, to a certain extent, French dishes too, and it was mainly aimed at middle-class cooks. Even in his introduction Vodnik stresses that 'it is not merely customary but also fitting that women should cook.' 'Scientific medicinal cooking in pharmacies', on the other hand, was to be left to men. The book is still extremely interesting today and the recipes it contains are increasingly frequently being used to prepare banquets and dinners. The fundamental importance of Vodnik's book, the influences of which are not to be perceived in Slovenian peasant cooking in any region, lies above all in the fact that it showed and proved that Slovenian culinary terminology was equal to that in other languages. This also meant raising the linguistic awareness of middle-class cooks, who often used a mixture of Slovenian and German words and various German

corruptions. This book marks the start of an extremely successful and numerous series of cookery books, beginning in 1868 with Magdalena Pleiweis and continued by Felicita Kalinšek, whose book has enjoyed numerous reprintings, including a number of revised editions, right up to the present day. Naturally all of these cookery books, all entitled *Slovenska kuharica* ('The Slovenian Cookery Book'), were mainly cookery books for Slovenians, since middle-class housewives continued to be exposed to and learn about the achievements of Viennese or Danube Basin cuisine.

From the second half of the 18th century onwards the Slovenian burgher class did not differ from other social groups merely in its more intensive consumption of culinary literature, but also in its material possibilities to acquire more varied foodstuffs, which thus meant a more varied menu and meals. We should not, however, forget what we said above about the fairly heterogeneous urban middle class in Slovenia. It is thus no surprise to learn that even in the years immediately preceding the Second World War cooks in reputable middle-class families still prepared, at least once a week, dishes

that were characteristic of peasants and their daily diet. For example cabbage, *žganci* (a dish made from maize, wheat or buckwheat flour), beans, turnip and also sweet cabbage. Of the 'holiday' dishes they would prepare *štruklji* (a savoury strudel-type dish) and various types of flatcakes.

Meals in middle-class families were eaten in dining-rooms, with the appropriate cutlery and tableware, and a fixed etiquette and rituals applying to meals. Many middle-class families had their own cooks to prepare their food, but in some households this was the work of the mistress of the house, helped by a maid. The dishes of the middle class were to a large extent based on European influences, particularly those of Viennese cuisine. The Danube Basin contributed a range of flour-based dishes and side dishes, and various types of omelettes and soufflés. Game was popular even in past centuries, when it was a privilege in the diet of middle-class and noble environments. Meat dishes could be eaten practically every day, since their means permitted it. Following the introduction of the potato, the characteristic middle-class Saturday or Sunday lunch developed over the course of a few decades.

It usually consisted of beef broth with noodles, boiled beef and occasionally a piece of roast veal or pork, roast potatoes, salad or some other vegetable side dish, and a pudding, which was most often an apple pie. Well-stocked markets of course gave variety to menus. Fish markets sold many types of freshwater fish, as well as sea fish. Markets also typically sold frogs' legs, turtles and various types of birds caught by bird-catchers in the town environs. Besides pasta, middle-class cuisine was also characterised by other flour-based dishes including various types of dumplings, some filled (apricot, plum, bilberry), *štruklji* (especially tarragon *štruklji* in spring and summer). The variety of soups was much greater than among peasant population. Above all it was seasonal in terms of the ingredients used. Since physical exertions were not part of the middle-class environment, this was also reflected by their soups. Thus they did not eat pork soups and hotpots. Middle-class cuisine was always introducing new things. Rice and rice dishes, coffee-drinking or cakes – which the peasant environment hardly knew at all right up until the end of the First World War. In autumn, family

Sunday get-togethers with peeled chestnuts, sweet cream and young wine were common. The Christmas holidays were traditionally marked by stockfish with potatoes and sauerkraut. For some years after the Second World War, Ljubljana's delicatessens (which no longer exist!) sold stockfish soaked in water containing beech ash from wooden tubs. Bread and pastries were bought from bakeries and breakfasts included butter, honey, jam and cheese. Evening meals were usually hot but not very substantial.

The Gastronomy Strategy of Slovenia (2006) includes a number of characteristic middle-class dishes, in particular those for which written evidence is available of their geographical origin in a specific urban environment. For example sautéed potatoes, fried frogs' legs, fried chicken thighs (known as 'flying *žganci*'), *Ljubljanska jajčna jed* (an egg dish), *štruklji*, *potice*, *Ljubljanski štrukelj* (a jam-filled dessert), and Ljubljana-style curd-filled pancakes. For the Maribor area the list includes the Pohorje-style omelette, the basic recipe of which derives from France, but which in Maribor was given the local twist of a filling of cranberries or fruits of the forest.



Nataša Benčič, Radio Koper, photo: Ubald Trnkoczy

ENTER WITH A SMILE

Director of photography. A person who sees and captures Beauty.

It is no coincidence that UBALD TRNKOCZY made his self-portrait in the reflection of the door of a famous establishment in Piran on which that very thought is written. Just as it is no coincidence that you can also see the bell tower of the Cathedral of St. George in the reflection. High above the town, for centuries it has protected people and Piran, providing the town's hallmark feature and recognisable image. For many years Ubald was employed at Televizija Slovenija, the national broadcasting station. As a young man he came to know the power and importance of light as a lighting technician, later he was assistant cameraman and cameraman, and for the last 15 years he has been a director of photography. During his time working for television he has shot more than 126 TV dramas, including 14 serials, countless miniatures, portraits and beautiful images. He has never been separated from the lens, be it a video or stills camera. He started taking photographs as a child, later giving 10 solo and many group exhibitions and multivisual presentations, and three years ago he published a monograph on Piran. It is titled *Modro zelena tišina*, or *Blue-Green Silence*. He loves Piran and its people. This love has lasted for at least 15 years now. With his wife Mirjam he has toured all the hidden corners of Slovenian Istria, and while waiting for the right light or the right moment, he has got to know people: "People are the key to the place. I was lucky to meet some wonderful people right at the beginning, and then this circle spread beyond the towns and through the villages... Whenever I was waiting for the right light, for the moment a bud opened into a flower, for a vine to acquire its true colour and the sea its true face, we often saw people observing us from a distance. Gradu-

ally they would come closer, and ask what I was doing. Then the conversation started, and they really opened up. We listened to life stories that compare to film scripts. The people in Slovenian Istria experienced a great deal of hardship, but they preserved their soul, their dignity and their heart. In contrast to many of us from the cities, who very quickly lose this; we are edgy, shameless, we hate and we rush."

This relationship of Ubald's with people is reflected in his spoken words and in the narrative we experience looking at his photography. All his exhibitions, including some set up permanently, convey respect for humans, their heritage, creativity and nature. Even the titles of these exhibitions and multivisual presentations tell of the poetic dimension of Ubald's soul and the messages inherent in the beauty presented to us: *Sun Song*, *Violin and Piran*, *Light of Piran Churches*, *Views*, *Peace and Good*, *Floating*, *It's nice being what you are*, *Stone on Stone* and so forth. Through the way he lives and works, in Piran, to which he still comes from Ljubljana, where he lives, he has pretty much softened the almost proverbial mistrust of Istrians towards outsiders. In Piran – perhaps he does not even know this – they call him "Our Ubald". He organises events, he collaborates with the tourism sector and the municipality, and his signature and organisation are behind the outstanding project "Photograph of the Month", which is held in the little chapel on Piran's Punta, and for many years it has presented each month the work of professional and amateur photographers. People encounter him, with his camera strapped to his shoulder, wherever something is going on. This allows the spontaneous creation of records of life,

glimpses that he records for eternity with his camera. Sometimes he waits a long, long time for the right moment: "The angel on top of the bell tower at the Cathedral of St. George was a big challenge for me. Twice a year, at the spring and autumn equinox, you can see it right in the middle of the round, setting sun. So I waited for it. In the first year, the weather was cloudy, then the wind turned it to face a different direction, then in the third year there were countless seagulls around it, and only in the fourth year was it set just as I wanted it. And I enjoyed it a lot more than if it had worked first time... Here, too, there is a lesson for life. There is nothing wrong if you don't succeed straight away, you shouldn't lose hope, and waiting can reward you."

Many of such photographs, rendered even finer by the wait, are collected in the Piran monograph *Blue-Green Silence*. Nature, people, sea, details of architecture, events, even animals.

"Together with my associates – the text was written by Irena Duša Draž, and Julija Zornik Strle did the design – we wanted to make a book that would be accessible to a wide circle of people, and not be yet another expensive book that would gather dust. We succeeded, people bought it, they sent it to people they know around the world, and they bought it for themselves. I worked hard to get around the formula of a standard monograph. I searched for metaphors, symbols and links. In Piran, for instance, there are a lot of cats. It's not Piran without them. So on one page I had a photo of real cats, and on the other, ceramic ones that Dubravka makes in her studio at Duka Gallery. This is all Piran. And the result is nice".

Ubald's story of his television years is calm





and happy. Although he has now been retired for a year or so, he still works occasionally for television. Right now he is finishing up a film by director Nuša Dragan about Piran in the Middle Ages, and through the camera lens he has learned how at one time the town was even better organised than today. There was nothing mediocrally murky about it. His walks around Piran also gave him a wonderful idea, which the local tourist industry has supported. On the external walls of the salt warehouses, past which runs the favourite seaside footpath from Piran to Portorož, he will place truly enormous photographs, several metres across, which will be lit up at night. They will make the walls prettier, and will show the beauty of these parts, and in the corner of each photograph will be another smaller one, showing clearly how you can get to the location in the big picture. Something similar to the Jakopič Walkway in Ljubljana, but different.

Retiring has not affected him, partly because he has had the great fortune to spend his whole life doing what really makes him happy. In the end, however, the moment comes when you have to stop, as Ubald says: "In the end I was disturbed by a lot of things and I became irritable. I can't stand lack of readiness and shallow work. The worst thing

for me was when we had just a few hours available for shooting the presentation of a person who had done something successful and lovingly all his life. That's not on. Being forced to work superficially and on the margins of quality, that's not for me! So perhaps I really was a pain," laughs Ubald.

I ask him about the possibilities for his own expression through the lens that perceives and sees. The book on Piran also notes the idea that a real viewer never shuts his eyes.

"The possibility of such expression is a great privilege and at the same time a great responsibility, something many people today do not realise. That at a given moment you are present and not objective, or you do something that seems to you ... it's not right. Viewers will see the event through your eyes. It's not right to present in a shallow way something to viewers that does not match the truth. Sometimes television can behave, I'm sorry, like a 'pig in the pumpkins'. I never wanted to shoot human hardship or tragedies, to push the camera ten centimetres from a sad face. What would I tell the viewer with that? If I don't capture something beautiful, or something that teaches us a beautiful lesson, I don't want to film it".

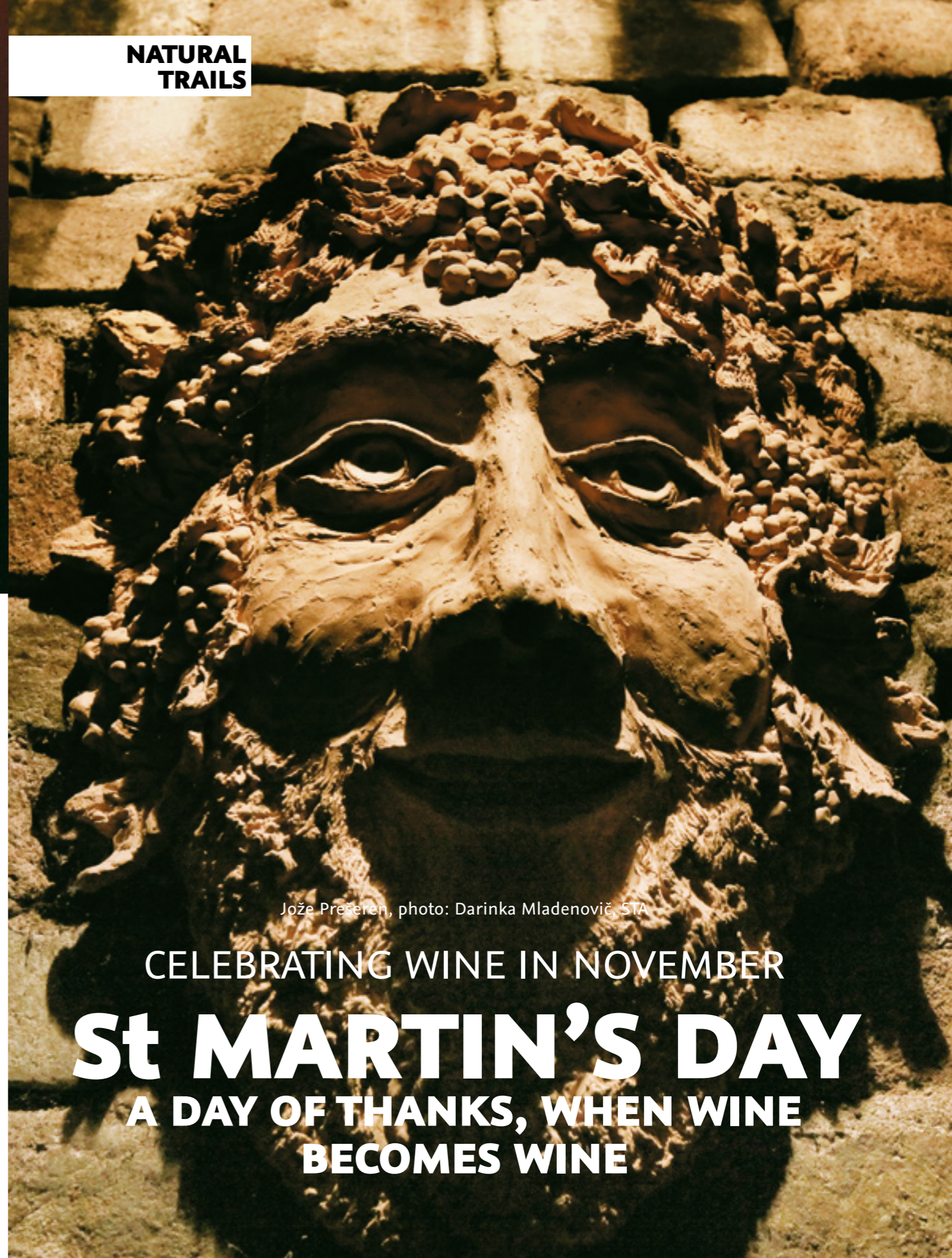
So what attracted him to it, then? Where did this desire arise in him to film things?

The name of a director, of colleagues, a good subject?

"Two genres always interested me in television. Firstly documentary films with subjects that are hard to express through the camera. Feelings such as hardship, joy, love... Filming something in such a way that the frame will express a Feeling. And the other genre – feature films, dramas and serials, where work with light is extremely important. That specifically is the best part of this profession. Whoever knows how to set up the lighting and achieve a good effect is really good in this profession. I had the fortune to work in television at a time when a lot was being filmed. I filmed more than 126 full-length feature broadcasts, which is an unbelievable record, something no one after me will be able to repeat. It's a shame that today there is no longer that kind of production. I had the fortune of the moment".

Ubald is of course not thinking of giving up photography. He loves doing it. And if his work is also valued by others, he is as happy as a child. This joy is expressed in everything he says and places on view. It is also reflected in his recollections, where the word 'we', meaning he and his Mirjam, is always used. Through the lens and just as he is, Ubald Trnkoczy enters with a smile.

NATURAL TRAILS



Jože Prešeren, photo: Darinka Mladenovič, STA

CELEBRATING WINE IN NOVEMBER
St MARTIN'S DAY
 A DAY OF THANKS, WHEN WINE
 BECOMES WINE

Last month in this section of the magazine we took a look at Slovenian grape-harvesting customs, which in reality hardly differ at all from such customs elsewhere in the world. Of course, everything depends above all on the people who take part in this type of work, as well as on the layout of the land on which the vineyards are located. In Slovenia it is difficult to find a vineyard that has grown up on level ground; as a rule, they are located on steep sunny slopes and, precisely because of this, vineyard work is particularly hard, since the difficult terrain often makes it impossible to use any mechanised equipment at all. This also and above all applies to the work that goes into harvesting the grapes. Vineyard owners have therefore gradually abandoned certain 'difficult' sites, focusing instead on those vineyards in which more modern, machine-aided production is possible. Experts are generally agreed that while there are fewer and fewer vineyards in Slovenia, with a number already being overgrown, the Slovenian wine harvest is increasing in quality and quantity every year as a result of intensive production. Naturally, Slovenia cannot expect to find itself mentioned in the same breath as the world's most famous wine-producing countries such as France, Italy, Spain, the United States or Australia; that said, 20th place does not seem that bad, particularly when one considers the size of the country.

The hard work invested in recent years in all areas has borne fruit for Slovenian wine producers – and the increasing amount of attention paid to the quality of the wines has not gone unnoticed by some of the best-known wine professionals, who are already aware that Slovenia is more than capable of producing a superb product whose quality frequently exceeds that of some of the best known wines from around the world ... Some winegrowers have even managed to enter the elite company of influential wine producers,

and Slovenia has become a frequent stop on the itineraries of leading wine writers, who are amazed at the exceptional quality of the country's top wines, which they believe deserve a greater degree of worldwide fame.

November is the month of maturing wine and giving thanks for the vintage

After a full year's hard work in the vineyards and cellars, the country's numerous winemakers impatiently look forward to the month of November, which is when the workers can relax a little and we get the first inklings of the quality of the vintage (bearing in mind that while 'young' wine will already be showing its true character, it is to early to talk of maturity.) The real holiday for winegrowers (and wine drinkers for that matter) is 11 November, when St Martin's Day is celebrated. The Church placed this day in the calendar to take possession of the old pagan customs and practices, when the people living in this climate zone would give thanks for a good harvest and stock up for the winter months, as pointed out by the well-known ethnologist Dr Niko Kuret. This is a happy relaxed holiday that we like to celebrate twice rather than once: if St Martin's Day falls on a weekday, we often celebrate it on the previous and subsequent weekends as well. 'Martinovo', as the Slovenes call it, has therefore become a Slovenian day of thanks, when people connected in any way with the land give thanks for all the produce of the land, and especially for the juice of the noble grape. This is when all those who have taken part in

the work gather, along with numerous relatives and family friends, in vineyard cottages, homes and restaurants.

St Martin has been the subject of great veneration in Slovenia for centuries. A large number of churches have been dedicated to him and many places around the country named after him (there are 17 villages bearing the name of 'Šmartno' in Slovenia). But why is St Martin associated with this autumn feast day? One Christian account says that Martin was a young soldier in the Roman cavalry who was greatly affected by the cruelty of army life and the incessant fighting. When he was 18 years of age, he left the army and devoted himself to the Christian life. He soon became known for his kindness, fairness and other virtues – so much so that they wanted to make him Bishop of Poitiers in France in the year 371. Martin believed that he was unworthy of the honour; so, when the Church delegation arrived, he hid in the monastery coop, among the geese – whose cackling gave him away. To get over his embarrassment, he honoured his visitors by treating them to roast goose and opening a barrel of 'must' (mošt in Slovene), which he blessed and declared to be mature wine. This St. Martin's Day ritual was taken up by the entire Christian world, though it does seem to have been created especially for Slovenes – perhaps also because Martin was born in the vicinity of the territory of the Slovenian nation, in present-day Hungary.

At various St Martin's Day celebrations, especially those attended by larger numbers of people, it is not rare to come across more or less playful re-enactments of the blessing of the wine, with St Martin putting in an appearance in all his ecclesiastical finery; the individual's verbal dexterity will, of course, determine how well and how 'spiritually' he tells the assembled company that the 'must' has suddenly and for some reason disappeared, to be replaced with lovely

young wine. It is interesting to see that St Martin's Day is celebrated in almost exactly the same way in all Slovenian wine regions.

St Martin himself was responsible for Slovenia's classic St Martin's Day meal of roast goose, stewed red cabbage and the crispy flatbreads known as mlinci. This is, of course, only one of the possible dishes prepared on the day – every mistress or master of the house will see to the necessary accompaniments or maybe to a different dish, with duck, roast chicken, farm-reared hen, turkey or roast pork being possible alternatives to goose ... Butchers and others have made adjustments in order to keep up with the demands of this feast day, since goose and duck, which cannot be reared in sufficient quantities on Slovenian farms, are also imported, mostly from Hungary. In any case, these celebrations, which in places spill over into proper public parties, feature robust food that makes people all the more eager to taste the wine. This year, Slovenia's biggest St Martin's Day celebration will once again take place in Ormož and around other winegrowing areas in the Prlekija region. It is indeed in the matter of food that the greatest differences in the way St Martin's Day is celebrated around the country can be seen, since almost every region boasts its own culinary specialities. So, for example, in Brda, no feast is complete without an omelette or fritalja, and polenta, while in Bela Krajina there would be no excuse for not serving the famous freshly baked flat cake, or pogača, typical of the region. And nowhere will the celebrations take place without tables groaning with delicious homemade meat dishes of one sort or another. St Martin's Day in the Karst would, of course, be incomplete without air-dried ham (pršut) or bacon (panceta), and the same goes for Pomurje and its specialities.



Three wine regions, nine wine districts

Slovenia can be regarded as one of the more traditional wine-producing countries in Europe. Under the law, the country is divided into three wine regions: Podravje, Posavje and Primorska. These regions are further divided into districts. The Podravje wine region is divided into the Prekmurje and Štajerska Slovenia districts, Posavje into Bizeljsko-Sremič, Bela Krajina and Dolenjska districts, and Primorska into Goriška Brda, Vipava, the Karst and Slovenian Istria.

The largest wine district in Slovenia is undoubtedly Štajerska Slovenia, which in recent years has undergone a great deal of ownership restructuring, with the owners of the former large winegrowing concerns being replaced; a great many large cellars have been renovated and the district has met a great deal of sales success on the international market. It is also the most extensive in geographical terms, since it is stretched between Lendavske Gorice, Slovenske Gorice, Maribor, Haloze and Virštanj.

The district is most famous for its white wines, although winegrowers there are increasingly experimenting with reds, which are becoming more and more popular among consumers. It is also home

to the best-known and oldest Slovenian sparkling wine. The main wine variety in this district is Laški Rizling, followed by Šipon, Renski Rizling and others.

The Posavje wine region boasts a range of protected wines with traditional designations, led of course by the popular red wine Cviček, the real symbol of Dolenjska, and followed by red and white Bizeljčan. Bela Krajina stands by its Metliška Črnina (red) and its white Belokranjec, which has just been awarded protected status.

Primorska, with its four wine districts, offers a whole range of different whites and reds. Brda, which was once known primarily for its Rebula (white) and Merlot (red), is now offering a series of premium-quality wines developed by individual growers. Vipava is proud of its excellent Merlot, Barbera and Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as great white wines such as Zelen and Pinela. The Karst is home to Teran, which is made from the Refošk grape, but also makes other types of wine. Slovenian Istria also has a range of excellent wines, and is best known for its Refošk (red) and Malvazija (white).

Whether you toast good company with red or white, with wine from Štajerska, Dolenjska or Primorska, there are two words you need in Slovenia: 'Na zdravje!' (which is our way of saying 'Cheers!'). (Of course, we should remind you at this point of the importance of drinking in moderation.)

NATURAL TRAILS



**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**



Bohinj lake
Photo: Darinka Mladenović