

# Sinfo 04

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The latest from Slovenia



ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA: **Slovenia must find optimism and hope but above all, it needs cooperation**  
IN FOCUS INTERVIEW: **What matters most is the right story** SPORT INTERVIEW: **Tina Maze**

# 14. Festival of Volunteering May 18 to 25

Main event:  
Kongresni trg, May 23



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA NOTRANJE ZADEVE IN JAVNO UPRAVO



## ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA 7

Eleventh Slovenian government

**Slovenia must find optimism and hope but above all, it needs cooperation**



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA

## IN FOCUS INTERVIEW 25

What matters most is the right story

**Aljoša Bagola**

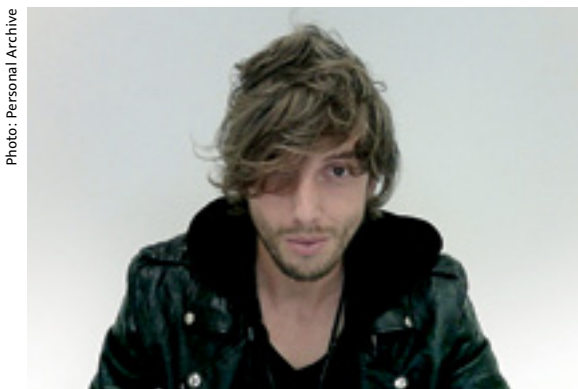


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## SPORT INTERVIEW 44

Simply the Best

**Tina Maze**



Photo: Stanko Gruđen / STA

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Photo: Bruno Toič

Tanja Glogovčan, editor

## Slovenia to aMaze

On 20 March, Slovenia acquired a new government, led by Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek. In this edition of Sinfo, we introduce the new government team and the essential elements of its coalition programme – measures to ensure the stability of the state – which the Prime Minister has already presented also in Brussels. The Prime Minister assured her discussion partners that Slovenia is not, and will not be, the next Cyprus. Another important event in the political arena was the unanimous ratification of Croatia's EU Accession Treaty by Slovenian MPs.

We were particularly excited about our sportsmen and women this winter. It is true that Tina Maze was the most outstanding, but others also deserve our appreciation. They reminded us that we must believe in ourselves, work together, make the right decisions, be committed to our goals and work hard. You can read an interview with this champion of the white slopes inside. We also put her on the front page: she deserves it.

Attractive stories make us happy and inspire us. An attractive story is felt whether it springs from joy or pain. What matters most is the right story is the title of the interview with Aljoša Bagola, the Executive Creative Director of the Pristop advertising agency.

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and a Slovenian business delegation visited Japan in March. The article highlights opportunities for cooperation and what Slovenian and Japanese markets expect and seek from one another. According to Shigemi Jomori, the Ambassador of Japan to Slovenia, to whom we spoke, the two countries do not have enough information about each other.

At the beginning of February, the Bank of Slovenia issued a commemorative two-euro coin to mark the 800th anniversary of the first visit to Postojna Cave, or the oldest recorded graffiti signature in Postojna Cave. In French expert literature, this marks the beginning of scientific speleology, because this was the signature of the first speleologist in the world, who was drawn to the depths of the cave by a sense of exploration and curiosity. Several pages in Sinfo are thus dedicated to Postojna Cave, one of the most popular Slovenian sights of interest.

Indeed – Slovenia is an amazing place!



Photo: Bruno Točič

## Ready for what the future brings

In the past few weeks, Slovenia has been in the centre of global media attention. For the first time since independence in 1991, there has hardly been a journalist, newspaper or television channel not interested in the future steps Slovenia's new government and Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek are going to take to avoid a bailout.

Justified or not, the attention is here and we are determined to make the most of it. First of all, in the words of our Prime Minister, we have to convince the shareholders to operate with numbers and not speculations. Numbers speak for themselves, and many of Slovenia's macroeconomic indicators are better than average among the EU member states. Our government debt is lower than the EU average and the size of our banking sector in relation to GDP is significantly lower than the countries that we have been compared to. Both the European Commission and the OECD have recognized that Slovenia has absolutely no need to request bailout financing.

Nevertheless, we clearly cannot claim that our banking sector is in the best of health. We need to continue with reforms and consolidate our finances. We are well aware of the situation we are in and can clearly state that we are prepared for the tasks ahead of us. Slowly but surely, we will prove that we can rise to the challenge and will be able to step ahead on the path of growth. Then the newspaper columns will once again be filled with good news from a country of hardworking and motivated people.

## The doors are open to cooperation

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Alenka Bratušek, attended the reception for the newly elected Slovenian Government hosted by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor.

In a short address, she thanked the President for his words of encouragement and said: "Our project at this moment is Slovenia in 2013, because we are all aware that the year before us is the key year. Hard work awaits us, however, we are not afraid of it. We know that there will be many obstacles, but we are ready to face them." Ms Bratušek continued that Slovenia is a stable country, therefore any comparisons with Cyprus are not appropriate nor necessary at this time. President Borut Pahor then addressed the gathered guests and said that at this moment Slovenia "needs practical measures and visionary action". The President wished the Prime Minister and the Government all the best and a lot of courage and luck. He expressed his readiness for cooperation, which the Prime Minister accepted with the words "government's doors will always be open for good initiatives".



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The President Borut Pahor wished the Government all the best.



Photo: Stanko Cruden/STA

## Boštjan Jazbec was appointed governor of Slovenia's central bank

Boštjan Jazbec, a senior adviser with the IMF, was appointed governor of Slovenia's central bank by the National Assembly in a 77-7 vote. He will take over from Marko Kranjec for a six-year term in mid-July.

Jazbec was promised support by all deputy groups except the Social Democrats (SD), who said they did not share his views on fixing Slovenia's ailing banking system and restarting the economy. But the other deputy groups hailed his nomination as injecting a breath of fresh air and a high degree of expertise to the central bank.

In his first statement after the vote, the 43-year-old Jazbec reiterated the position that Slovenia can solve its problems without needing to ask for international aid.

## Tomaž Vesel is the choice of the President of the Republic

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, informed Janko Veber, President of the National Assembly, that he is nominating Tomaž Vesel, Supreme State Auditor at the Court of Audit, as the new President of the Court of Audit.

President Pahor submitted his official proposal for the candidate of the President of the Court of Audit after candidates had been introduced to all deputy groups and after informal consultation sessions with leaders of deputy groups, from which the President established that Vesel enjoys the necessary support. The term of the current President, Igor Šoltes, ends on 31 May.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Tomaž Vesel, Supreme State Auditor

## The New President of the National Assembly is Janko Veber

Members of Parliament selected Janko Veber as President of the National Assembly, with 52 votes for and 34 against.

Janko Veber followed the leader of the Civic List party, Gregor Virant, who resigned as President of the National Assembly (NA) after his party left the coalition of Prime Minister Janez Janša in January. Since then, the President has been replaced by the oldest Vice-President of the NA, Jakob Presečnik.

Veber was first elected to the Assembly in 1996. So far, he has been a member of the parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Committee on the Environment and Spatial Planning, and the Transport Board, which he also managed in the previous term of office. He was also Vice-President of the Motorway Construction Investigation Commission. At the beginning of the current term of office, the Social Democrat membership unanimously confirmed Veber as leader of their parliamentary group; he is also a member of the Constitutional Commission and the Commission for Public Office and Elections.



Photo: Tamino Petelinček/STA

Janko Veber is the tenth President of the National Assembly in Slovenian parliamentary history.

## Slovenia has a new Human Rights Ombudsman

The term of office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Vlasta Nussdorfer, has officially started. Nussdorfer was appointed new Human Rights Ombudsman by the National Assembly at the beginning of February. Her term of office commenced on 23 February 2013.

82 Members of Parliament voted for her appointment. This is the highest vote for an Ombudsman in Slovenia so far. On taking up her post, Nussdorfer announced that she would strive to help the weakest and helpless during her term of office. The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, wished her "lots of courage, prudence and fortitude".

Nussdorfer has 35 years of experience in the judicial system and 10 years in the non-governmental sector. Working as the Attorney General, she was known to the public for her voluntary work; among other activities, she was President of the 'Beli obroč' association, helping victims of crime.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Vlasta Nussdorfer is the fourth Human Rights Ombudsman in the Republic of Slovenia.

## Pope Francis's Installation Mass

President Borut Pahor attended the inauguration mass of Pope Francis and held several bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the event.

Borut Pahor highlighted Pope Francis's message of modesty: "This is very important...A large part of humanity feels inequality. His decision to illustrate this humility is for me a key message."

President Pahor met on the sidelines of the event his Italian counterpart Giorgio Napolitano, US Vice-president Joe Biden, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, Canada Governor General David Johnston, and Slovenian Cardinal Franc Rode.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

More than a hundred government delegations and several hundred thousand believers attended the ceremony in St Peter's Square which marked the beginning of Pope Francis's pontificate.

## Slovenia must find optimism and hope but above all, it needs cooperation

On 20 March 2013, the National Assembly appointed the eleventh Slovenian government, which will be led by Alenka Bratušek, MSc. The cabinet team comprises two female and eleven male ministers.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The cabinet team comprises two female and eleven male ministers.

In addition to Bratušek, who is the leader of the Positive Slovenia party, the government also includes two presidents of coalition partners i.e. the leader of the Citizen's List, Gregor Virant, acting as Minister of the Interior and Public Administration, and the leader of the Pensioners' Party, Karl Erjavec, who is serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The president of the fourth coalition partner, Dr Igor Lukšič, the leader of the Social Democrats, is not in the cabinet.

### ELEVENTH SLOVENIAN GOVERNMENT

The ministers in the eleventh Slovenian government are: Dr Uroš Čufer, Minister of Fi-

nance; Karl Viktor Erjavec, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Dr Tomaž Gantar, Minister of Health; Dr Uroš Grilc, Minister of Culture; Samo Omerzel, Minister of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning; Roman Jakič, Minister of Defence; Tina Komel, Minister without Portfolio for Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and the Autochthonous Slovenian National Community in Neighbouring Countries, and between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad; Dr Anja Kopač Mrak, Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Dr Jernej Pikalo, Minister of Education, Science and Sport;

Dr Senko Pličanič, Minister of Justice; Stanko Stepišnik, MSc, Minister of Economic Development and Technology; Dr Gregor Virant, Minister of the Interior and Public Administration and Dejan Židan, MSc, Minister of Agriculture and the Environment.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

In her speech after the inauguration, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek repeated the key objectives which she highlighted as PM designate: calming the political situation, consolidating public finances, rehabilitating the banks and stimulating economic growth. She stressed her

In her speech after the inauguration, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek repeated the key objectives which she highlighted as PM designate: calming the political situation, consolidating public finances, rehabilitating the banks and stimulating economic growth.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Ms Alenka Bratušek, thanked the former Prime Minister, Mr Janez Janša, for all the good things that his government did for Slovenia, and told that her government team would continue with all the good projects already underway.



Photo: Sanjko Gruden/STA



Photo: Nebojša Tajić/STA

Four leaders of coalition partners: Karl Erjavec, President of Pensioner's Party, Dr Igor Lukšič, President of Social Democrats, Alenka Bratušek Msc, President of the Positive Slovenia party, Dr Gregor Virant, President of the Citizen's List.

In conclusion, the former Prime Minister congratulated Prime Minister Bratušek on the appointment of the government and expressed the hope that she would work for the common good.

awareness of the responsibility, and said she believed she would be able to lead the team on the path to positive change for the good of all Slovenian citizens. Janko Veber, President of the National Assembly, said that he wished the Prime Minister and her ministers would do all in their power to encourage economic growth in Slovenia and ensure new jobs.

**THE HANDOVER OF BUSINESS BETWEEN THE NEW AND FORMER CABINETS**

The new Prime Minister, Alenka Bratušek, thanked the former

Prime Minister, Janez Janša, for the good work his government had done for Slovenia. She stressed that her government would continue to implement all the good policies that had been initiated. She emphasised that she and her team would focus on the future, and added that they were aware that difficult times and a lot of hard work lie ahead for Slovenia and that the change in the government team does not signify an end to problems. In her presentation, she said: "My team is young, educated and full of optimism. At a time of great distrust in politicians, our political inex-

perience will be our advantage rather than our weakness. We care about the country and the people and not about ourselves, and I will manage the country together with my entire ministerial team in the same spirit."

After the handover of business, the former Prime Minister said in his press release that he was satisfied with the government's work, regardless of the brevity of his term, because some important reforms were undertaken in that time. In conclusion, the former Prime Minister congratulated Prime Minister Bratušek on the appointment of



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

"My team is young, well educated and full of optimism, and, in the time when people do not trust politicians, our political youth will be more of an advantage than a weakness. It is all about the country and its people and not us, and this is also the principle on which, together with my ministerial team, I will govern the country," noted Ms Bratušek.

the government and expressed the hope that she would work for the common good.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT**

Since the election of the eleventh Slovenian Government in the National Assembly, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek has been receiving congratulations on her appointment. The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr Borut Pahor, was among the first to congratulate Ms Bratušek on the nomination of her ministerial team. He also wished her every success in the work of the

Government and expressed his readiness for cooperation for the benefit of the country and its citizens. In his message of congratulations, the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso, said that her appointment came at a challenging time for Slovenia and the European Union and that he was confident she would make a valuable contribution to the joint efforts to strengthen the Union. On behalf of the European Commission and himself, he wished the new Prime Minister every success in her mandate, adding that he was looking forward to working with her.

Ms Bratušek also received a letter of congratulations from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Zoran Milanović. He emphasised the commitment of Croatia to continue with good neighbourly cooperation and expressed his expectation to meet in person soon. The Metropolitan Archbishop of Ljubljana, Msgr Anton Stres, congratulated Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek on the appointment of her cabinet, wishing her every success in the running of the Government for the good of all the citizens of Slovenia, as well as personal happiness.

Taking over from former Prime Minister Janez Janša, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek announced: "Slovenia must kick-start its economy, create new jobs, find optimism and hope but above all, it needs cooperation."

## Slovenia does not require foreign aid

After the bank crisis erupted in Cyprus, there was great speculation among the public about whether Slovenia would also seek foreign financial aid. Prime Minister Bratušek and Financial Minister Čufer are certain that this will not happen. Their opinion is shared by some important Slovenian and foreign economic experts and politicians in Brussels.



Photo: Thierry Monasse/STA

At the discussion, Prime Minister Bratušek highlighted that Slovenia is aware of the situation and tasks ahead, and presented the current and planned measures for overcoming current problems. She particularly stressed that Slovenia is able to resolve these issues alone, and expressed her satisfaction that, similarly to the President of the Commission, the Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD also shares this opinion.

“Slovenia is among the EU countries with the lowest debt. The unemployment rate is lower than the EU average. It has a positive balance of payments and a new Government with great determination to do everything possible to solve problems on its own,” said the Prime Minister after meeting the President of the European Commission.

Knowing that foreign financial markets can only be convinced by concrete objectives and solid arguments, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Alenka Bratušek, first went to Brussels, where she met José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council and Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament. The Prime Minister assured her discussion partners that Slovenia would continue to take measures to ensure the stability of the state. During her first working visit to Brussels, the Prime Minister also visited the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the European Union, where she met

Ambassador Rado Genorio and the staff at the Representation.

### **SLOVENIA WILL CONTINUE TO CUT COSTS AND CONSOLIDATE PUBLIC FINANCE**

Among the planned measures, the Prime Minister highlighted the stabilisation of the banking system and expressed certainty that settling bad debts through the bad bank will commence as early as in June.

She assured her discussion partners in Brussels that Slovenia would continue with savings and the consolidation of public finance, but in a way that does not reduce the economic growth. The Prime Minister said that the Slovenian Gov-

ernment will start privatisation processes before the summer, because this will be the only way to ensure fresh capital for new investments, enhance economic growth and create new jobs. “Slovenia is a stable and strong country, possibly stronger than many other European countries,” stressed Bratušek. While noting the assessment of the former first economist of Deutsche Bank, Thomas Mayer, who assessed Slovenia as one of the strongest members of the Eurozone; according to him, only Germany and Estonia are less likely to collapse financially. After the meeting, José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, said that Slovenia was facing a serious task, but he stressed that the



Photo: Thierry Monasse/STA

President Barroso stressed that he ‘admires the determination of the Prime Minister to strengthen the Slovenian economy’ and noted that her immediate visit to Brussels was a clear sign that the new Government had dedicated a lot of attention to the new European reform agenda.

meeting had given him ‘a feeling of confidence that Slovenia will rise to the occasion’. The President of the Commission asked Slovenia for concrete proposals to resolve key issues, not only with regard to the banks, but also in macro-economic terms. The Slovenian Government must submit a concrete plan to Brussels at the beginning of May. In the budget and reform plan, the Government must thus define a comprehensive and detailed strategy to resolve the issue of macro-economic imbalances. The Commission will then examine the plan closely, assess it and provide recommendations for action which will be unveiled on 29 May.

President Barroso also men-

tioned explicitly that he congratulated Prime Minister Bratušek on a ‘very inspiring vote in the Slovenian National Assembly to support Croatia’s accession to the EU’. He said that the Commission saw this as ‘a very important gesture of friendship between two countries’, of which one is, and the other is soon to be, a member of the EU.

### **COMPARISON WITH CYPRUS IS INAPPROPRIATE**

The Prime Minister responded to recent speculations on financial aid by saying that Slovenia is not a tax oasis, but an export-oriented economy. She stressed that Slovenia is among the EU countries which have the least

debt. It has a positive balance of payments and a new Government with great determination to do everything possible to solve problems on its own. President Barroso also rejected the comparison with Cyprus, because he believes that situations in both countries are completely different.

### **THE MOST URGENT MEASURE IS BANK REHABILITATION**

Not only notable politicians in Brussels, but also Yves Leterme, Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said upon the introduction of the OECD’s Economic Survey that Slovenia can still fulfil its obligations and, that on the ba-

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Photo: Stanjo Cruden/STA

The OECD suggests Slovenia implement and publish publicly new comprehensive stress tests and diligent reviews on the basis of conservative and transparent assumptions. This should strengthen the trust of investors.

The Slovenian Government will start privatisation processes before the summer, because this will be the only way to ensure fresh capital for new investments, enhance economic growth and create new jobs.

sis of the OECD assessment, there is no need for international aid. Mr Leterme also said that the Government had so far been able to settle its financial obligations and there are no reasons to expect that Slovenia requires international aid. However, in order to improve its situation in financial markets, the Government must take action, particularly by enhancing the banking sector and implementing structural reforms for long-term sustainability and sufficient economic growth.

After examining the Survey, Dr Uroš Čufer, the Minister of Finance, assessed that it is qualitative and complies with the government findings on the Stability Programme, which is being prepared by the Ministry and the Government. Stimulating economic growth and fiscal consolidation are the Government's priorities, and the rehabilitation of banks is the most urgent measure. Relating to the latter, he said that the bad bank will implement the first transfers of bad debt already this

summer. He emphasised that the concept remains the same, and that the adopted act is good and workable enough. He also mentioned that the identification and segmentation of the bank's assets is currently underway.

With reference to fiscal consolidation, Minister Čufer highlighted that the Government will continue to strive to reduce the structural shortcoming i.e. that part of the national debt which is not related to combating recession. "The focus will be on the search for measures on the side of expenditure. The measures to be found will have to be of a permanent, not a temporary nature; they will not be concerned with making repairs. However, this will not be enough. Measures will also have to be found on the income side i.e. taxes."

The new Governor of the Bank of Slovenia, Dr Boštjan Jazbec, who takes office in July, is certain that Slovenia does not need international aid to solve the banking and financial crisis. "The mea-

asures drafted by the previous Government, which are being continued by the current Government, are the assurance that aid will not be required," he stressed.

Dr Jazbec also highlighted that bankers know that the banking system is in serious need of rehabilitation, the balancing of public expenditure and reforms, which will help to accelerate economic growth and create new jobs. He characterised the current crisis as an opportunity to end bad practices in managing state property and ownership transformations, which can be understood as possible causes of the current banking and financial crisis.

According to Dr Jazbec, we have to understand that the crisis occurred not only in Slovenia, but has also affected other economies around the world that are similar to ours.

Dr Jože Mencinger, an economist and the Minister of Economy in the first Slovenian Government,



Photo: Aljoša Rehar/STA

Presentation of the annual monitoring to German-speaking investors in Slovenia in mid-April. In the photograph: Christian Miller, representative of Austrian companies in Slovenia; Tjaša Cetinski, purchasing and sales manager at Helli Saturnus Slovenija; Gertrud Rantzen, president of the Slovenian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Robert Reich, the Swiss Ambassador to Slovenia, and Gerald Schmidt, general manager of BSH Hišni aparati.

assesses the OECD's Survey as correct. With regard to the economic and financial policy of the Bratušek's Government, Dr Mencinger called upon the public to give the new Government some time, because the situation in Slovenia in his opinion is already taking a turn for the better.

**IT IS NOT TRUE THAT SLOVENIA HAS NO IDEAS OR A VISION FOR A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS**

Foreign markets important to Slovenia on its way to recovery are also markets of the former common state and the German market or German capital.

In his address to Slovenian and Croatian entrepreneurs at the consultation session on business cooperation with Croatia at the end of March, Samo Hribar Milič, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, warned against assessments which predicted Slovenia would be heading in the same direction as Cyprus, and stressed that fear

was unjustified. Nevertheless, the fact is that the Government has to take fast and efficient measures. On that occasion, he pointed out three misconceptions of the public about Slovenia. He claimed that it is not true that there are no ideas and a vision for a way out of the crisis in Slovenia. There are infrastructural and energy projects waiting for the green light. In his opinion, it is also not true that there is not enough knowledge in Slovenia. And last, but not least, it is not true that there is no money or capital to start up the economy. The capital can be acquired from the European Investment Bank, the EBRD and the EU funds. According to Mr Hribar Milič, Slovenia should consider the accession of Croatia to the EU as an opportunity.

There are somewhat more than 550 companies in Slovenia with German capital, which employ more than 46,000 people, create one-fifth of revenue in industry and have an annual turnover of seven billion euros. These are particularly export-oriented

companies. This year, there has been an increase in dissatisfaction in companies with German capital, especially because of corruption, and it has been known for quite some time that tax burdens, tax system burdening and high labour costs are the basis for the reservations of foreign investors. In spite of the weaknesses of the market, German companies persevere in Slovenia, mainly due to its high-quality work force and expertise.

**TRUST IN SLOVENIA HAS TO BE RESTORED**

Slovenia and Cyprus are not in the same situation and there are also no indications that the countries will share a similar fate. However, the fact is – and the Government is also aware of it – that trust in Slovenia has to be restored as soon as possible. As President Barroso said in Brussels, Slovenia must not only implement the necessary reforms, but must also build a national consensus to implement them.

Stimulating economic growth and fiscal consolidation are the Government's priorities, and the rehabilitation of banks is the most urgent measure. Uroš Čufer, Minister of Finance, said that the bad bank will implement the first transfers of bad debt already this summer.

## Slovenia's unanimous YES to Croatia's accession to the EU

At its session on 2 April, in the presence of Zoran Milanović, Croatian Prime Minister, and Vesna Pusić, Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovenian deputies unanimously ratified the Croatian Accession Treaty. According to Slovenian and Croatian political leaders, this paves the way for closer cooperation, particularly on economic matters.



Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA

"Slovenia is certain that the enlargement of the EU brings stability, democracy and economic success," emphasised Prime Minister Bratušek in her address after the unanimous ratification.

Prime Minister Bratušek noted that this moment signified a 'special and important day' for both countries and is proof that Slovenia has fully embraced the European policy of co-existence and solidarity.

The accession of Croatia to the European Union will reduce administrative barriers in business transactions and eliminate levies, and with the entry of the neighbouring country to the common European market, customs inspections will also be abolished. Police inspections will end when Croatia enters the Schengen area.

### SLOVENIA HAS FULLY EMBRACED THE EUROPEAN POLICY

Alenka Bratušek, the Slovenian Prime Minister, Zoran Milanović, the Croatian Prime Minister, Janko Veber, the President of the Slovenian National Assembly, Karl Erjavec, the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Vesna

Pusić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, discussed the importance of the ratification and options for cooperation between both countries within the EU.

Prime Minister Bratušek noted that this moment signified a 'special and important day' for both countries and is proof that Slovenia has fully embraced the European policy of co-existence and solidarity. She stressed the idea that 'the European path unites and creates important alliances'. She expressed her happiness that her first foreign guest was the Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, with whom she held a brief meeting before the session of the National Assembly. "This

was proof of good relations between the countries," she added and expressed pleasure that the former Prime Minister, Janez Janša, had accepted her invitation and was present on this occasion at the National Assembly. At the end of her address, the Prime Minister congratulated Croatia on its expected accession to the EU and wished it 'the best of luck in this new and large family'.

### IN INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES IS DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS

On this occasion, the Prime Minister thanked all the experts and team members on both sides who participated in this impor-



Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA

Similarly, the Croatian Prime Minister, Zoran Milanović, also stressed that he was hoping for the economic growth of both countries and believed that Croatia's accession to the EU would also benefit Slovenia.



Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

Vesna Pusić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who also came to Ljubljana, created a framework solution for the issue of Ljubljanska banka with her Slovenian colleague, Karl Erjavec, in February.

tant and challenging project, which required their firm belief in the vitality of the European project and the aptness of finding compromise solutions. "Slovenia is certain that the enlargement of the European Union enhances the stability of democracy and economic success, which are both in our interest. Also, the financial crisis we are facing will be overcome more easily with joint efforts," added Prime Minister Bratušek. The Prime Minister wished Croatia good luck and great success in the new extended European family.

In his statement after the vote, Janko Veber, the President of the Slovenian National Assem-

bly, also congratulated Croatia on its expected accession to the EU. He assessed that the result had shown that Croatian accession to the EU was important for both Slovenia and Croatia. He also stressed the shared history of the countries and the wish that 'life along the border will become more pleasant' and that the interests of the region would be more strongly represented in the future than at present, when Slovenia is the only member of the EU from the former Yugoslavia. He wished a lot of success to Croatia in the elections for the European Parliament and good cooperation between the deputies of both national assemblies 'also in order to represent the

interests and importance of the region' in the EU.

The Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović first thanked Prime Minister Bratušek, and then also all those who participated in resolving the issues which eventually led to ratification. Prime Minister Milanović particularly thanked Slovenian deputies for the ratification. Because it was unanimous, it also had symbolic significance, he observed. In his address, he stressed the correlation of economic conditions in Slovenia and Croatia and also their interdependence. "With regard to the fact that there are more things binding us together than dividing us, and that

The Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović first thanked Prime Minister Bratušek and then all those who participated in resolving the issues which eventually led to ratification.





Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, will pay a working visit to Croatia in May with a business delegation. He will be hosted by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipović.

The accession of Croatia to the European Union will reduce administrative barriers in business transactions and eliminate levies. With the entry of Croatia to the common European market, customs inspections will be abolished. Police inspections will end when Croatia enters the Schengen area.

now almost nothing separates us anymore, and with regard to the fact that both countries are small, but we nevertheless know what we want i.e. that cooperation proves beneficial to both sides, I do not foresee closer cooperation than with Slovenia," added the Croatian Prime Minister.

Vesna Pusić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that she 'cannot think of many examples in history when resolving a problem resulted in better relations than existed before.' The Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasised that in addition to economic cooperation, the stability of the Western Balkans is particularly in the interests of both countries.

#### THE HISTORY BEFORE SLOVENIA'S UNANIMOUS YES

The Croatian Prime Minister Milanović and the former Slovenian Prime Minister, Janez Janša, signed a memorandum to resolve the issue of the former Ljubljanska banka within the succession negotiations on 11 March 2013.

In July 2012, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia appointed France Arhar, the Director of the Bank Association of Slovenia, as the expert from the Slovenian side to resolve the dispute with Croatia over Ljubljanska banka. In cooperation with

his Croatian counterpart, Arhar's task was to study the dispute and propose a solution to both governments.

That the end of complications between the countries is near was already evident at the meeting in Otočec, where Karl Erjavec, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vesna Pusić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and financial experts France Arhar and Zdravko Rogič met around the same table at the beginning of last February. The financial experts, who were well informed on the issues, concluded their work after four meetings with a solution which,

#### RATIFICATION IS A SIGN OF MATURITY

The ratification of the Croatian Accession Treaty in Slovenia was of particular interest in neighbouring Croatia. In his interview for Croatian Radiotelevision, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, highlighted the importance of focusing on economic cooperation between the countries. He also stressed that the ratification was a sign of maturity and wisdom and the courage to resolve bilateral issues. He assessed that not all the possibilities for cooperation had been explored, particularly in energy, tourism, transport and infrastructure, and that this historic opportunity for cooperation should not be missed.

The President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipović, expressed his satisfaction, and stressed that the decision of the Slovenian National Assembly was 'confirmation of good, long-term and friendly relations with Slovenia'.

Upon the ratification, Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, stated on Twitter that Croatia is 'thus one step closer to becoming a member of the EU'.

In spite of some negative forecasts, Slovenia is not the last EU member state to ratify the Croatian Accession Treaty, as Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium have not concluded the ratification process.

according to both foreign ministers, 'is not harmful to either side, but beneficial to both'. Thus the expert contribution to the matter ended, and the political process began.

After Vesna Pusić, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Tone Kajzer, State Secretary at the Cabinet of the former Slovenian Prime Minister, had initialled a memorandum on the agreement between the Slovenian and Croatian Governments on the transfer of foreign currency deposits in Ljubljanska banka, the former Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša and Croatian Prime Minister

Zoran Milanović met on 11 March in Mokrice. They signed the memorandum, an agreement that the issue of transferred foreign currency deposits in Ljubljanska banka would be resolved within the succession negotiations. The Croatian side thus undertook to end the disputed judicial proceedings against Ljubljanska banka and Nova Ljubljanska banka, and Slovenia committed to ratifying the Croatian Accession Treaty with the EU. The countries also committed to finding a comprehensive solution to this question as soon as possible and thus take a pro-active approach to further negotiations within the Bank for International Settlements.

Photo: Archives of the Office of the President of the Republic of Slovenia



## Advanced technologies attracted most attention during the visit to Japan

At the beginning of March, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and a Slovenian business delegation were on a working vis-

it to Japan. The President was accompanied by a 33-member delegation representing the Slovenian economy.

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, started the visit to Japan with a symbolic visit to the Meiji Shrine, which is dedicated to the divine spirits of the Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shoken. During his visit, he also met Prime Minister Abe, and they discussed the possibilities of strengthening general, especially economic, collaboration between the two countries. During their conversation, Prime Minister Abe welcomed the signing of the Cooperation Memorandum between the SPIRIT public agency and JETRO Japan External Trade Organisation, and he especially emphasised the extended cooperation in the field of science and technology. Prime Minister Abe, who was invited on this occasion by President Pahor to visit Slovenia, announced intensive bilateral consultations on this field. President Pahor, with the State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Igor Senčar and the State Secretary of the Ministry for Economic Development and Technology,

Uroš Rožič, met the delegation of Slovenian businessmen who accompanied him. At a brief working dinner, they discussed the possibilities of strengthening the business activities of Slovenian companies in Japan. On the second day of the visit, President Pahor met His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito. During their conversation, which overran the anticipated time, they discussed the changes which had emerged in twenty years of diplomatic relations and exchanged views on the future.

Later, the Slovenian President attended a seminar on Japanese-Slovenian technological cooperation, visited the Hitachi exhibition site for developmental innovation and met the president of Keidanren, the Japanese Business Federation, Hiromasa Yonekura.

Alongside the main visit, President Pahor also met the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Slovenia. On this occasion, he

thanked Japanese members of Parliament for their past and future efforts in encouraging cooperation between Slovenia and Japan. At the meeting, President Pahor presented the newly-adopted amendment to labour legislation and repeated Slovenia's interest in progress in the negotiations between the countries on an agreement to avoid double taxation. After meeting members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group, President Pahor attended a reception to mark his visit to Japan hosted by the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Japan, Helena Drnovšek Zorko, for distinguished representatives of the Japanese public and business, representatives of the Slovenian community in Japan and members of the Slovenian business delegation.

At the end of the visit, Igor Senčar, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs met Akitaka Saiki, Japanese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Japan. Mr Senčar assured Mr Saiki of Slovenia's

Emperor Akihito receives the President of the Republic, Borut Pahor, at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. Borut Pahor is the first Slovenian President to visit Japan and the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. The President thanked the Emperor for his invitation and expressed his belief that Japan and Slovenia would continue to strengthen good and friendly relations in the future. They also mentioned the changes both countries had experienced in the 20 years since the beginning of diplomatic relations and exchanged views on the future. In accordance with strict imperial protocol, the discussions with the Emperor did not extend to political issues. Thus the discussion was held in a very relaxed atmosphere and overran the time anticipated by officials. As a reflection of the very positive atmosphere at the meeting, the Emperor accompanied the President to his car, which is not customary.

Borut Pahor is the first Slovenian President to visit Japan and the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

So far, the Japanese have invested little in Slovenia, although they are among the most important foreign investors in the EU. According to the Bank of Slovenia, the total value of Japanese investments in Slovenia at the end of 2012 was EUR 31.3 million.

Japan wants to become a 'gateway' for Slovenia to enter the Asian market, and Slovenia wants to become a Japanese 'gateway' for the EU, Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

support for the beginning of negotiations between the European Union and Japan on a framework agreement and agreement on free trade, and especially with regard to Japan's significance as a strategic partner of the EU. Mr Senčar repeated Slovenia's interest in progress in the negotiations between the countries on the agreement to avoid double taxation, which would help Slovenian companies in business cooperation with Japan.

President Pahor met several Slovenian business representatives and their business partners, and also attended the Slovenian-Japanese business and investment forum. At the meeting, the managers outlined in more detail the possibilities of business cooperation with their Japanese partners on certain projects. The working breakfast was also attended by Chikao Kawai, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, who welcomed all the participants and mentioned that Japan could be a gateway for Slovenia's entry to Asian markets, while Slovenia could be

a gateway for Japan to enter the European Union, Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. President Pahor added that Slovenia is seeking a partner country in East Asia and that Japan could be a pillar of Slovenia's presence in Asia. The managers agreed that cooperation in the field of smart communities in particular could be strengthened significantly.

In his speech at the Slovenian-Japanese business and investment forum, organised by SPIRIT and JETRO and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Tokyo, President Pahor presented to Slovenian and Japanese business representatives the idea of a week of Japanese culture in Slovenia and a week of Slovenian culture in Japan, which would closely connect both countries. During the investment forum, the President also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum on cooperation between SPIRIT Slovenia public agency and JETRO, the Japan External Trade Organisation. The companies Duol d.o.o. and VSR Lab d.o.o.

also signed letters of intent on business cooperation with their Japanese partners.

According to Japanese protocol, every visiting foreign politician is taken to visit Kyoto, the old imperial capital. President Pahor and his delegation visited Sanjusangendo Temple and the Pure Water Temple (Kiyomizudera Temple), where he learned about the culture of Ancient Kyoto. Emperor Akihito granted the President of the Republic of Slovenia the great honour of visiting Kyoto Imperial Palace, Kyoto Gosho. The palace was home to the imperial dynasty up to the Emperor Meiji, who moved the seat of the imperial capital from Kyoto to Tokyo 150 years ago.

At the end of the working day, President Pahor attended a reception hosted by Mr Keiji Yamada, the Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Mr Daisaku Kadokawa, the Mayor of Kyoto and other representatives of Kyoto's local authorities.

Left: President Borut Pahor started the first day of his visit with a symbolic visit to the Meiji Shrine, followed by a meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe.

Right: President Borut Pahor meets His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito.



# Shigemi Jomori

## Japanese Ambassador to Slovenia

### Japanese companies do not have enough information about Slovenia and vice versa

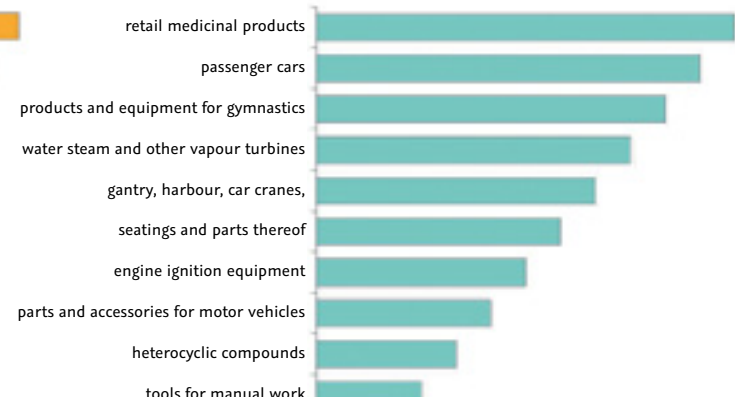
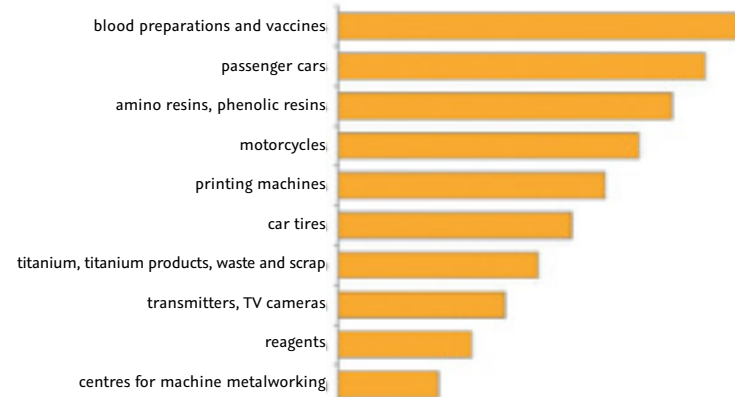
Photo: Personal Archives



Photo: Archives of the Office of the President of the Republic of Slovenia

IMPORT PRODUCTS TO JAPAN

EXPORT PRODUCTS FROM JAPAN



Charts: Inena Kogej



Photo: Tamino Pevelinsek/STA

Shigemi Jomori attended the opening of the international conference dedicated to the victims of the 2012 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which was organised by the Department of Asian and African Studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

Ambassador Shigemi Jomori began his term of office as Ambassador to Slovenia in March 2013, after ending his term as Consul General of Japan in Milan, Italy.

**How would you describe Japan in a few sentences?**

Japan consists of four islands with beautiful countryside and rich culture. There is a coexistence of "traditional and modern" or "technology and nature". People are hard-working and think highly of harmonization, which we call "wa".

**Where are the main differences?**

Of course, there are certain differences between Japan and Slovenia. I think there is a kind of cultural difference between Asian countries and European countries in general. But I would rather emphasize our similarities, such as our democracy and beautiful countryside, as lovers of skiing, and so on.

**Japanese is the only official language in Japan. How many languages does an average Japanese citizen speak?**

It is true that the only official language in Japan is Japanese. Most Japanese people learn English in junior high and high school for a total of six years. Generally speaking, the average Japanese can understand English, though they are not so good at speaking it.

**Which and how many Japanese enterprises have offices in Slovenia? And vice versa?**

Some of the Japanese enterprises

in Slovenia are Toyota, Summit Motors, Makita, Yaskawa, San-Rex, Astellas, Canon and Olympus. I am not sure how many Slovenian companies have offices in Japan, but it is true that some Slovenian companies maintain good relations with Japanese partners and have succeeded in doing business in Japan.

**Is it true that Japan's business relationships with Slovenia are mostly indirect (via affiliates), rather than direct?**

To be honest, it is hard to say how extensive indirect business relations between Japan and Slovenia are, as the figures about indirect business relations do not appear in the statistics. However, it is true that many Slovene companies export their products to Japan via third European countries.

**Why so?**

One of the reasons is that we – both Japan and Slovenia – have not had a wide enough acquaintance with each other. Japanese companies do not have enough information about Slovenia and Slovenian enterprises and vice versa. Therefore it is necessary to get to know each other as the first step towards business relations. I believe that the recent visit by President Pahor and a business delegation provided a good opportunity for the business communities of Japan and

Slovenia to get to know each other better.

**Is Slovenia kind enough to Japanese business? Where should there be improvement?**

I know that Slovenia has strived to make its business environment better and carry out several reforms. According to Japanese businessmen, however, Slovenia could still improve some fields, such as its high total labour costs, high entry bar for employing non-EU citizens, red tape in administration and unstimulative taxation system.

**In which area, from your point of view, are the most chances to intensify business between the countries?**

I think that Slovenia has its strength in "niche" industry areas, such as IT and high technologies, especially innovative software products, automobile parts, smart grids and the biochemical industry.

**Have you got a favourite place in Slovenia?**

I arrived in Slovenia few weeks ago, so unfortunately I have not yet been to other places outside Ljubljana. I have heard, though, that Slovenia has beautiful countryside with various geographical characteristics. I am looking forward to visiting many places throughout Slovenia during my term as ambassador.

## A brand is not a product

Advertising is an effective way to present products or services to (potential) buyers, and retailers use it often to boost sales.

Photo: Archives of Benetton



The purpose of advertising is to change behaviour. Through ads, people learn about products or services, form an opinion, buy them once or become regular buyers. It is in the interests of the seller that an ad has sufficient reach and that their products and services become known to as many potential buyers as possible.



Photo: Sanjko Cuden/STA

Slovenian consumers chose Milka as the best brand in 2012, which is also promoted by the best Slovenian skier, Tina Maze.



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

We are exposed to approximately 200 advertising messages every day, amounting to approximately 6,000 per month and approximately 70,000 per year.

The purpose of advertising is to change behaviour. Through ads, people learn about products or services, form an opinion, buy them once or become regular buyers. It is in the interests of the seller that an ad has sufficient reach and that their products and services become known to as many potential buyers as possible. Adverts have immense power to influence people, eliciting a desire for things they do not even need or want.

Advertising comes in various forms and uses various media: mass print media (magazines and newspapers), electronic media (radio, television), external media such as street posters

and buses, and direct mail, the Internet, mobile phones and others. We are constantly surrounded by advertising.

Advertising is one of the elements that contribute to the character and reputation of a brand in the market. A brand is not a product; it is a symbolic category which gives the product added value. People tend to choose particular brands not only because they are useful, but because many products or services express certain personality characteristics of their users. Buyers select certain brands depending on how the values projected by the brands match their lifestyle.

Ads have a great impact on adults, who are more or less aware of the actual purpose of the messages and filter them with a critical distance; but this is even more difficult for children, who are not able to make a distinction between media reality and their personal reality until they reach a certain level of cognitive development, and therefore they constitute an even more susceptible media public. Modern ads are not necessarily associated with the products or services of the advertised brand. They are no longer based on emphasising quality and providing information, but lean on more intangible attributes such as feelings or moods. At this point,

it is particularly important what values a particular ad attributes to a particular brand.

The media play an important role in constructing reality, as they interpret the image of reality and give sense to our experience. Media content is an important co-creator of our values and perspectives, dictating what is desirable and appreciated in society, and having a decisive role in forming our images of the world, socialisation, knowledge, lifestyle, identities etc. Because children, who dedicate a lot of their free time to the media, follow them with a low level of critical assessment, they must be taught to analyse and critically reflect

on media content, evaluate and interpret it. This is the issue dealt with by media education.

As early as 1964, UNESCO supported the idea of media education. In 1976, its working group of experts created a model for mass media education, teaching children and adolescents how to critically receive media content. At the International Symposium on Media Education in Germany in January 1982, a resolution was adopted which was signed by 19 countries. It stressed the role of such education, which would prepare the young for responsible citizenship and increase the critical awareness of media users.

Media education teaches how to understand the way the media form our images of the world and ourselves, which is the main concept of media literacy. Media literacy provides certain criteria that help to assess information. In the last decade, the status of media education in many countries has improved significantly, but only a few countries have included it in the school curriculum. According to a number of sociologists and communication experts, the only question should be how to teach media literacy, not if. The spectrum of communication technologies is widening, and if we are to prepare our children to function effectively in the 21st century, they must be media literate.

The brand name is decisive in 90% of purchases.

# MICROCREDIT AFRICA WORKS



With its marketing methods, Benetton brought a new dimension to the global advertising scene.

Aljoša Bagola

## What matters most is the right story



The Slovene Advertising Festival took place in March, the biggest advertising festival in Slovenia, and we talked with Aljoša Bagola, one of the most visible people in creative industry in Slovenia.

**Aljoša Bagola** is Executive Creative Director at Pristop, one of the largest advertising agencies in Slovenia. As a copywriter and creative director, he has been creating the biggest Slovenian marketing and communication projects for thirteen years. He has received over a hundred prizes and awards at established national and international festivals such as SOF, Golden Drum, Epica, New York Festivals, Cresta, Eurobest, Magdalena, ForFest, AdPrint and similar. Ten years ago, he was Slovenia's representative at the world competition of young creatives at the Cannes international advertising festival.

Advertising is an inseparable part of the economy, and as such, is a sort of indicator allowing one to understand developments in the economy. It also reflects the mental image of the country, its values and storytelling.

**How has Slovenian advertising developed in the last decade? What have been the main changes?**

Advertising is an inseparable part of the economy, and as such, is a sort of indicator allowing one to understand developments in the economy. It also reflects the mental image of the country, its values and storytelling. Concerning the last ten years, I can say that it was exactly ten years ago when the golden era of advertising in Slovenia ended, the era when major brands, major advertising campaigns, major agencies and a more or less stable advertising ecosystem were created. Adverts were no longer called 'propaganda' or, equally inadequately, 'commercials'. Before that, i.e. immediately after independence, Slovenia was characterised by an era of so-called national advertising, with a good example being the 'Slovenia, my country' campaign, which was aimed at creating a national identity, the identity of a diligent, hard-working, ski-loving nation on the sunny side of the Alps. We wanted to distance ourselves from the Yugoslav identity, in which the only common denominator was federalism, which is why Slovenian marketing pioneers were looking for a cliché to make us visible abroad and united in the new country. Since this era corresponded with major achievements of our alpine skiers, we took this convenient sports cliché and got it going. We became a nation of skiers. This was followed by an era characterised by marketing market growth, economic growth and illusions of us becoming the next Switzerland. Now, when we have grasped the nettle of crisis, this illusion has sadly vanished, of course. In explaining my view of Slovenian advertising, I always like to emphasise the era of 'commercial advertising', which came with the arrival of strong foreign discount-oriented corporations, leading to the banali-

sation of the daily struggle for consumers through a strategy of aggressive selling ads which, given that the country is flooded with external advertising, has compromised its image. Instead of being able to admire its landscape, gigantic posters with packed meat, toothpastes, toilet paper and other visual rubbish, which should remain in commercial catalogues, hit us in the eye. We are currently in a phase where advertising should be kept to a hygienic minimum.

**Is this also a global trend? Is this something specific to Slovenia, or did Slovenia just keep up with some universal changes?**

In times of crisis, price is a very important part of consumer decision-making, but advertisers (mostly commercial advertisers) should certainly respect the commitment to not abuse the current fear that people feel and not violate fundamental visual standards. A part of our advertising is thus as endemic as our proteus – it lives peacefully in the darkness of its little puddle and reproduces only every ten years. Fortunately, advertising was nevertheless unable to escape global trends, which have recently been dictated by technology. The arrival of the Internet redefined the concept of information, knowledge and storytelling, and transformed the consumer from a passive recipient into a commentator, active user, arbiter and co-creator. Most of all, it changed the advertising ecosystem as we knew it. The standard television advertising slot (i.e. a system of interruptions and repetitions) got serious competition through the blossoming of the minimally censored YouTube. We saw that the public sometimes wants something completely different (funny cats, cute toddlers and a lot of bizarre things) and that advertising cannot have a creative monopoly and dictate content. Given the lack of gatekeepers,

Internet users started to dictate content by creating it themselves. Nowadays, the human race creates as much information in two days as it did from the year dot to 2001. Hence, advertising must radicalise its storytelling to be further seen and observed. By taking account of all the above, I began to develop my own advertising style, which I call WTF advertising and which contains a lot of asymmetry, oddness and organic wildness. One should be aware that the advertising slot is one of the most aggressive territories in Western civilisation, as thousands of pieces of information and imposed opinions battle in a few minutes. In order to be noticed in this slot, you have to do something different. Therefore, I have always included some unusual moments, a different type of storytelling which does not follow the Aristotelian dramatic unities. I want people to see my ad and say 'Wow' or 'WTF' and Google it immediately and watch it again. Otherwise, our agency is known for its engagement strategies, which invite consumers to actively participate and co-create a trademark.

**So digital environments and social networks have significantly transformed communication. Does it make your business harder or easier?**

Above all, it makes it different. The world is changing, and some things that used to function no longer do. Advertising must also reconfigure its molecule and accept that the creative and storytelling advertising monopolies have moved from Hollywood to Silicon Valley, where the late Steve Jobs and his colleagues changed, in the long term, the way consumers talk, shop and act. For example, let us take teenagers, who spend most of their time looking at their hands. This is not because they want to read the future, but because they literally have the future in their hands. For them, knowledge no

Photo: Personal Archive



longer means storing information in long-term memory, it means creative information management. So they consider the concept of standard education more and more irrelevant and get more and more bored at school. However, not only knowledge has been redefined. The younger generation also acts as its own avatar in the digital environment. The young are digital natives. So advertising has serious problems with how to address this target population effectively and monetise its operations in mobile and interactive environments, since the way of functioning is different from the television environment. The young seem to be elusive, and their wallets even more so. How are these changed circum-

stances favourable to creating campaigns? Can you point to a good practice example? In my opinion, the Red Bull Stratos campaign is certainly a good practice example, which has completely transformed everything we understood as marketing efforts in the modern world. Red Bull chose to ignore the advertising slots, the standard media space purchase, and no longer accepts the standard advertising triangle and its outdated relationships between the advertiser, the medium and the consumer. They do things in their own way. In the summer, we were able to witness the Edge of Space freefall, which in a few minutes caused a tectonic change in marketing, like Apple had previously done by launching iPhone. In the past, Red Bull

was consistent in building its identity through its promise that 'Red Bull gives you wings'. The Stratos project campaign upgraded the well-known series of animated ads into a media and advertising revolution, which shows that a contemporary brand needs boldness and creativity beyond advertising slots. A one-way address seeking instant consumer robotisation is not good advertising. But if your consumers are engaged in the creative dialogue or in an experience never lived before, they will truly appreciate it. Or, to put it metaphorically – advertising needs wings.

**Can you mention a Slovenian campaign that was successful in this sense?**

We started to use engagement

We wanted to distance ourselves from the Yugoslav identity, in which the only common denominator was federalism, which is why Slovenian marketing pioneers were looking for a cliché to make us visible abroad and united in the new country. Since this era corresponded with major achievements of our alpine skiers, we took this convenient sports cliché and got it going. We became a nation of skiers.

## The story of a trademark: Elan

Elan: the most innovative brand

'I feel Slovenia' is a great and well managed brand. But efforts to make every country seem like a sort of Disneyland with castles, mascots and unique experiences have ended.

strategies as early as 2008 to include consumers in the creative dialogue. The 'Cheapbest' campaign for Mobitel is one example – young consumers were enabled to assert their creativity and could live an advanced brand experience through the concert of The Killers. We continued in a similar way with the Cockta campaign, which connected the young from the whole of the former Yugoslavia region into a creative pool and allowed them to perform in a web series we designed. Nowadays, campaigns are designed to engage consumers from the very beginning. Recently, we designed a campaign for Mercator in which the users shot the TV ad themselves, i.e. the ad was composed from their videos. You can only be as creative as your users. And brands need this kind of reality check.

**So you say that the trend is towards engaged consumers...**  
That's right.

**The Cannes advertising festival is the largest festival of its kind in Europe, and you have attended it for several years. What are the trends to watch in the future? What else will happen in advertising and communication? What direction will developments take?**

Ten years ago, when I was a young creative representing Slovenia at this largest advertising festival, I was able to experience the whole of its spectacle. I have been a regular ever since, as the Cannes festival is absolutely the most trend-setting festival in our branch. Then, everything was under the influence of major television campaigns, and even today, the last Grand Prix awarded is still the TV ad award, despite all the talk about the decline of television and the rise of the Internet. For the moment, advertising continues to glorify its holy cow, i.e. the 30-second TV-ad. On the other hand, it is

very daring in researching new ecosystems formed through Internet technology and the globalisation of communication. Therefore, special awards were introduced at Cannes – the so-called Titanium Grand Prix award for visionary projects in advertising. In recent years, there has been a shift from self-oriented advertising towards more responsible advertising which gives back to the environment, addresses the public sphere and makes efforts to improve, educate and help.

**Which medium offers the most opportunities for advertising expression?**

Each medium has its rules, but I still prefer the TV ad, because it requires sophisticated storytelling. Because I like huge responsibility and I am a megalomaniac (laughter), I enjoy the shoot, since it is like a composer witnessing a symphony orchestra playing his or her latest work (laughter). However, I believe that advertising must stop focusing on the expressive media and improve its talent for listening. If brands are able to hear the words spoken by Jimi Hendrix, that knowledge speaks and wisdom listens, they will take an important step toward their users. Now, advertising is used for too much talk and not enough listening, and for this reason, its key words, or, even better, its key organs for the future are the ear and heart, no longer the tongue and head.

**To what extent is innovation important in the advertising process?**

Actually, innovation is essential, and constitutes the first step in the contemporary advertising structure. In marketing language, this is called a competitive advantage or unique selling proposition. They involve mechanical evidence about services or products that make them ex-

ceptional and different. Development departments in companies are therefore essential for marketing success. Innovation provides more value than marketing, or even more narrowly, advertising efforts, and so it is an important part of the revitalisation of the global economy. Nevertheless, it must be relevant and in compliance with post-crisis values that strive to preserve the environment and human relationships and improve the quality of life.

**As a country, Slovenia is represented by the 'I feel Slovenia' brand. What is the future for national brands in the globalised world, which now gives less importance to borders? What are the prospects for 'I feel Slovenia' and other national brands?**

'I feel Slovenia' is a great and well managed brand. But efforts to make every country seem like a sort of Disneyland with castles, mascots and unique experiences have ended. Globalisation, not only in terms of reducing the significance of borders between countries, but also in terms of increased information flow, has dealt a blow to typical advertising and understandings of the concept of country. A single relevant Internet comment can wipe out the effect of an expensive campaign run on expensive international channels. When we are choosing a certain destination, we first Google it and tend to believe the experiences of other consumers/tourists much more than clichéd adverts with waterfalls, food and other instant national romanticism. Countries should learn to promote themselves by not only advertising, but by understanding new behaviours that come with the new technologies.

The story of Elan is full of exceptional innovations which over the years have dictated skiing techniques up to the point that anyone – a beginner or the best recreational skier – can enjoy in this beautiful sport.

The prestigious title of the 'Most Innovative Brand 2012' presented to Elan by the German organisation Plus X Award proves that Elan's achievements in design and innovation are truly great.

Photo: Archives of Elan d. d.



Elan Amphibio skis, the latest Elan innovation, were designed in cooperation with Porsche Design Studio.

The 1970s were a key period for Elan. The company focused mainly on the production of skis. The brand shone in all its glory, thanks to the excellent Swedish skier Ingemar Stenmark, who won numerous races in the Ski World Cup on supreme Elan skis. Ingemar Stenmark still has the most World Cup wins of all time (he won 86 times), and he won them all on Elan skis. In the following decade, Elan became one of the largest and most powerful ski producers in the world.

Ski jumper Rudi Finžgar became part of Slovenian skiing history in 1941 when he jumped 95 metres. He combined his experience and skiing enthusiasm with knowledge, ambition and vision and became the founding father of the Elan factory in 1945. He and some friends (mostly craftsmen and engineers) established the company Elan on 24 September 1945. In the same year, the results of their first manufacturing efforts were 800 pairs of light and durable wooden skis.

Three years later, Elan was already recognised as a producer and exporter of skis to the United States of America, and in 1948, the company was nationalised. The range of Elan products expanded in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to skis, Elan also produced yachts, tennis and badminton rackets, table tennis equipment, ice picks, mountain rescue gear, competition and recreational sledges, ice skates and hockey sticks, oars and water skis.

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In 1992, two years after bankruptcy and other hardships, the company was purchased by Croatian Privredna banka Zagreb. In spite of difficult conditions, Elan continued to develop and explore new technological improvements and launch an innovation which created a true global revolution in the skiing industry: Elan launched carving skis. The new carving technique was revolutionary and has completely changed the development of skiing.

Elan also entered the snowboard market and developed innovative yachts. The company again found itself in trouble at the end of the 1990s, and was bought out by the Slovene Development Cor-

poration in 2000. Repositioning of the trademark followed, with intensive investment in developing new products, the technological modernisation of production, restructuring the global distribution network and a new approach to marketing. Today, Elan employs 500 people in Begunje.

#### ELAN'S DIVISIONS TODAY

With its three divisions – winter, marine and sports facilities – Elan Group is the leading producer and supplier of sports and leisure time activity equipment. Skis and yachts are produced in Slovenia, snowboards in Austria, and motor boats in Croatia. Elan owns six companies that market its products in the USA, Canada, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Japan, including independent distributors around the world.

When it comes to skis, Elan is a global brand. Its products sell in more than 50 countries. With sales of over 300,000 pairs of skis per year, the Elan trademark takes an average 8.5 per cent share of global markets. Elan also produces some other brands, which place it among the largest production capacities in the world. 550,000 – or every sixth pair of skis from the three million pairs sold worldwide – was made in Begunje. Germany, which is considered the largest and most demanding European market, accepted Elan as one of its leading trademarks. True technology, specialisation and enthusiasm are the foundation of the ski trademark, according to Elan.

The key markets which see the most intensive marketing activities are Central and Eastern Europe, Northern America, Japan and Scandinavia. "Marketing activities focus on direct consumer experience and testing on snow. By doing this, we are aware of the importance of the whole chain of the sales process and also how important it is to excite consumers, retailers and distributors with innovations", says Blaž Lazar, manager of winter division marketing.

With its products for all lovers of nautical adventure, Elan Marine is present in all important world markets, the most important being Slovenia, Italy, France, Spain and Croatia. According to market

research by Yacht Magazine, Elan is the third most innovative and the thirteenth most recognisable brand in Europe out of 31 yacht makers. The values which Elan follows in its yacht production are comfort, manoeuvring characteristics, quality and safety.

In sports facilities division which was initially its main sales offer, Elan Inventa is the leading company in the Western Balkans, Scandinavia and Russia and is also entering other European markets. So far, Elan Inventa has equipped over 2,500 sports facilities and outdoor sports grounds. It generates over 70 per cent of its turnover in foreign markets.

#### INNOVATIONS ARE THE ONLY WAY

The development of the Elan trademark is based on innovations, which holds for all divisions. The development of constructions and ski design has been a feature of Elan since 1963, when the first development institute was established and two patents introduced to the market only two years later. Because each innovation triggers the need for another, Elan has been exciting and surprising its customers throughout its history. After launching carving skis, it amazed with its development of the Fusion integrated ski binding system, which ensured a combination of the best flexibility of the ski and weight distribution. Later, better flexibility and the torsional stability of the ski were combined in the WaveFlex technology. Elan has now taken on a new challenge and is already conquering the world with the new Amphibio technology.

#### THE LATEST INNOVATION: AMPHIBIO SKIS

As the leading producer of skis, Elan has succeeded in combining camber and rocker profiles in one ski with Amphibio technology: the outside edge of the ski has a camber profile and features full edge contact for perfect edge grip, while the inside edge of the ski has a rocker profile, which enables control and easy turning.

Amphibio technology thus determines which ski is left and which right. Elan was the first company in the world to develop this technology, which skiers can use to

optimise the characteristics of the outside and inside ski edge at each turn. By way of comparison: if you were driving a Formula 1 car, you would not have to worry about losing control at any point.

#### COOPERATION WITH TOP INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS

Elan has always dedicated special attention to design. When designing Amphibio, Elan decided to cooperate with the renowned Porsche Design Studio, which added its visual touch to these revolutionary skis and hence highlighted the technological, aesthetic and functional advantages of this innovative product.

The marine division of Elan regularly cooperates with Humphreys Yacht Design, and the winter division with the Slovenian design agency Gigodesign; Oskar Kogoj participated in the design of the MBX skis several years ago. Elan emphasises that the key to its success in the field of development and innovation lies in the fact that design and development are

closely connected even when a new product is first being developed, and that its achievements which are reflected in innovations are the result of combining rich experience and multidisciplinary specialist knowledge.

#### THE MOST INNOVATIVE BRAND 2012 AND OTHER AWARDS

For its achievements in design and innovations, Elan has received numerous prestigious international awards for design, innovation, quality and functionality.

All the awards were related to certain products, but last year Elan received the title of the 'Most Innovative Brand 2012 in the sports equipment category', the first Slovenian company to win the award. This is the highest award presented annually by the German organisation Plus X Award. Brands which receive such titles are the most innovative in individual categories and are distinguished by outstanding achievements in the fields where the brands are present and evolving. The brands do

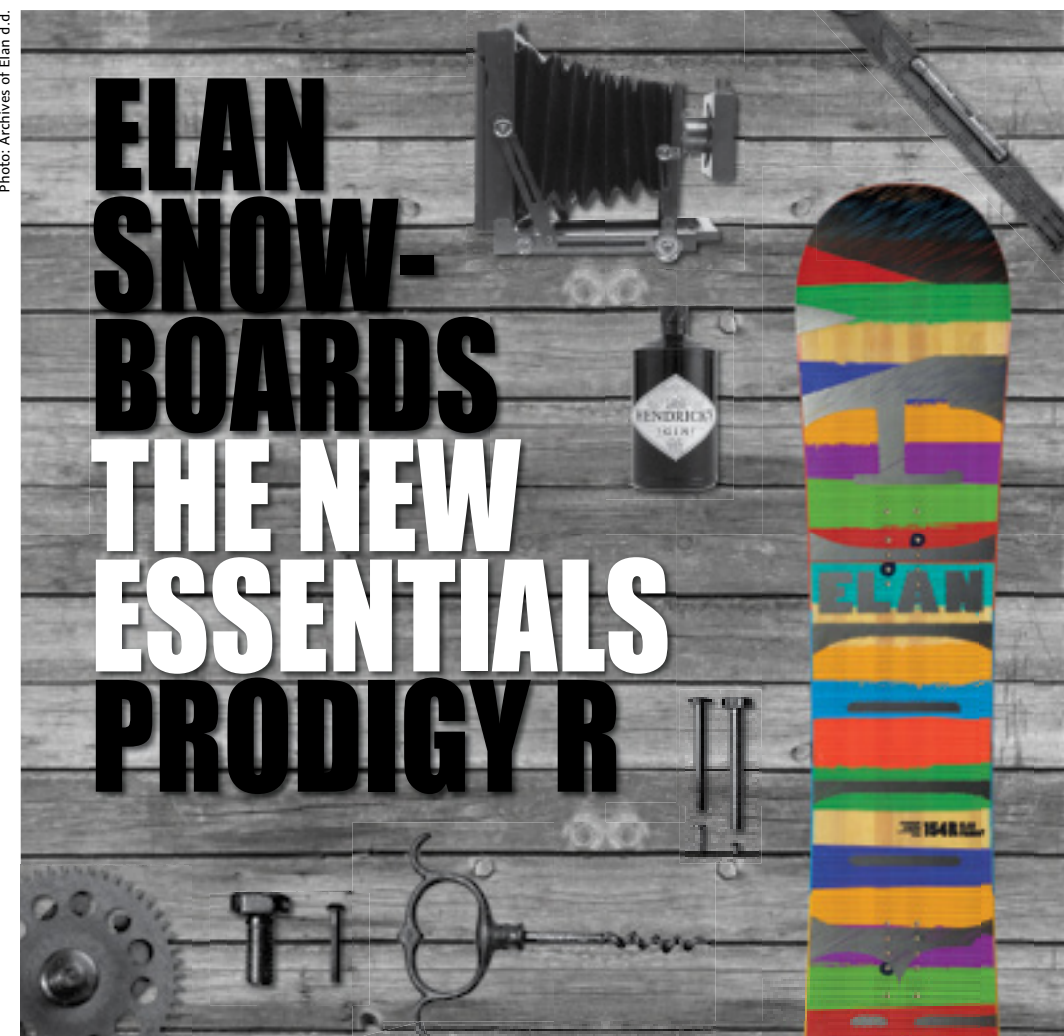
not apply for the award, but are nominated for their achievements and the awards their products have garnered. Elan thus shared the podium with some other most innovative global brands such as Adidas, Mercedes, AEG, BlackBerry, Buderus, LG, Opel and Sony, which received awards in other categories.

#### ELAN IN THE FUTURE

And what can we expect from Elan in the future? Luka Grlic, Elan Brand and Product Director, says: "Our vision is to become number one in innovation and the design of technical sports equipment, and we will do everything in our power to achieve this objective. By doing so, we do not want to become the biggest, but the best in the field. Innovations will play a key role in the future. The open process of innovation, which includes many external partners, and naturally the unselfish and talented in-house team are guarantees that Elan will be raising expectations in the future as well."

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Photo: Archives of Elan d.o.o.



Elan also combines innovation and design in snowboards.



## Advertising will survive

Advertising festivals are a wonderful opportunity for conversations and debates about what challenges the advertising industry faces in the future. However, during the last few years, there is also an unspoken question: is the era of advertising over?

In spite of the changes and trends that we are all noticing, the basic mission of advertising has not changed significantly. It has been always true that good adverts solve communication challenges. The question today is: what is an advertisement? For Nike, for instance, a mobile application is an advertisement, and they finance the development of applications from the marketing budget. They also discovered that they reached the biggest audience when they advertised during the Super Bowl: 200 million in one day. Today, they are able to reach the same number every day through social media. So it is no surprise that during the last few years their investment in classic television and print advertising has decreased by almost a third, while their investment in other, more advanced forms of advertising, has increased.

The form of advertising is changing more than the essence. In Slovenia, this process seems somewhat slower than in bigger, more developed markets. This has always been the big issue at SOF, during both official lectures and social meetings. The answer to who is responsible for this slow pace depends on whom you ask. Years ago, when mobile marketing was increasing abroad, I visited the majority of Slovenian agencies to learn their attitude to this issue. I received approximately the same answer throughout: "We know it's the future, but our clients will not be ready for anything like that." I then visited the clients and received this answer: "We know it's the future, but no one knows how to sell us that." Anyway, a mobile application won the award for visual identity last year at SOF.

I am convinced that if today you were to replace the words



'mobile marketing' in that story with 'content marketing', which has become a buzzword lately, and which the SOF has already named as a category in the competition, you would be able to

hear the same two arguments against it. Seeking the reasons why something cannot be done is like chasing one's own shadow down an Escher staircase. Advertising will survive in one

form or another. The advertising industry must find the correct business model, which will enable flexibility in adapting to change and thus survival.

## 2 Cellos are conquering the world

Are you also interested in hearing the legendary song 'Smooth Criminal' by Michael Jackson in a version performed on two cellos? When Luka Šulić and Stjepan Hauser, a Slovenian-Croatian cello duet, recorded their first interpretation and posted it on YouTube, the video quickly recorded 7 million views. They were equally successful with their second single 'Welcome to the Jungle' and thus swiftly stepped onto the global music stage.

Their version of 'Smooth Criminal' has been viewed on YouTube by more than seven million people and their careers began to evolve in a direction many only dare to dream about. Elton John, George Michael and many others noticed their video. They were guests on Ellen DeGeneres Show and the series Glee.

Luka Šulić and Stjepan Hauser come from the world of classical music. Hauser is a young Croatian virtuoso - the last of Mstislav Rostropovich's students - who has received many national and international awards. In the world of music, he is known as 'the magician of the cello'. He studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Luka Šulić is from Maribor and is also a virtuoso cellist. His carrier is equally impressive. He has performed on numerous stages abroad and he studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Their studio album, IN2ITION, has been available in Slovenia from this January; many eminent musicians such as Elton John, Zucchero, Steve Vai, Lang Lang and Naya Rivera collaborated on it. With their second album, they wanted to display the strong intuitive bond between them and chose songs to express



this chemistry through their instruments.

"We are very proud of the new album. It seems unbelievable that it was produced by the legendary Bob Ezrin. If someone were to enumerate the guests on our album a year ago, we would have smiled and waved them away", said Šulić and Hauser.

The album features songs from Fleetwood Mac ('Oh, Well', feat. Elton John), The Prodigy ('Voodoo People'), Coldplay ('Clocks' feat. Lang Lang), Rihanna ('We Found Love'), AC/DC ('Highway to Hell', feat. Steve Vai), Muse ('Supermassive Black Hole', feat. Naya Rivera), Cher & Nancy Sinatra ('Bang Bang', feat.

Sky Ferreira), The Police ('Every Breath You Take'), and Elton John ('Candle In The Wind'). The album was recorded in Zagreb, Rome, Nashville, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. The producer was Bob Ezrin who has worked with music legends such as Pink Floyd, Kiss, Peter Gabriel and Alice Cooper.

## It is essential to observe the world around

Photo: Personal Archive



**Darja Korez Korenčan is one of the recipient of Josip Jurčič Awards 2012. As the editor of culture programmes, the journalist and music publicist Darja Korez Korenčan masterminded two notable projects: Ars 360 and Minute za jezik. On television, she has been the only broadcaster to deal with classical music events. Darja Korez Korenčan is also involved in journalism and writing for children and adults. She has also written five books on music: Slovenski glasbilarški mojstri (Slovenian Instrumental Masters), Čarobni zvoki slovenskih orkestrrov (Magical Sounds of Slovenian Orchestras), Slovenske glasbene družine (Slovenian Musical Families), Krog kulture (Circle of Culture) – (as co-author) and a monograph on conductor Anton Nanut.**

My principle in writing is similar to the one that applies in journalism i.e. to know how to observe the world around us and to respond. Naturally, writing fiction differs significantly from journalistic work in that a person must be a good storyteller and give their imagination wings. I never had problems with that. I enjoyed writing imaginative compositions in primary school. I later participated in journalist and literature clubs, wrote speeches for various meetings and celebrations, wrote acrostic verses for family events, and so on. I would probably have started writing sooner if I had had more time, but I fully dedicated myself to my journalist and editorial work instead, and wrote several books on music, while fiction was there patiently waiting its turn. And its turn came. I now dedicate most of my free time to writing.

I have written a short series for children in the lower grades of primary school in which I point to injustices that happen to little girls and boys who somewhat differ from the average; their titles already say a lot about them: Piflarka (Nerd), Boječka (Scaredy-cat), Očalarka (Four Eyes) and Bajsi (Fatso). The story Baletni copatki (Ballet Slippers) is about a little girl who wants to become a ballerina, but her parents refuse to enrol her in ballet school. However, following an unusual set of circumstances, things turn out in her favour.

When a rough story is in my head, I begin writing it down, and if it is short, like these for children, it is finished quite quickly.

It is different with a novel, which requires a certain basic framework, more twists and turns, and a convincing story which keeps the reader in suspense, which is by no means easy. I usually imagine a story and then upgrade it as I go along. It is important to choose the main characters and put them in a central event; after that, things evolve quite quickly. When a certain story from the surroundings stirs me and I think that it could find its place in the novel, I begin to develop it in my head. I could compare this process to a concentric circle which is growing. When I write, I need my peace, but not complete isolation like in an apartment. In the summer, I take my laptop out on the terrace, where I am surrounded by nature and singing birds. I shut out everything else. I am most productive beside a crackling fire in the fireplace on long winter evenings. Although I usually go to sleep before eleven, I sometimes get so involved in a story that I continue to write late into the night and suddenly I am no longer sleepy, because I am thinking about my characters, twists, creating the best dialogues, and so on.

I always put myself in the place of the reader and imagine the reader putting the book down at a certain point if they do not find it interesting enough. The readability of the novel is my main criterion; I am not interested in anything else.

Nothing gives me more pleasure than writing fiction, which cannot be compared to any documentary work that demands a lot of checking and collecting data, which I find quite tiresome and strenuous. I have written five such books and I will probably not tackle those challenges anymore. If possible, I will focus on fiction in my spare time. I feel that we are surrounded by a world full of interesting events, we only have to be able to observe it, as I already mentioned at the beginning. People today look down at the ground; they do not say hello, and ignore each other and do not wish to look one another in the eye. The tempo of everyday life has probably led them to the point where everyone hurries past one another without giving each other a warm smile or friendly look. They get in their car, drive to their job and do not take the time to go for a walk, to chat to someone or ride a bicycle and become acquainted with their surroundings, which can give interesting inspiration for writing. Nevertheless, it is important to be familiar with the subject you write about, either from personal experience, from someone else's narration or on the basis of good observation and perception. I always write about a subject that is more or less familiar to me. But that does not mean that I have experienced it myself. Only a segment of a narrative can be somehow related to me, although usually there is no connection. My novels are not and never will be even partly autobiographical, because I do not wish to share my feelings with a wide range of readers. They are usually the product of my imagination, which has its roots in modern society and the environment I know – cultural, artistic, journalistic, business.

A known foreign writer said that he wrote for readers and not for commentators and reviewers. I could say the same. Literary critics must take a position on a certain work they receive for review, and rightly so. It is similar with pieces of music, theatre and opera performances, films, etc. We know that many composers who are praised nowadays were torn to pieces in their lifetime; their performances were booed and could not be performed because they were not considered good enough. Many artists were prevented from studying because they were supposedly not talented, although it was later established that they were very talented. It is similar with writers. Critics consider some writers as trivial and their works as trash literature, but readers practically devour their books, and other books, which are not readable at all, are praised by critics. This is how it is with the disproportion between popularity and quality according to critics, but one should not be bother with this.

It is important to stay true to one's principles and style of writing, which is the key to the readers, who are in my opinion the only and most credible judges. If they like the story and narration and they like borrowing the books from the library, I consider this enough an encouragement to continue writing.

## 'I am not drawn abroad – I have everything at home' Darinka Mladenovič – photographer

She has been publishing her photographs in our magazine since its establishment in 2004 and has so far published 344 photographs, 42 of which were covers. There are many reasons to introduce her and for her to step in front of the lens for a change. This time, she is not photographing others, but has allowed us to look at her. But she does not like making portraits. You encroach on someone too much, she says. To make a portrait, a person has to be willing to pose and have a special expression on their face; they must reflect a certain something, tell a story, and the photographer must have permission to get close to them. Today, people are not willing to give themselves away so easily anymore.

Photo: Miranda Legovič



Where does she look for inspiration for her work? As a little girl, she admired her father, who was an amateur photographer and also developed photos in a makeshift dark room at home. She was born in 1948 in Murska Sobota, and because there were no opportunities to study for a long period due to the difficult times, she enrolled in a

vocational photography school, where her sense of design, aesthetics and beautiful photography was soon noticed. When her second daughter was growing up, she began taking photos of her, and published them in Jana, Naša žena and other magazines. She bought her first digital camera, a Canon G3 in 2002, and discovered that such cameras offer

many new possibilities for taking photos and further processing and using them. Other technical and financial advantages were demonstrated with the development of digital cameras because photography became significantly cheaper and accessible to a wider public. However, it is true that good equipment is not cheap and the results are thus much better. Her husband, who has supported her along the way and still does, once advised her to present her photographs to the outside world, so they would not only be stored away at home. He thus empowered her and made her confident that the photographs would also be enjoyed by other people. He was not mistaken. Numerous independent exhibitions, Zimski bregovi in ptičji ples (Embankments in Winter and Dance of Birds) (Ljubljana, 2006), Hodil po zemlji sem naši in pil nje prelesti (I Walked Our Land and Drank Its Beauties) (Ljubljana, 2006), Iz zakladnice domače pokrajine (From the Treasury of the Local Landscape) (Ljubljana, 2006), Vsaka stopnja modrine je skrivala neznano (Each Shade of Blue Hid the Unknown) (Ljubljana, 2007 and Cerknica, 2007), Ljubljansko Barje (The Ljubljana Marshes) (Škofljica, 2007 and Dol, 2007), Utrinki Slovenije (Images of Slovenia) (Jesenice, 2009) prove that she is on the right track and that other people like her work. She has received many medals, awards and commendations for work submitted for national and international exhibitions: a FIAP gold medal in the Mask

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Photo: Darinka Mladenović

Ski resort Kanin



Photo: Darinka Mladenović

Lipizzaner horses



Photo: Darinka Mladenović

Logarska dolina (Logarska valley) is one of Europe's most beautiful glacial alpine valleys.

competition for her photograph Preganjanci zime (Prosecutors of Winter), first prize at the contest Slovenske fotografije se predstavijo (Slovenian female photographers introduce themselves) for her photograph Okno 1 (Window 1), first prize at the 16th Aljaž Events in Dovje - Mojstrana for her photograph Toscana, a silver medal at the 32nd Zagreb Salon for Do poslednjega daha (Until the Last Breath), a bronze medal at the 1st International Print Salon 2007 in the United Kingdom for The Straining competition, a FIAP bronze medal in India in 2010 for her photograph KISS and many other diplomas and commendations. She was awarded the title of FZS Master of Photography and the international title of EFIAP (Excellent Artist of the International Photographic Society).

She and her husband are now retired and together walk along the paths where Darinka catches the beautiful sights of Slovenia with her camera. When her skilled eye notices an interesting motif, nothing prevents her from capturing it. Shots taken in the morning are the most beautiful:

the colours are warm and the landscape radiates in all its generosity. In addition to landscapes, she likes to photograph animals and sportspeople, especially in action. She also records churches and ethnological events. She is increasingly drawn towards church interiors, which she can photograph without flash. Over the years, she has created vast archives of photographs which she generously donates for various uses and needs.

Is there a difference between old and young photographers? "Yes, there is a great difference. We were always taught that a good photograph is supposed to have a natural appearance and good composition; in short, that it has to be perfect. Today, some photographers manipulate colours excessively and the photographs hence function unnaturally. They obviously have a different view of photography. They do not care about composition, but more about what the photograph expresses on its own, regardless of the quality; they are interested only in the story." She likes dynamic motion shots of animals, particularly birds and horses,

and sports events, in a word – motion – because motion is life. "I take pictures of Slovenia; I am no longer drawn abroad, because I have everything at home." Her favourite photograph, cottages covered with snow on Kanin, gives her inner peace which she finds magical. The Lipizzaner horses display liveliness, speed and dynamics. Recently, she has become enraptured with water – rapids, waterfalls, but the quest never stops. Photography remains her constant challenge. Does she have a role model? She is her own role model. "I have never looked for role models, because I saw the value in what I created myself." Numerous awards and diplomas are proof of that value.

And the words of Renata Picej attest to it as well: "Darinka, has anyone told you that your photographs are like medicine for depression, tiredness, deadlock, disappointment and the other pains and sicknesses of the soul? I can barely breathe, because I am so overwhelmed by the beauty and positive energy of your photographs."

Shots taken in the morning are the most beautiful: the colours are warm and the landscape radiates in all its generosity.

## If the soil is drunk in March, it will be thirsty in the summer

Nature begins to awake in March; the days are longer, there is more and more sunshine, spring fills us with optimism, people seem happier and more attractive. The old Slovenian name for March is 'sušec', which is derived from the adjective 'sušast' which – contrary to the apparent meaning – signifies not dry, but changeable, weather.



Photo: Darinka Mladenović

March is also the month of celebrating women and mothers – two days are dedicated to them during this month. As a counterbalance, there is also the martyr's day for the men.

March 8 is International Women's Day or Women's Day, as it is known in Slovenia. The achievements of women in the social, political and economic fields among others are celebrated on this day. The idea of an international day dedicated to women dates back to the time of rapid industrialisation and economic expansion a hundred years ago, when women began to strive for better working conditions, and when they launched women's movements for equality with men. March 8 was celebrated officially for the first time on 28 February 1909 in the USA, on the basis of a declaration by the Socialist Party of America.

Mothers hold a special place and role in our lives, and a special day is dedicated to them.

Mothers' Day is celebrated around the world, at different times of the year. In Slovenia, it is on 25 March, while some countries combine it with 8 March, and the majority of countries celebrate it on the second Sunday in May. Mothers' Day in Slovenia began to be more widely celebrated after the breakdown of the former political system, although it has a far longer history.

March 10 is Men's Day, or the Day of the Forty Martyrs, when 40 soldiers who refused to renounce their Christianity were martyred. The holiday does not have the weight it should, considering the sacrifice these men made in 313. What is interesting is that men have recently invented a lost tradition called 'salamijada' or the salami feast, celebrated on that day, from which women are excluded. The Sevnica Salami Fest and the Pohorje salami feast are renowned, with a competition for the best salami.

On 12 March is 'gregorjevo' or St Gregory's Day, the day which, according to Slovenian folk tradition, marks the beginning of spring. St Gregory's Day is also considered a day for people in love, and a day when birds marry. An old tradition says that girls used to look at the sky on St Gregory's Day. The first bird that a girl saw would decide what her husband would be like.

Some Slovenian towns have a tradition of symbolically sending lights down a stream on the eve of St Gregory's Day. In Kropa and Kamna Gorica, these lights are known as little boats, while in other towns they are known as 'gregorčki' or little Gregories. Multi-coloured vessels are fitted with candles so that the light shines through them. Today, the tradition of launching little Gregories is primarily a challenge for children's hands, which craft colourful art work from recycled, natural and any other materials.

## Postojna Cave – a Slovenian national symbol

The most frequented Slovenian sight – 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first visit to the Cave

Among Slovenia's many natural and cultural sights, Postojna Cave is undoubtedly a true national symbol. It is the largest Slovenian site of special interest and one of the most frequently visited tourist caves in Europe. Compared to other caves in the world, it is unique and many visitors surprise us with their knowledge and enthusiasm about it.



Photo: Archives of Postojnska jama d.d.

The Postojnska jama company is currently celebrating the 800th anniversary of the first visit to the Cave. That is the age of the writing found on a wall inside, although experts have yet to establish how it was written. The tradition of visiting Postojna Cave is very old. At first, only the entry sections were explored. Almost two hundred years ago, local Luka Čeč ventured further inside and thus laid the foundations of modern tourism. "We have had many visitors since Postojna Cave was first opened to the public, and we are expect-

ing the 35-millionth visitor at the end of this year", stressed Marjan Batagelj, the director of the Postojnska jama company. Visitors will be informed about the jubilee, the history of the Cave and its significance throughout the year; but nevertheless, "the beauty of the Cave speaks for itself".

The celebration of the venerable anniversary began with the issue of a commemorative two-euro coin which features a stylised spiral ending in two stalactites. The spiral represents the length and age of the Cave and

also the path which has led visitors inside for 800 years.

One million commemorative coins – issued by the Bank of Slovenia – were minted at the Kremnica Mint in Slovakia. Deželna banka Slovenije is taking orders for the coins, which entered circulation one month ago. Director Batagelj was very pleased with the issue. "This is a very good feeling, which will not go away once the anniversary is over," he said. "Imagine receiving this coin in France or in Germany or anywhere else. This is a good

For 140 years, the Postojna Cave, as the only cave in the world, offers a unique and adventurous ride with a special train, which will take you into the cave, under spectacular underground arches, which are embellished with chandelier look-alike stalactites, through a beautiful subterranean world full of playful limestone sculptures.

The Postojnska jama company is currently celebrating the 800th anniversary of the first visit to the Cave. That is the age of the writing found on a wall inside, although experts have yet to establish how it was written.

feeling for anyone.” 800 years ago was the period between the fourth and fifth crusades, when there was war in Europe. “People came here to visit the Cave and to mark the fact that they were here. They were obviously taken by its beauty, because people like to leave their mark in places where they feel good.”

The second important event to commemorate the jubilee will be an issue of joint stamps by the Slovenian and Austrian post offices. The joint stamp of the two countries will mark the oldest underground post office. It was open during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and already at that time, Postojna Cave’s post office managed to acquire a Slovenian inscription on the stamp in addition to the German text, which was very unusual for Austrian postmarks.

**RICH TOURIST HISTORY**

Throughout history, the Cave has been a sanctuary for local people, who later proudly showed the entry passages and halls to their visitors, who signed their names on the calcareous sinter walls and stalactites. The signatures date back to the 13th century: the oldest is from 1213.

The year 1819 is considered the beginning of organised visits, when Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, was the first to enter his name in the visitors’ book and view the newly discovered sections. Tourism in the Cave developed rapidly thereafter, and the Cave railway began operating in 1872. Electric illumination was installed in 1883, three years before London.

More than half a million visitors a year come to the Cave today and more than 34 million people have admired its beauty so far.

Postojna Cave boasts many superlatives, one of which was the oldest underground post office in the world, which was open between 1899 and 1945 and was included on the list of post offices by the world postal association. Its history is being marked by the issue of a postage stamp block, with one stamp featuring the former post office, and is being issued in cooperation between the Slovenian and Austrian post offices. Postcards posted at the Concert Hall in the Cave receive a special illustrated postmark with the motif of a proteus (a cave salamander).

The unusual looks of the olm have always sparked our imagination. At first it was believed that they were just baby dragons which the high tide brought to the surface.



Photo: Archives of Postojnska jama d.d.

**MORE THAN HALF A MILLION PEOPLE VISITED POSTOJNA CAVE LAST YEAR**

On the occasion of the jubilee, the Postojnska jama company is striving to please its visitors with numerous events and novelties. One of this year’s major investments is the new exhibition pavilion. In 2012, the company invested in several new projects. The largest was the new restaurant on the ground floor of the Hotel Jama, with a self-service restaurant and new sanitation facilities. Work on the new exhibition pavilion has also commenced. The display of the museum collection will be co-financed by

the IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme, from which the company acquired 200,000 euros.

Part of this year’s investment, about three and a half million euros for the reconstruction of lighting in the Cave, will be co-financed by the state from cohesion funds. The project will take more than a year and will be completed in 2014. The construction of controlled units, where pets will be able to wait under professional supervision for owners visiting the Cave, is also anticipated.

The Cave has so far hosted more than 150 high-profile visitors,

including numerous presidents of states and governments, kings, emperors and many scientists and artists. Great interest is also expected in the future. Business workshops have already been fixed to take place in Shanghai and Beijing this year and discussions for presentations in the south of China, one of the most important areas in the country, are also underway. Representatives of Postojna Cave will be present at IMTM in Tel Aviv and will also go to Japan and South Korea. The company will try to acquire funds for promotion in distant markets from EU funds through the European Travel Agents’ and Tour Operators’ Associations.

Throughout history, the Cave has been a sanctuary for local people, who later proudly showed the entry passages and halls to their visitors, who signed their names on the calcareous sinter walls and stalactites. The signatures date back to the 13th century: the oldest is from 1213.

**MARJAN BATAGELJ, MAJORITY OWNER AND PRESIDENT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE POSTOJNSKA JAMA COMPANY:**

“We have had an exceptional year, also because the loss of visitors from nearby countries due to the economic crisis has been substituted by visitors from the Far East and from countries where the crisis was not so marked. Due to the increasing number of visitors from the Far East, we prepared audio guides which enable tours in 15

different languages; in addition to European languages, we offer Japanese, Chinese Mandarin, Korean and Hebrew. Visitors like that very much, because in this way we show them that we respect their culture and language. We are also aware that Postojna Cave is a global trademark and we must adjust to that.

But there are always two logics. The first is the logic of capital that we are all familiar with and which strives constantly for profit. And then there are

the laws of nature, which is our Cave. Between the two is the strategy of sustainable tourism adopted in Slovenia, and we see ourselves particularly here, which means that the Cave cannot be used in a way that damages it. Thus, the wish to increase the number of visitors should not be a priority; instead, we should focus on its sustainability, so we can leave the Cave to our descendants in better condition than it is in now. And to seek such a balance is an art in itself.”



Photo: Archives of Postojnska jama d.d.

Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand hosted by Marjan Batagelj, President of the Management Board of the Postojnska jama company

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**THE GOLDEN BOOK**

In the 200-year history of organised tours, the Cave has been visited by 34 million enthusiastic people from all around the world. Many of them left indelible marks in the visitors' books. Among the interesting features of the Cave are the inscriptions in visitors' books, especially the Golden Book, which contains some very interesting names from world history, culture, science, politics, business and so on. Already in the mid-19th century, the Cave was welcoming visitors not only from Europe, but also from Australia, China, India and even Java and Sumatra.

Visitors used to sign their names on the walls and stalactites. Thus, signatures from as early as the 13th century can be found on the walls in the Passage of Old Signatures, but most signatures date back to the 16th and 17th centuries.

Ferdinand I, the Austrian heir to the throne, was the first 'official' visitor to the Cave, which was already prepared to receive visitors, and he was also the first to enter his name in the visitors' book. Up to 1941, 31 visitors' books were opened; they are all stored in the cave museum. In 1857, a special book was introduced, the so-called Golden Book, which was reserved for the signatures and comments of the most eminent visitors. The fourth book is currently open and the entries represent unique testimonials of the times and political conditions in the world.

Many distinguished guests' names are registered in the lists. These include almost all European rulers from Sweden to Greece, leaders of countries once associated with Slovenian territory, Chinese and Japanese potentates, the Emperor of Brazil, Emperor Franz I (twice, in 1816 and 1818) and Archduke Ferdinand, the Austrian heir to

the throne (1819); Napoleon's widow, Empress Marie Louise (1830 and 1832), Maximilian of Bavaria, heir to the throne, and later King Maximilian II of Bavaria (1835); Archduke Johann of Austria (1837 and 1844); Emperor Franz Joseph I (1857 and 1883); Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II with Empress Theresa Christina (1871); the King of Serbia, Milan Obrenović (1887 and 1888); and even the Prince of Japan, Takehito-Shinnou and his wife, Princess Yasuko, were not able to resist the beauty of the Cave, which they visited in December 1889 while travelling across Europe. The King of Romania, Carol I and his wife, Queen Elisabeth (known as Carmen Sylva); the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III (1919 and 1922); Shri Vijayadevi Mohandjevi, Maharaja of Dharampur and his wife; and Benito Mussolini (1938) were also here.

President Josip Broz Tito came for the first time on 28 May 1845 and

later returned many times with state delegations. In 1954, he thus hosted the President of Turkey, Bayar, and a year later, King Paul of Greece and his wife Frederica. The President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Naser, visited the Cave accompanied by Boris Kraigher, President of the Executive Committee of Slovenia, in 1956. In 1960, the Cave was visited by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranajke. President Tito and his wife Jovanka accompanied the Russian President Nikita Khrushchev and his wife Nina on their visit on 29 August 1963.

Milan Kučan, the first Slovenian President, and his wife, Štefka, hosted many prominent guests of the modern era here. On 12 October 2001, President Kučan hosted the Queen of Denmark, Margrethe II and her husband, Prince Henrik. Princess Nori (Sayako) of Japan, the only daughter of the Japanese royal couple, signed the Golden Book in the same year. Four Presidents visited in 2005: the President of Poland, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, the President of Slovakia, Dr Ivan Gašparovič and his wife Silvia, the President of Finland, Tarja

Halonen and the President of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan. Among others, there was also Paul Crutzen, the Dutch meteorologist, the Nobel Prize Laureate for chemistry in 1995. On 1 June 2006, Albert II of Monaco accepted the invitation of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Janez Drnovšek. The Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, was the guest of the Slovenian Prime Minister, Janez Janša in September 2007.

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The Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, was the guest of the Slovenian Prime Minister, Janez Janša in September 2007.

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Photo: Archives of Postojnska Jama d.d.



Photo: Archives of Postojnska Jama d.d.

The reputation of Postojna Cave has also spread to all corners of the world by postcard. The earliest known postcards of a Slovenian town from the beginning of the 1890s come from Postojna. Publishers Anton Bole and Maks Šeber - who was also a printer, speleologist, photographer and European traveller - were responsible for the postcards. Šeber's photographs of the Cave that had been explored by that time

were printed on postcards at home and abroad. The postcards featured texts in Slovenian; they were bi- or trilingual, but Slovenian was always first. Between the Wars when, under the Treaty of Rapallo, Postojna was considered Italian territory, speleologist and then manager Ivan Andrej Perko contributed most to the recognisability, reputation and progress of the longest and largest Slovenian tourist cave.

Postojna Cave has been the most frequented tourist sight in Slovenia for a number of years. Other sights which attract visitors to Slovenia include the Bled, Ljubljana and Predjama castles, Ljubljana ZOO, Lipica Stud Farm and the Škocjan Caves.

Bled Castle is the second most frequently visited sight in Slovenia. 211,903 visitors were recorded there last year, and

based on visits to the Castle so far, similar numbers are expected this year.

Spas, Ljubljana, the Alps, Portorož, Bled, the Soča River and Bohinj are the most frequently used key words or phrases in connection with Slovenian tourism on online social networks in 2011, according to research by Attentics in 2012 conducted for the Slovenian Tourist Board.

## Tina Maze

### Simply the best

She began and ended the season with a win in her favourite discipline, giant slalom. As well as winning small crystal globes in giant slalom and super-G, she also raised the renowned large crystal globe at the finals of the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup. Tina Maze has been passing milestones and setting records this season which will be difficult to beat. Her achievements are so exceptional and inspiring that they can only be described with

superlatives. Tina has collected 2,414 points this season and is ahead of the runner-up by 1,313 points. She has stood on the winning podium 31 times in all disciplines and has also won two silver medals and one gold at the World Championship in Schladming. These results will go into the record books, but only Tina knows how rough the path to these achievements was and how much hard work, pain and sacrifice were required.



Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA



Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA

Team to aMaze truly is a winning and dedicated combination.



Photo: Vesna Pušnik Brezovnik/STA

The residents of Črna na Koroškem, Tina's birthplace, prepared an exceptional reception for her, and even temporarily renamed the town Tina na Koroškem.

**We are catching up with you when you have just received the large crystal globe for overall points in the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup and also small crystal globes in several disciplines (note: we will specify all of them). Your impressions are probably still fresh. How would you assess this season?**

The season was at a high level throughout. I'd assess it as superb.

**Your results this season have been exceptional; you have broken record after record. You beat Hermann Maier's 13-year-old record of 2,000 points in one season. What are your plans for the future? Can you even set yourself new, higher goals?**

First, some rest, and then we go on, but only if the bar is raised higher. There is still room for improvement.

**But it has not always been like this. There were bad seasons, but you persevered. How did you motivate yourself then? Apparently, Janica Kostelić was one of your role models.**

I always persisted, although it was often difficult.

**Since you started working with Andrea Massi, your form and results have improved. What is**

**the main reason for the turnaround, or the main changes in the work that resulted in such success?**

The success is the result of a lengthy process; nothing was achieved overnight. We have been improving every year and in every aspect.

**What is work in the Team to aMaze like?**

Dedicated, professional, very structured and technical.

**In your opinion, what is the key to achieving such results?**

There are so many factors; it's impossible to determine one in particular.

**Have you ever regretted leaving the Ski Association of Slovenia and embarking on an independent path? After all, several of the best skiers favour this approach - Bode Miller, for example.**

With such successes, I certainly cannot have any regrets.

**Before the beginning of the season, you surprised the public by releasing a single, My Way Is My Decision. The response was outstanding. Does that mean that you are going to start a career in show business as well?**

Well, skiing is partly show busi-

ness; races are performances and training sessions are dress rehearsals. I don't have any plans for music yet.

**How can you remain so focused and successful in competition with all your obligations - to sponsors and music - and pressures, and even the death threats you received at the end of the season?**

It's also due to training. You acquire a thick skin over the years.

**The Slovenians have taken skiing as their own; it is part of the national consciousness, which was actually built on the successes of our skiers. Do you feel part of this story? Do you also feel Slovenia?**

Of course, I feel that we're all about to take an important step and I wish there were more brave people who know what they want.

**In conclusion: the former Slovenian government gave you a great reward for your results, which have also contributed to the international promotion of Slovenia. How do you see this gesture of the government?**

It was a nice gesture. I was pleasantly surprised and grateful that my results were also rewarded financially.

The large crystal globe is not only a glass ball weighing twelve kilograms. It is a form of a symbolic appreciation for regular early mornings, frostbite on tired skin, pain from strenuous workouts, physical and psychological challenges to human abilities, all the sacrifices and, last but not least, heavy financial burdens. It is recognition of a sportsman, a champion, who has been in top form for the entire winter.

## Jesenice – town of steel and flowers

Jesenice is an industrial town lying between Alpine slopes. Many know Jesenice only because of its location: it lies on the way to the Karavanke Tunnel on the transit route to Austria, and that is somewhat unfair to this town, which hides

some interesting stories. Many of these stories are about sport. Amongst others, Jesenice will also be one of the venues of the European Basketball Championship, which is taking place in Slovenia in September this year.

Photo: Jure Kravanja



Jesenice

As a child, I remember Jesenice as a town on the road to Kranjska Gora, where my parents taught me to ski. Like many Slovenians, I took my first runs on skis on the well-known terrain of the World Cup. Kranjska Gora is only about 30 kilometres from Jesenice. But rather than skiing, Jesenice was known for ice-hockey.

### ICE-HOCKEY TRADITION

The Podmežakla Hall was a nurturing ground for ice-hockey heroes and knew how to bring out talent in young boys. The Jesenice ice-hockey club thus prides itself on having one of the longest traditions in Slovenia and a wide range of national championship titles. More than 160 games were played at the hall annually. The most famous ice-hockey player from the Jesenice school of hockey is undoubtedly Anže Kopitar, who has recently been playing in the NHL for the LA Kings with whom he won the Stanley Cup last year. The Cup thus came to Slovenia and also thrilled those who perhaps were not regular spectators.

Organised ice-hockey celebrated its 65th anniversary in Jesenice. In Slovenia and elsewhere, it would be difficult to find a team which has left such a stamp on sport as the Jesenice ice-hockey club. They were at the top of their game for almost forty years, which is an enviable accomplishment. The Jesenice success story encompasses many years of hard work and sacrifice by all who, whenever and in whatever manner, participated in the ice-hockey fairytale of the Podmežakla boys. Particularly matches against the HK Olimpija from Ljubljana were exceptional experiences and the fans were always passionate and dedicated to their team.

### FROM STEEL TO FLOWERS

Although Jesenice was once viewed only as a town with heavy iron foundries and mining stories, it is quite an exceptional place. The town, squeezed between the steep slopes of the Karavanke Alps, is the starting point for visits to flowering alpine meadows, which seem to be located right above the town.



An abundance of narcissi

The most known alpine pasture is Golica. This beautiful area, which is also the title of the most frequently played song in the world as performed by the Avsenik Brothers Ensemble, has been made famous because of the flowers and also the song. Golica is particularly attractive in spring, when its slopes turn white with narcissi. An abundance of narcissi can be seen on the slopes of Golica and Javorniški Rovt between May and June. To preserve these protected flowers, traditional farming methods are used on these slopes and mowing takes place as late as June. The Sava Caves which used to hold the richest deposits of iron ore are also nearby, and it is not surprising that the iron industry was a means of survival.

Only a few minutes away from Jesenice's hustle and bustle lies the first botanical garden in Slovenia, Zois Park, which is more than one hundred years old. According to local residents, nourishment can always be found there, for both body and soul. There are many traces of ancient life in these parts, the heritage of Žiga Zois's

explorations, and other sites of interest which can be found along the forest educational path.

Beautiful mountain tours begin above Jesenice. There are also Javorniški Rovt and Hruška planina, which is still a living alpine herdsman's mountain, where authentic dairy products are served in herdsman's huts. The mountain pastures are vast, wild and often completely uninhabited. Trails lead to various waterfalls, where you can quench your thirst and take a moment to reflect.

And while walking around Jesenice, you cannot ignore the Stara Sava, the protected industrial area of the former iron-works settlement. It includes the Bucelleni-Ruard Manor, the Jesuit Church of the Assumption of Mary, the Kasarna, a former residential block for workers, and other remains of various industrial plants. History meets a lively atmosphere here, as you can always attend a musical performance or other events. And the murmur of the Sava River also contributes its special note.

Photo: Saša Manojlovič



Zois park

The exhibition '60 let košarke na Jesenicah' (60 Years of Basketball in Jesenice), prepared by the Upper Sava Valley Museum is open at the gallery in Kos Manor in Jesenice until 26 April. Jesenice also has a rich basketball history, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. The curator of the exhibition is Dr Marko Mugerli; in cooperation with many connoisseurs of basketball in Jesenice, he prepared an accompanying catalogue where

full information about the 60-year history of basketball in Jesenice can be found.

**Tomaž Tom Mencinger, the Mayor of Jesenice, commented on the exhibition:**

"We are preparing for a huge event which will be very important for Jesenice. We all hope that the organisation of the first round of the championship that is to take place in Jesenice is successful, and that

we can prove to the visitors that we are a friendly and warm town to which they will want to return. The exhibition '60 let košarke na Jesenicah' proves that Jesenice is not only an ice-hockey town, but that basketball played a significant role in our sporting past, and so I am happy that our 60th anniversary of basketball in Jesenice can be celebrated with our town hosting the first round of EuroBasket 2013."

### EuroBasket news

## Tickets are already on sale

Tickets for EuroBasket 2013, which will take place in four Slovenian towns, Celje, Jesenice, Koper and Ljubljana, are available from 18 March. All games are scheduled for 14.30,

17.15 and 21.00; the national team will play all its games at 21.00. Tickets for this year's EuroBasket can be bought for individual games and are no longer available in daily pack-

ages, as was the case in previous championships. They can be purchased through two sales channels i.e. Eventim or Palma Travel Agency, with tourist packages included, via their

website (<http://www.palma-travel.eu/individual-packages>). Depending on the category and round of competition, prices range between EUR 4-180.

GROUP A (Ljubljana)	GROUP B (Jesenice)	GROUP C (Celje)	GROUP D (Koper)
France	F. Y. R. of Macedonia	Spain	Russia
Great Britain	Lithuania	Slovenia	Greece
Germany	Montenegro	Croatia	Italy
Ukraine	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Poland	Finland
Belgium	Latvia	Georgia	Turkey
Israel	Serbia	Czech Republic	Sweden



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



## Slovenian cookbook, the best in Eastern Europe

The cookbook entitled *Okusi pokrajin* (Tastes of the Regions) prepared by Janez Bogataj in cooperation with Stevo Karapandža, won an award for the best book in the Eastern Europe category at the Paris fair of gastronomic and culinary literature 'Festival du livre culinaire'.

At the fair, which took place at the end of February, over 3,500 books from around the world were in competition for awards in various categories. The event, with numerous presentations and tastings, was held at the Carrousel du Louvre, and was attended by the Slovenian Ambassador to France, Veronika Stabej. In addition to the Slovenian version, the book is also available in Serbian, Montenegrin, Bosnian and Croatian. Books from Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the USA dedicated to the cuisine of Eastern Europe also competed for the award in the Eastern Europe category.

Photo: Aleš Fevžar/STO



## Rogla, Golte and Zreče are the best

Visitors to the website of the leading urban information provider in Europe, *Your Pocket*, have chosen the best ski and spa centre in Slovenia for the third time.

Rogla was chosen as the best Slovenian ski centre for the second consecutive year, with 33 per cent of the votes; Golte came second and Cerklje ob Savi third. First place among spas was taken by Terme Zreče Spa Resort, which beat Terme Olimia Spa Resort (last year's winner).



Photo: Nelojka Trifun/STA

## Awards for exemplary business and entrepreneurial achievements

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) presented 45 awards for exemplary business and entrepreneurial achievements.

This year's winners are: Andrej Gradišnik from Metal Ravne, Marjana Lavrič Šulman from Futura DDB, Emil Marinšek from Maremico, Petra Malenšek from Vivapen, Janez Novak from RLS, Andrej Repše from Armat Projekt, Dejan Turk, President of the Management Board of Simobil, and Vojmir Urlep, President of the Management Board of Lek.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

## Stele Award goes to conservator Alenka Železnik

The Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred on conservator Alenka Železnik, and certificates of recognition went to conservators Marinka Dražumerič and Miran Ježovnik and the owner of the cultural monument, Svetelšek Homestead, Mirko Lavbič.

Železnik received the Stele Award for her supreme achievements, which have contributed significantly to the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage in Slovenia. Conservator Dražumerič received the Stele certificate of recognition for her successful management of the complete renovation of the Mordax Chapel in Novo mesto, and conservator Ježovnik for the preparation of static projects of immovable monuments and registered heritage in Slovenia. A certificate of recognition also went to Mirko Lavbič, the owner of the cultural monument, Svetelšek Homestead, for his exceptional approach to renovation.

## The best 3D photographer in the world is Matjaž Tančič

The 2013 Sony World Photography Award, awarded by the World Photography Organisation (WPO), has gone to Slovenian photographer Matjaž Tančič. One of the pioneers of 3D photography in the world has thus become its great master.

Tančič's winning photograph, *TIME KEEPER*, was inspired by the arrangement of a living room which he found in the Chinese Hui minority among the old village houses of Yixian in China. He started his career as a photojournalist for *Mladina* magazine and later became involved in fashion photography. The winning photograph will be showcased at the 2013 Sony World Photography Awards Exhibition in London (between 26 April and 12 May), where Tančič will be presented the award.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Photo: Gregor Miklavž/STA



## This year's Glazer Award for lifetime achievements went to actor Vlado Novak

This year's Glazer Award for lifetime achievements was presented to the actor Vlado Novak. The committee awarded Glazer Certificates for achievements in the field of culture in the last two or three years to the poet Lidija Gačnik Gombač, Artistic Director of the Maribor Theatre Festival Alja Predan and painter Jože Šubic.

A lifetime achievement award was presented to Vlado Novak for his achievements in the field of dramatic art. He has played over 100 dramatic roles, mainly leading ones, in the Maribor and other Slovenian theatres, and also over 40 roles in film and on television. The Glazer Certificate was also awarded to the dramaturge, translator, editor and theatre expert Alja Predan. Jože Šubic was awarded for his projects "Nine Stations of Your Taste, House of the Rising Sun and Who Is Holding the Water Here?". The Glazer Award for lifetime achievements is the main award of the city of Maribor for achievements in the field of culture. Glazer Awards are named in honour of the Slovenian poet Janko Glazer, who spent most of his creative period in Maribor.



Photo: Tinkara Zupančič/STA

## Evald Flisar receives the Grum Award

The highest number of awards was given at the closing ceremony of the 43rd Week of Slovenian Drama. The recipient of the Grum Award for the best new Slovenian dramatic text was Evald Flisar for 'Comedy About the End of the World', and the biennale Grün-Filipič Award for achievements in Slovenian dramaturgy went to Vili Ravnjak.

According to the jury's citation for the Grum Award, 'Comedy About the End of the World' deals with the most burning global and local themes in a fresh manner, with an originally constructed story and skilfully written dialogues. Many foreign theatres are interested in Flisar's texts e.g. Taiwan, Japan and Belarus. This year, the jury gave the young dramatist award for the first time; it was divided between two of twelve competing texts, i.e. 'Inventura' by Vesna Hauschild and 'Sen 59' by Tibor Hrs Pandur. The Grün-Filipič Award went to all-round theatre person Vili Ravnjak, while the most popular play among the public was 'A Hammer or Tweezers?' by Simona Hamer, produced by Integrali Cultural Association and Glej Theatre, which was featured in the accompanying programme.

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



### Salami Feast

5 May 2013 at 15.00, Žirovski vrh

Assessment and tasting of salamis, opportunity to buy cured meat products, and a social and cultural programme; a walk through Zala, the area around Žirovski vrh, will be organised in the morning. [More information at www.tdzirovskivrh.si](http://www.tdzirovskivrh.si)

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



### Refosco Festival

17-19 May 2013, Marezige

The Refosco Festival includes lectures, the introduction of the wine queen, awards to the best wine producers, tastings of Refosco, olive oil, prosciutto, bread, Refosco cocktails, and a farmers' market of home produce and products. All events will be accompanied by various musical performances.

[More information at www.zakladi-istre.si](http://www.zakladi-istre.si)

### Europe Film Week

5 - 12 May, all over Slovenia

In the first half of May, all lovers of high-quality European films are in for a treat: Europe Film Week is coming to the cinemas of thirteen Slovenian towns.

This traditional film festival is one of the events taking place all over Slovenia in the days around Europe Day, 9 May. The films will be shown, admission free, in Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Velenje, Slovenj Gradec, Radovljica, Sežana, Izola and Nova Gorica, and also in Ptuj, Trbovlje, Domžale and Krško for the first time. Audiences will be regaled with eighteen specially selected European films, including winners of the European Parliament LUX Prize, winners from the most renowned European festivals, including Cannes and Berlin, and Oscar-winners. Europe Film Week also features numerous other events, meetings, and debates with film-makers, and creative workshops for children.

Europe Film Week 2013 is organised by the Representation of the European Commission, the European Parliament Information Office for Slovenia and the Government Communication Office of the Republic of Slovenia in cooperation with Art Cinema Network Slovenia and Media Desk Slovenia.

Photo: Alfi Fevzar/STO



### Bograch Festival

25 May, Murska Sobota

A traditional competition in the cooking of bograch followed by tasting will be held outside the Diana Hotel. There will also be a fair of traditional crafts and a music programme.

[More information at http://www.hotel-diana.si/](http://www.hotel-diana.si/)

Photo: Gregor Miklavc/STA



### Goodness from Slovenian Farms

16-19 May, Ptuj

More than 750 farms from Slovenia and abroad will be presented at the exhibition in the competition and introduction sections. The assessment includes 1,173 food items in thirteen product groups. This year's focus will be on tasting delicacies from the fireplaces of Štajerska farm houses.

[More information at www.visitptuj.eu](http://www.visitptuj.eu)

Photo: Bobo/STO



Source: Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

## Silent Revolutions: Contemporary Design in Slovenia

The travelling exhibition of contemporary Slovenian design is being showcased between 21 March and 28 April 2013 in the Museum Quarter in Design Austria in Vienna, Austria. The exhibition is being mounted in cooperation with SKICA, the Slovenian Cultural and Information Centre.

The Silent Revolutions exhibition is a selection of designs created in the first two dynamic decades of a young European country. The name of the project, Silent Revolutions, denotes a country with an exceptional history in design which has not (yet) made its influence felt in the broader European context. The 'silence' in this story is the key concept behind the exhibition, in which a wide array of recent designs are placed alongside five historic and iconic design objects. The second element, 'revolution', represents several exhibited items and examples of design whose amazing and daring innovations set new and unique global standards.

The exhibition focuses not only on the excellence of individual products, but also on their position in the wider context of contemporary Slovenian design, which changed considerably with Slovenian independence in 1991 and the sudden leap into market economy and all that this change brought about. Therefore, the exhibition showcases not only superb products and designers, but also clients, manufacturers and companies which had a key role in realising these designs. Special attention is paid to innovative approaches, exceptional strategies, inspiring visions and advance creative thinking in today's highly volatile changing economic environment. The selection highlights important products of major companies which developed their own brands and special items from limited editions manufactured by designers themselves.

The featured designers include: Igor Akrapovič, Asobi, Bevk Perovič arhitekti, Lara Bohinc, Ivo Boscarol, Gigodesign, Gorenje Design Studio, Jernej and Japac Jakopin, Leonora Jakovljevič, Kabinet 01, Toni Kancilja, Rok Kuhar and Katjuša Kranjc, Franc Kuzma, Studio Miklavc, Rok Oblak, Oloop, Tanja Pak, Marko Pavlinec, Janez Suhadolc, Arne Vehovar, Nika Zupanc, Peter Florjančič, Niko Kralj, Saša J. Mächtig, Davorin Savnik, and Marko Turk. The companies include: Akrapovič, Alpina, Lara Bohinc, Elan, Glesia, Gorenje, Imas, Intra lighting, Kuzma, La Femme et la Maison by Nika Zupanc, Leonora Mark - Ave Femina, Pipistrel, Seaway Group, Stol & Stol, Trimo, Vertigo Bird, Zilio Aldo & C. sas, Iskra, Imgrad, Stol Kamnik and Electroacoustics Laboratory (EAL).

As a comprehensive unit, the exhibition reflects the exceptional and diverse spirit of this era. In spite of various parallel approaches in Slovenian design, straightforward individual layers of a multi-layered story are revealed. These significant and dynamic differences are displayed and highlighted as a driving force and are the common denominators of Slovenian contemporary design.

Additional information and photographs:

[www.silentrevolutions.si](http://www.silentrevolutions.si)

