

Sinfo

July-August

The Best from Slovenia

IN FOCUS

Our Sportsmen – Our Pride

**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**



**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**

Sinfo

SLOVENIAN INFORMATION

www.slovenia.si
www.ukom.gov.si

Published by
Government Communication Office

Editor-in-Chief
Petra Ložar

Executive Editor
Vesna Žarkovič

Editorial Board
Danila Golob, Uroš Mahkovec, Danila Mašič,
Polona Prešeren, Livija Kovač Kostantinovič

Design
Irena Kogoj

Photo Editor
Foto format d.o.o.

Photo on the front page
Mostphotos

Translation
Secretariat-General of the Government of
the Republic of Slovenia, Translation and
Interpretation Division, DZTPS

Language editing
Amidas

Copy writer editing
Marcus Ferrar

Print
Collegium Graphicum d.o.o., Slovenia

Number of copies
3500

ISSN
1854-0805



Photo: Mateja Jordovič Petročnik

A BRILLIANT SPORTING RECORD

The sporting life of Slovenia has thrived since the country became an independent state. Taking into consideration it is a nation of only two million inhabitants, Slovenia can boast of an abundance of top athletes and champions. In the past 25 years our athletes have won 34 Olympic medals, of which 19 were at the Summer Olympics. Adding in non-Olympic competitions, Slovenia's tally is 216 world titles and 10 big crystal globes. This ranks Slovenia third on the global scale. Slovenians are a sporting nation not only in terms of professional achievements but also in the number of recreational sportsmen and sportswomen. The hearts of all Slovenian athletes swell with pride when they put on their outfits featuring the national coat of arms and wave the Slovenian flag. It is hard to imagine modern Slovenia without its best athletes, the unparalleled ambassadors of our country, whose achievements instil confidence and pride as well as strengthen national consciousness. Watching them compete brings us to our feet and fills us with pride and admiration. Their performance in many events has brought them fame and success in the international arena. Sport is, after all, inextricably intertwined with the state, national affiliation and iconography. Celebrating the results of its athletes helps a country shape its identity. Just days before the opening of the Games in Brazil, the President of the National Olympic Committee, Bogdan Gabrovec, proclaimed that Slovenia would win six medals. Should his prediction turn out to be correct, this Summer Olympic team will be the most successful national team ever. We will keep our fingers crossed for Slovenian athletes in Rio!

You can further read about succession issues that had to be settled by the five equal and sovereign successor states after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991. There is also a piece about the Slovenian master of painting, graphic arts and drawing, Zoran Mušič, and a permanent exhibition of his work in the National Gallery of Slovenia. There is another one about the centenary of the Russian Chapel under the Vršič pass that was constructed during World War I by long-suffering Russian prisoners-of-war. This tangible symbol of friendship between Slovenia and Russia reminds passers-by that the life and irreplaceable dignity of each and every human being must be respected. It also promotes genuine relations that form the very foundation of respect and the peaceful coexistence of all humanity. Just like the Olympic Games.

Vesna Žarkovič, Executive Editor

Vesna Žarkovič

- 8** OLYMPIC GAMES
The Slovenian Team at the Olympic Games in Rio
- 10** BOGDAN GABROVEC, PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVENIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
"Slovenia will win six medals in Rio de Janeiro"
- 16** SLOVENIAN MEDAL WINNERS
Olympic medal winners for Slovenia as an independent country
- 20** WHERE ARE THE FORMER SLOVENIAN OLYMPIC ATHLETES TODAY?
Making a life after sport
- 24** ALEŠ FEVŽER – OLYMPIC PHOTOGRAPHER PAR EXCELLENCE
"I live for great photos"
- 28** SARA ISAKOVIĆ – TOP SWIMMER, OLYMPIC MEDAL-WINNER – AND NOW LEADER OF SLOVENIA'S FANS
"Our fans create a very positive image of Slovenia"
- 32** ANŽE KOPITAR – LOS ANGELES KINGS HOCKEY STAR
"Slovenia will always be my home"
- 36** SPORTS VENUES FOR EVERY TASTE
A country of eager sports people
- 46** PLUNGING DOWN THE SPILLWAY OF A DAM
Ljubljana-Tacen welcomes world's best canoeists at the 2016 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup Final
- 58** KRESNIK LITERARY AWARD
A novel of an imagined childhood
- 80** BLEED STRATEGIC FORUM
Addressing unparalleled challenges to security





spontelna

9

MEM

MEM

SLOVENSKA
SPORTELNA
Blizšie k vám.

2

CANO

VALJO

OUR SPORTSMEN – OUR PRIDE

Just ahead of the Olympic Games in Brazil we present the members of the Slovenian Olympic team and our previous Olympic medallists. We can hardly imagine modern Slovenia without its best athletes: they are the country's best ambassadors. Through their many successes, they are a great source of pride and strengthen our national awareness. We rise to our feet to wish them courage and good luck as they take on daring new trials and challenges.

OLYMPIC GAMES

The Slovenian Team at the Olympic Games in Rio

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: NEBOJŠA TEJIĆ/STA



At this year's Olympic Games in Rio, 59 athletes will be representing Slovenia. The team includes 36 male and 23 female athletes, with a total of 131 people making up the entire Olympic entourage. They are headed by Iztok Čop, Olympic medalist and Vice President of the Slovenian Olympic Committee.

Slovenia will compete in 14 sports: athletics, artistic gymnastics, sailing, judo, canoe slalom and sprint, cycling road and mountain bike, table tennis, swimming, marathon swimming, handball, shooting and triathlon.

- handball: 14 players + three substitutes;
- shooting: Boštjan Maček, Živa Dvoršak;
- triathlon: Mateja Šimic;
- tennis: Polona Hercog.

Despite marathon runner Anton Kosmač and shooter Boštjan Maček not achieving the qualifying standard, they will still be representing Slovenia's colours in Brasil on account of their previous results. Tennis player Polona Hercog secured a place in the national team at the last minute.

The flag bearer at the opening ceremony will be sailor Vasilij Žbogar.

The official presentation of the Olympic team took place on 22 July in Koper in the pleasant company of athletes and supporters. The Slovenian team is a very much younger one, but nevertheless has ambitious goals. Sailor Vasilij Žbogar is the only team member to have won a medal in previous Olympic Games.

The list of the athletes competing in the Olympic Games in Rio:

- athletics: Luka Janežič, Žan Rudolf, Robert Renner, Anton Kosmač, Maja Mihalinec, Sabina Veit, Daneja Grandovec, Maruša Černjul, Tina Šutej, Martina Ratej;
- artistic gymnastics: Teja Belak;
- sailing: Vasilij Žbogar, Tina Mrak, Veronika Macarol;
- judo: Tina Trstenjak, Anamari Velenšek, Rok Drakšič, Mihael Žgank, Adrian Gomboc;
- canoe slalom: Benjamin Savšek, Luka Božič, Sašo Taljat, Urša Kragelj, Peter Kauzer;
- canoe sprint: Špela Ponomarenko Janič;
- cycling road: Matej Mohorič, Jan Polanc, Simon Špilak, Primož Roglič, Polona Batagelj;
- cycling mountain bike: Tanja Žakelj;
- table tennis: Bojan Tokič;
- swimming: Anja Klinar, Tjaša Oder, Damir Dugonjič, Anže Tavčar, Janja Šegel, Tjaša Vozel, Martin Bau, Robert Žbogar, Janja Šegel, Tjaša Pintar;
- marathon swimming: Špela Perše;



BOJAN GABROVEC,
PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVENIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

“Slovenia will win six medals in Rio de Janeiro”

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: ALEŠ FEVŽER



When a nation celebrates the sporting successes of its athletes, it is building its identity. Mr Bogdan Gabrovec, the president of Slovenian Olympic Committee (SOC) is always present at these celebrations, albeit in the second row. The front row is reserved for the athletes.

We are talking on 16 June and there is only a month and a half left until the beginning of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. What is currently taking up most of your time?

It is the security issues. Growing terrorist threats require new approaches and more staff, which, in turn, increases costs. I am trying to ensure that these costs are fairly shared among all stakeholders. Another security challenge is taking precautions against the spread of the Zika virus, which could cause additional stress for athletes. We are prepared for that. Slovenian Olympians and their support team are aware of the risk of infection at the Rio Games. We started an awareness-raising campaign a year ago and organised vaccination programmes. Olympic team candidates are kept up-to-date with the latest findings, and the medical team is available at all times. Specific preventive measures with instructions regarding personal hygiene, personal contacts, and precautions against mosquito bites have been adopted. In addition, we appeal to all athletes to have their blood tested before departure and immediately upon return. The virus immediately shows up in blood samples.

You led the 2012 summer Olympic team in London, and the Rio Games will be your first as president of the SOC. How many medals do you expect?

I will stick to six. We will win one in a team sport, but I won't give you the names of individual medallists. Under such a scenario, this year's Olympic team would be the most successful Slovenian team ever. At the Rio Games, the only Slovenian Olympian with an Olympic medal in his collection is sailor Vasilij Žbogar. Slovenia has a high medal-winning potential in judo and kayaking, with a long list of potential medallists. I don't want to increase the pressure by making promises about the number of medals. I do believe, though, that we won't return to Slovenia empty-handed.

Well, there will be also Slovenian handball team in Rio.

This will be the third Olympic Games for Slovenia's handball team, and handball continues to be the only team sport in Slovenia to

have made it to the summer Olympics. So far, without any major success. However, in handball there is a rule that it is easier to get a great result at the Olympics than it is to secure a place among the top 12 national teams qualifying for the 'tournament of tournaments'.

An Olympic medal in handball would be a historic achievement, as Slovenia is still seeking its first Olympic medal in team sports.

What criteria are used to select members of the Olympic team?

Only athletes who meet the qualifying standards and those who are clearly identified as being able to represent Slovenia at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo will travel to Rio. The only exception might be Rajmond Debevec, whose ninth performance at the Olympic Games would make him one of the three athletes ever to have had such an impressive record. We will fight for Debevec to get to Rio, because of the immense contribution he has made to the development of sport in Slovenia.

Slovenia's Olympic delegation will be led by former rower Iztok Čop. You support the idea that delegations should be led by former athletes. What makes them better at the role?

Our first positive experience dates back to the 2008 Beijing Games, where Slovenia's delegation was led by canoeist Andraž Vehovar. Petra Majdič was equally successful as delegation leader at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. We fought hard to get approval for this change from the High-Level Sports Committee, since the former SOC president did not support this solution. The role of a delegation leader is quite demanding. I led the delegation in 2012. Actually, it is better this way because, without any explanation, the athletes know what is going on and what is in the background.

Delegation leaders strengthen the team spirit and act in a sports-like manner to resolve any conflicts which may arise among athletes facing tremendous expectations.

Today, it is not enough to participate, athletes are expected to win. The level has risen considerably. The Games are now attended by 10,600 athletes competing in about 35 events, in winter and summer sports.

What is the level of doping among Slovenian athletes, compared to the rest of the world?

There were two doping cases of female athletes qualifying for the 2016 Olympics, which is a high percentage compared to other countries. Both athletes were instantly eliminated from the selection procedure. The SOC, and I personally, employs a zero-tolerance policy to such actions. Olympic candidates are under particularly strict control. We fully support the efforts of the IOC to extend the retesting of blood samples. Slovenia has 55,850 registered athletes aged 12 and older in competition-based systems. In terms of percentage, the number of recorded cases is negligible. However, any athlete using drugs to enhance performance must be penalised.

You have been at the helm of the SOC for 18 months. What are your impressions and what will be your most important task in the future?

When I first announced my candidacy, I did not expect to have so much work. During this time, we have set up a strategy of the Committee that is aligned with the national sports programme. A lot of work still needs to be done. We would like to see more funding for top-level sports, which halved after 2010. The government's annual sports budget is 17 million euros, of which 12 million goes to support annual sports programmes. This is not enough, of course; more than 60% of sports facilities are outdated and waste energy. Unfortunately, sports and culture are normally hit hardest by budgetary cuts. Therefore, the SOC is also trying to raise the personal income tax voluntary contribution rate from 0.5% to 1%. During my term as president, I would also like to ensure more stable conditions for sport at a local level.

How has the recent visit to Ljubljana by IOC President, Thomas Bach, affected the popularisation of Slovenian sport in society and the country?

Thomas Bach's visit to Ljubljana is a tremendous compliment for Slovenian sport. Bach stressed the role of sport and athletes as the best ambassadors of Slovenia in the world. That is something we all agree about.

In terms of the number of medals won, Slovenia ranks third in the world. We are a sport-loving nation.

Our country should use that in its promotion and in benefits to the economy. In line with the Olympic Agenda 2020, Slovenia has already put together its national programme for sport, which aims to bring sport closer to the environment, moving from club level up. The IOC is a multinational organisation which strives to make an impact through principles rather than only money. This issue has been widely debated. In Slovenia, too much time has passed since 2002, when Bled hosted the European Youth Olympic Festival. We have failed to upgrade this event with something even bigger. We are going to bid for the Summer Youth Olympics and are joining forces with Croatia and Italy as a candidate to host the European Games. We hope to gain the support of the state for these two projects. The European Games, which premiered last year in Baku, Azerbaijan, are a European version of the Olympics. Bach complimented Slovenia as a great host and a friendly organiser of international sports events, and invited the country's NOC to consider hosting a large-scale competition.

What about the employment of Slovenian athletes in public administration, i.e. in the army, police, or financial administration?

Our current capacity is 120 employees - 70 in the army, 30 in the police, and another 20 at the Ministry of Finance. The agreement we wish to include in the Public Financing Act foresees 200 jobs for athletes and coaches by the year 2023. If this is realised, the top-level athletes and coaches in Slovenian sport will be provided for.

Slovenia is very strong in the areas that focus on the athletes: education and dual careers allowing athletes to study and hold a regular job, which is a unique solution in the world.

Currently there are 40 or 50 athletes who meet the qualifying criteria for employment but cannot enter the system because there are no vacancies. The country employs 115 athletes and coaches and finances the project of post-career transition and retraining for top athletes. Twelve years after the implementation of the Bologna Process, we would like to reintroduce sport as a compulsory subject at higher education institutions. Exclusion of physical education (PE) from colleges and universities has lowered the amount of

physical exercise taken by students and resulted in their negative attitude to sport. Such mentality has a negative effect on sporting achievements as well as working habits. This new Act hopes to bring PE back to higher education institutions.

What do you, personally, do to stay fit and healthy?

Sport has been part of my life for 50 years. I live for it, although I don't have much time for myself right now. Sometimes I substitute for my son, who coaches judo in the Koroška region. I like doing that because I used to coach judo, and was head coach of the national team. I stay fit by doing various things at home, for example, making firewood in the forest. I try to keep my volunteer engagement with the SOC in line with the set goals, sometimes at the expense of my private life as well as my company. During the past year-and-a-half I have covered 127,000 km travelling across Slovenia, because I am focusing more on the local environment.





The President of Slovenia's NOC, Bogdan Gabrovec, is the second president of the Slovenian Olympic Committee – Association of Sports Federations, in the history of the organisation. Prior to this role, he had led the Judo Federation of Slovenia for 20 years, making it into one of the most successful national branch federations. He led the Slovenian Olympic delegation at the London Games, where Urška Žolnir won Slovenia's first female Olympic gold. Gabrovec served as Vice President of the SOC and President of the Top-Level Sports Committee for eight years, and was a member of the executive board of Slovenia's umbrella sports organisation for 12 years. Previously, he acted as president of the Sports Association of Slovenj Gradec. He sat on the Expert Committee for Sports of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and was president of the Council of the Foundation for Financing Sports Organisations. For four years he was president of the Martial Arts Federation of Slovenia, and recently a member of the expert group working on the new strategy of the SOC-ASF. Gabrovec is a master of judo and a former member of the Yugoslavian national judo team. Later he was appointed head coach of the national female judo team and national judo team.

An overview of the medals Slovenia has won at previous Summer Olympics shows an outstanding success rate before the Olympic Games starting in August 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. The first medals in Slovenia's rich collection were bronze medals won 24 years ago in Barcelona. Four years later, Atlanta signalled the start of the silver era, which climaxed in the golden era at the turn of the millennium games in Sydney, when Rajmond Debevec and rowers Iztok Čop and Luka Špik returned home with gold. Since 2000, Slovenia's team has never left the world's biggest competition with fewer than four medals.

Most of the medals, which are written in the history of the nation and place the athletes who earned them on the map of immortals, have been won in highly-rated individual sports events. At the Olympics, judo is regarded as the king of martial arts, athletics is the queen of sports, and swimming medals are always among the most valued. Iztok Čop and Luka Špik won their last Olympic medals four years ago in London, on an island, whose long-term tradition places rowing among the most popular national sports.

Dear athletes: the Minister wishes good luck in Rio!

The summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro represent a new sporting challenge for our athletes, since they raise high expectations among athletes, sports officials and the public.

On his recent visit to Slovenia, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach expressed his admiration for the past achievements of Slovenian athletes at the Olympic Games. "With regard to the number of population and successes recorded at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi and 2012 Olympics in London, Slovenia is a real sports giant," said Bach. And this is more than true. Since the declaration of independence, Slovenian athletes have won thirty-four Olympic medals, of which six gold, ten silver and eighteen bronze. They were also very successful in paralympic disciplines, winning three gold, eight silver and seven bronze medals, or eighteen Olympic medals altogether. I am convinced that Slovenian athletes will return from Rio with yet more medals.

This year, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport again provided additional financial support to the Slovenian Olympic and Paralympic Committee for the Rio 2016 project, which allowed our athletes to engage in good-quality preparations for the Olympic Games.

Athletes are role models for nearly everyone, especially for the young people. They can be credited with the fact that young people are choosing to participate in sports, which is also one of the main goals of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport – to make sure that more and more young people and others decide to take up sports. I believe that many young people will be encouraged to engage in sports even more actively when watching this year's Olympic Games.

Slovenian athletes are true ambassadors of Slovenia in the world. I wish them a safe journey to Rio, excellent competitive conditions and the best possible results. Thanks to them, this summer will be especially exciting and marked with the sports spirit.

Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič, Minister of Education, Science and Sport



Olympic medal winners for Slovenia as an independent country

DANILO GOLOB, IRENA KOGOJ
SOURCE AND PHOTO: OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OF SLOVENIA



Urška Žolnir won a gold medal for the independent Slovenia at the 2012 Olympics in London.

Total Olympic medals: 34 medals (6 gold, 10 silver, 18 bronze)

19 SUMMER OLYMPIC MEDALS		
 <p>4 gold medals</p>	 <p>6 silver medals</p>	 <p>9 bronze medals</p>
<p>Iztok Čop and Luka Špik rowing – double scull; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Rajmond Debevec shooting – 50 metre rifle three positions; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Primož Kozmus athletics – hammer throw; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Urška Žolnir judo; <i>London 2012</i></p>	<p>Brigita Bukovec athletics – 100m hurdles; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Andraž Vehovar canoeing and kayaking – K1 slalom; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Iztok Čop and Luka Špik rowing – double sculls; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Sara Isaković swimming – 200m freestyle; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Vasilij Žbogar sailing – laser; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Primož Kozmus athletics – hammer throw; <i>London 2012</i></p>	<p>Iztok Čop and Denis Žvegelj rowing – coxless pair; <i>Barcelona 1992</i></p> <p>Milan Janša, Jani Klemenčič, Sašo Mirjanič, Sadik Mujkić rowing – coxless four; <i>Barcelona 1992</i></p> <p>Jolanda Čeplak athletics – 800 m; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Urška Žolnir judo; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Vasilij Žbogar sailing – laser; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Lucija Polavder judo; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Rajmond Debevec shooting – 50 metre rifle three positions; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Iztok Čop and Luka Špik rowing – double sculls; <i>London 2012</i></p> <p>Rajmond Debevec shooting – 50 metre rifle three positions; <i>London 2012</i></p>

15 WINTER OLYMPIC MEDALS		
 <p>2 gold medals</p>	 <p>4 silver medals</p>	 <p>9 bronze medals</p>
<p>Tina Maze downhill; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p> <p>Tina Maze giant slalom; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p>	<p>Tina Maze alpine skiing – giant slalom; <i>Vancouver 2010</i></p> <p>Tina Maze alpine skiing – super-g; <i>Vancouver 2010</i></p> <p>Peter Prevc ski jumping – individual normal hill; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p> <p>Žan Košir snowboarding – parallel slalom; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p>	<p>Alenka Dovžan alpine skiing – combined; <i>Lillehammer 1994</i></p> <p>Jure Košir alpine skiing – slalom; <i>Lillehammer 1994</i></p> <p>Katja Koren alpine skiing – slalom; <i>Lillehammer 1994</i></p> <p>Damjan Fras, Robert Kranjec, Primož Peterka, Peter Žonta ski jumping – team large hill; <i>Salt Lake City 2002</i></p> <p>Petra Majdič classical sprint – individual; <i>Vancouver 2010</i></p> <p>Vesna Fabjan classical sprint – individual; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p> <p>Teja Gregorin pursuit – individual; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p> <p>Peter Prevc ski jumping – individual large hill; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p> <p>Žan Košir snowboarding – parallel giant slalom; <i>Sochi 2014</i></p>

Paralympic medals

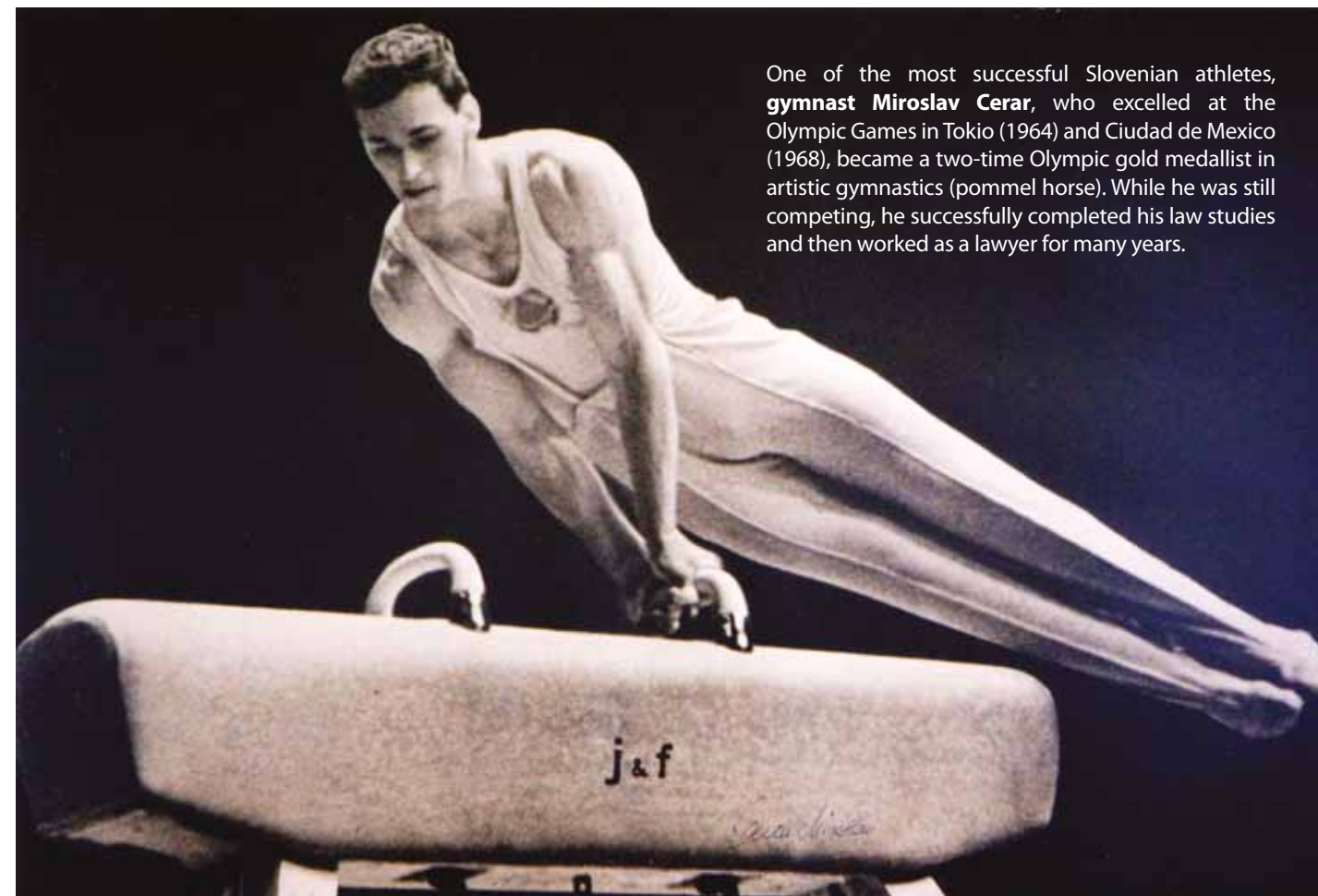
20 SUMMER OLYMPIC MEDALS		
 <p>3 gold medals</p>	 <p>8 silver medals</p>	 <p>9 bronze medals</p>
<p>Franjo Izlakar athletics – shot put; <i>Barcelona 1992</i></p> <p>Franjo Izlakar athletics – discus throw; <i>Barcelona 1992</i></p> <p>Mateja Pintar athletics – table tennis; <i>Athens 2004</i></p>	<p>Franjo Izlakar athletics – shot put; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Franc Pinter shooting – air rifle standing; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Franjo Izlakar athletics – shot put; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Franc Pinter shooting – air rifle standing; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Tatjana Majcen athletics – javelin throw; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Franc Pinter shooting – air rifle standing; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Jože Flere athletics – discus throw; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Gorazd Franček Tiršek shooting – air rifle standing; <i>London 2012</i></p>	<p>Dragica Lapornik athletics – shot put; <i>Barcelona 1992</i></p> <p>Danijel Pavlinec swimming – 100 m freestyle; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Danijel Pavlinec swimming – 200 m freestyle; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Janez Roškar athletics – javelin throw; <i>Atlanta 1996</i></p> <p>Dragica Lapornik athletics – shot put; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Janez Roškar athletics – javelin throw; <i>Sydney 2000</i></p> <p>Tatjana Majcen athletics – shot put; <i>Athens 2004</i></p> <p>Franc Pinter shooting – air rifle standing; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p> <p>Mateja Pintar table tennis; <i>Beijing 2008</i></p>

WHERE ARE THE FORMER SLOVENIAN OLYMPIC ATHLETES TODAY?

Making a life after sport

DANILO GOLOB
PHOTO: STA, UKOM ARCHIVES

What are former Slovenian Olympic athletes doing now, after they ended their sports career? Many of them have embarked upon entrepreneurial ventures, while others used their sports experience to share knowledge with younger generations. Some others have gone abroad to find new opportunities.



One of the most successful Slovenian athletes, **gymnast Miroslav Cerar**, who excelled at the Olympic Games in Tokyo (1964) and Ciudad de Mexico (1968), became a two-time Olympic gold medallist in artistic gymnastics (pommel horse). While he was still competing, he successfully completed his law studies and then worked as a lawyer for many years.



Former **skier Jure Franko**, Sarajevo 1984 Olympic silver medallist, spent two decades in the USA and Japan, becoming a successful businessman. Today, his company Prospot engages in the production of Slovenian stage versions of well-known musicals, delighting both domestic and foreign audience.





Quite a few athletes are active in retail, for example cross-country skier **Petra Majdič**, rower **Iztok Čop** and shooter **Rajmond Debevec**. At the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, Petra Majdič won a bronze Olympic medal, which was also the first medal for Slovenia in cross-country skiing. Today, the successful athlete is the exclusive representative for the Finnish manufacturer of sports apparel, footwear and equipment One Way for Slovenia. Among other things, she also has her own clothing line, leads team building workshops and gives lectures on marketing and motivation.

Slalom canoeist Andraž Vehovar won the first silver Olympic medal for independent Slovenia at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Already during his sporting career, he concluded his MBA studies, and was later awarded a Doctor of Science title. He also founded his own company, which deals with marketing and marketing consulting.



Rajmond Debevec, who holds Slovenian record for most Olympic appearances, is still one of the top sport shooters. Among many medals, he also won a gold medal in Sydney and two bronze medals in Beijing and London, respectively. In 1990, Debevec has established a specialised store with equipment for sport shooting, which is the only such store in Slovenia.





Hammer thrower Primož Kozmus reached the peak of his career at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, where he won a gold medal. He was also very successful four years later in London, where he won the silver Olympic medal. Currently, he works in tourism; he opened the Kozmus Hostel and the Klub pod lipo club ("Club Under the Linden Tree") in Brestanica, and also owns a sports club.


Some athletes are active in the hospitality industry. **Rower Jani Klemenčič**, bronze medallist at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, opened a bar already during his rowing career. Later the bar was turned into the Chilli restaurant.



Sara Isaković, who won a silver medal for Slovenia at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, has ended her sporting career and moved to Dubai. She graduated in psychology at the Berkeley University and plans to open her own consulting company in Dubai.



Jure Košir, top alpine skier, who won a bronze medal in slalom at the 1994 Olympic Games in Lillehammer, stayed close to sports even after the end of his ski career. Today, he works in sports marketing, organises sporting events and represents athletes; he also opened a sporting goods store called Forma F+.





Iztok Čop, the most successful Slovenian rower, won a set of Olympic medals together with **Luka Špik**, and with **Denis Žvegelj**. As a consultant, Čop remains connected to rowing. He works with the Filippi Boats company in introducing innovations in the field of rowing equipment.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH NEW GENERATIONS OF ATHLETES

Working with young athletes is also a very popular activity among former athletes; that way they remain in touch with sport.




Primož Peterka, winner of a bronze team medal at the Salt Lake City (2002) Olympic Games, became assistant coach of the Slovenian women's ski jumping team.



Urška Žolnir won a gold medal for the independent Slovenia at the 2012 Olympics in London. Earlier, in 2004 in Athens, she won a bronze medal. Today, Urška is coaching judokas in the most successful Slovenian judo club called Sankaku.



Brigita Bukovec is the winner of the first Slovenian Olympic medal in athletics. She won the silver medal in 100 meters hurdles in 1996 in Atlanta. After the end of her career, she started to work with young athletes in her Athletics School.

ALEŠ FEVŽER – OLYMPIC PHOTOGRAPHER PAR EXCELLENCE

“I live for great photos”

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES



Aleš Fevžer has photographed all sorts of subjects all over the world. But above all he is known as the only Slovenian photographer to have shot all 13 Olympic Games since Slovenia's independence. The Rio Games will be his 14th. The iconic moments captured by his camera include all Slovenia's Olympic medals, from the first won by Iztok Čop and Denis Žvegelj, to the most 'brutal' earned by Petra Majdič, who took bronze in 2010 despite skiing with four broken ribs and a collapsed lung.

“If you take real pleasure in taking photos, and if you wish to show the best an athlete can offer the viewer, photos should be exciting and good,” says Fevžer. Photography is his life, time means nothing, he works day or night, because the only thing that really matters is the quality of his photos.

For Fevžer, a good sports photo is not just technically perfect, what counts the most is that the photographer has managed to capture an outburst of happiness or instant joy, which is unforgettable. Fevžer favours emotion over action.

“I have goosebumps when I remember how overwhelmingly emotional it was listening to Slovenia's national anthem, or any other anthem, being played to honour the winner.”

A unique experience. What I remember most are images, shots of pure joy and spontaneity. Not the moment when the winner is presented with a medal, but the moment when he or she realises that they have succeeded. Just an instant, a second, or two. And if I can manage to capture this emotion, there is nothing like it. Sports photographers are always on the lookout for good action photos. It is about knowing the sport you are shooting, and having a great gear. When people say that anyone can take a good photograph, they couldn't be further from the truth. Only sports photographers are able to take great photos, because we practice daily. In recent years, with digital photography gaining in popularity and offering opportunities for cost-free experimentation, people do all sorts

of things. However, when a photographer only has one chance to capture a skier's performance in a millisecond window, it is not a game anymore.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES – A HUGE CHALLENGE FOR A PHOTOGRAPHER

In the 17 days of the Olympic Games, a photographer is only focused on work. “I want to take as many shots as possible, edit and archive them. The Olympic Games are not just another large sporting event, they are a special experience.

I am flooded with adrenaline, filled with something bigger than myself. When it is all over, I feel completely drained and need quite some time to recover.

The Olympics are a real challenge for sports photographers because so much is going on, and there are so many emotions that viewers also sense. This is where you realise why athletes are so overwhelmed when they win an Olympic medal, or devastated if they fail.”

How will Fevžer manage to photograph all the Slovenian athletes? Luckily, the Slovenian team is relatively small and Slovenian athletes are at the top in all events, so he hopes he can do it. So far he has managed to photograph all the Slovenian medalists live, at the time of their performance. The success of his work also depends on the success of the athletes.

How is it possible for a freelancer from Slovenia to compete with large photo agencies? "You can never compete with large agencies who send five or six photographers to a large event and cover all the ground. In indoor sports these agencies have three or four photographers near the court, one on the grandstand, and another one taking shots from the ceiling. The bigger the agency, the better its chances of getting special photography permits. It's quite logical. They supply the entire world with their photos whereas my photos are, in the best-case scenario, taken up by Slovenian media and sponsors of Slovenia's national team."

ALBERTVILLE 1992 – THE BEGINNING OF AN OLYMPIC STORY

Aleš Fevžer's Olympic story began with the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville. These were Slovenia's first Winter Olympics as an independent state. Have the games changed a lot in these 24 years? "Tremendously. The media pressure has been growing year by year and I am really happy that I started in 1992, when it was much easier to get to the Games than it is today when Slovenia is only allowed three photographers and 10 journalists. The Internet and online media have further increased the number of the press and photographers. I think that about 1,200 photographers come to the Olympic Games. Today, in the era of the media boom and digital media, large agencies can easily photograph all athletes. In the past, when photographic films were used, it was much harder due to the system of work.

What saddens me is that today organisers must spend so much energy on security issues.

Scanners, inspections and accreditations are everywhere. Photographers, media and spectators find this rather frustrating as they have to stand in queues wherever you go. For example, photographers are doing all we can to move quickly between venues, and then there is a queue and a lot of waiting before you can even get into a stadium or a press centre. Technology has also changed a lot over time. Things were completely different up to the year 2000. Cameras recorded images on photographic film, and after taking some photographs we had to have the slides or colour negatives

processed. But then again there was no pressure of instant publication as there is today."

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY REMAINS HIS BIG LOVE

Primarily because most athletes, novices at the Games or big stars, are really open, friendly and uncomplicated. They are a joy to work with, both when doing portraits that require personal contact or just photographing their performance from the edge of the sports surface. For Fevžer, the 1994 Lillehammer Games were the best Winter Olympics ever, because Norwegians are so passionate about sport and they were able to create a unforgettable atmosphere. He also has fond memories of the 2010 Summer Olympics in Australia, where he met many interesting people. Australians, like Norwegians, are crazy about sport. Fevžer regrets the growing commercialisation in sport the related loss of some of its charm. At the Olympic Games, he says, the main prize is still the medal, and not cash.

And what expectations does Fevžer have about Rio? "Now I'm older I'm not as excited before going to the Games, because I know what it will be like. I've been to Rio three times already. It's not exactly a safe city. About 15 years ago, when I was walking around with a camera in my hand, the local people looked at me as if I was easy prey. In retrospect, I was quite lucky to not be robbed. Otherwise, I'm looking forward to great performances by Slovenian athletes, hoping for new medals.

My work is so much nicer when Slovenes are winning medals.

I remember from the previous games that all our athletes were overjoyed by success, but the following were particularly emotional: Brigita Bukovec and Andraž Vehovar in Atlanta, Tina Maze in Sochi, and Iztok Čop and Luka Špik in London, the latter since it was their last Olympic performance. All medalists are happy, but the joy felt by medal favourites is sometimes less spontaneous than when an athlete wins a medal slightly unexpectedly. It's even more beautiful then."



SARA ISAKOVIĆ – TOP SWIMMER, OLYMPIC MEDAL-WINNER –
AND NOW LEADER OF SLOVENIA'S FANS

**“Our fans create a very
positive image of Slovenia”**

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES



Sara Isaković is a retired swimmer with a fine pedigree. She won a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, competed in three Olympics and was European Champion in 200m freestyle. This year, she will go to Rio in an entirely different role – as the leader of the plane of Slovenian fans. Sara, who graduated from Berkeley University with a degree in Psychology, will share her experiences, present the life of a professional athlete, and motivate the fans to cheer their hearts out for the Slovenian national teams and athletes. One of Slovenia's friendliest and most energetic athletes, Sara now lives and works in Dubai.

It's been a while since you retired from professional sports. What do you do now and what are your biggest challenges?

It's already been two years since I finished my swimming career, and I've never looked back having doubts in my mind that I've made a wrong decision. I've been loving life and directing all my energy and passion into my new career as a performance psychologist. I graduated from Berkeley University with a degree in Psychology (neuropsychology) and then did brain research in San Diego where we explored brain mechanisms of elite performers – Navy Seals, Marines and Olympic athletes – aiming to discover what makes these minds so resilient under stress. I then pursued a Masters' degree in performance psychology, and just recently graduated and received my diploma. I plan on opening my own consulting company here in Dubai (where I live now) next fall and help people reach their maximum potential in various performance fields, from airline pilots to athletes and many more.

As a life-long athlete, I know top performance is all a mind game and fully believe in the importance of mental training when it comes to overcoming challenges to be your best on a daily basis.

Performers need to learn early on how to set goals, how to stay committed and motivated, maintain their confidence when they experience failure, learn to deal with fears and anxieties, practice

visualisation and, most of all, know how to stay mindful of their thoughts and body. The brain is a muscle, and just like physical fitness is practiced to shape a strong body, mental fitness is needed to mold a resilient mind.

You will be leading a group of fans to Rio, what will your role be?

I'm very honoured and grateful to have the opportunity to be part of the Rio Olympics, and be the leader of Slovenian fans. It's something I've always wanted to do. I see myself in an active role where I'll be sharing my energy and enthusiasm with the Slovenian people (fans, Olympic sponsors, committee officials, etc.) that I'll be travelling with, reminiscing on my Olympic experiences and providing an insight and 'behind-the-scenes' vibe of what it takes to compete at the world's largest sporting event.

What is the effect of cheering at sports events?

Cheering for athletes and showing them support is in my opinion one of the most uplifting aspects of performance. I know from my personal experience, my dad always used yell 'Let's Go!!' before my race and it made me feel very confident and also comforted that I have someone in the stands support me no matter the outcome.

When a large crowd gets involved, it lifts up your spirits, it can change the course of a game and help athletes achieve their very best.

This is especially true in competitions held abroad where there might not necessarily be many people from your country. I believe that our group will help create a fun, exciting atmosphere for our athletes, and hopefully when they see a few Slovenian flags in the stands they will know that the entire country is cheering for them and sending positive vibes their way.

Besides athletes, Slovenian fans have often proved to be great ambassadors of our country. How do you feel Slovenia, and what inspires you here?

It's true that our fans create a very positive image of Slovenia and serve as great ambassadors of our country around the world. I get to be in both roles now, which is even more exciting – as an ex-Olympian and a cheerleader! *(laugh)*

I've always been proud of where I'm from and especially thrilled to show pictures of Bled and many other Narnia-like places of Slovenia when meeting new people.

I've lived most of my life abroad, but nothing makes me happier than coming home, breathing the fresh air and soaking in all beautiful colors my home has to offer. I'm sure we'll convince many Brazilians this summer to come to visit our precious country.

You competed in three Olympic Games. In what way will these Olympics be different?

I can't believe how fast time flies by. I remember my first Olympics in Athens 2004 like it was yesterday, and now it's already been 12 years. Each of my Olympic experiences were very different and unique in their own way. In Athens, as a 16 year old, it was merely a dream come true. I was in awe by everything and everyone around me. The opening ceremony and march around the stadium was unforgettable. As a swimmer, I gained valuable experience and knew what it will all look like four years later. In 2008, Beijing, I was ready to show the world I belong with the very best and won my Silver medal, which to this day seems a little unreal. *(laugh)* London was special in its own way because I knew so many people after spending four years studying and training in the U.S. This time around I just get to enjoy! I get to soak in the Olympic spirit, share it with our fabulous fans, make new friends, tour around Rio and cheer our heart out for our Slovenian athletes! I'm pretty sure I'll be more nervous cheering, than I was swimming in all three previous Games *(laugh)*.



ANŽE KOPITAR – LOS ANGELES KINGS HOCKEY STAR

“Slovenia will always be my home”

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES



Hockey player Anže Kopitar is the first Slovenian ever to play in the North American Hockey League. As a Los Angeles Kings player, he has already twice won the Stanley Cup, North America's prime challenge competition. Right now, he is on vacation in Slovenia, where he spends his free time actively, leading his own camp for young and aspiring hockey players and preparing for new challenges in the NHL as a new LA Kings captain.

Your first coach was your father. Apparently, he made the now famous ice surface right behind your house for you. What are your memories of your beginnings?

My memories are wonderful. I think that every hockey player remembers his beginnings. Especially because my father and grandfather made that ice surface for me. So it was logical that my father would be my first coach. My beginnings were not that hard, especially under such circumstances. I have really beautiful memories of that time.

Looking back today, have you ever imagined that you would have such a career? Did you ever dream about this?

Although hard to imagine, it definitely was a dream for me. I always wanted to play hockey, but I probably did not believe that I could play on such level as I do today.

Back then, hockey was, and it still is, my greatest love, and that will never change.

And playing on such level is only an additional bonus.

You came to NHL from a small state of Slovenia, at the time a relatively unknown country in the world of hockey. What was the hardest step you had to make?

There was definitely more than one step I had to take. One of the hardest moments was when I was 16 and moved to Sweden all by myself. It was really hard to leave home. But I think playing hockey was in my nature and I always knew that I could come home if something would not turn out as planned.

All this was probably also due to the fact that you had a coach-trainee relationship with your father? Does he still give you advice?

Of course. It was great, especially in the beginning. He helped me a lot and he still does, mostly with my physical training. But, of course, we also talk about other things in hockey, if the need be.

You brought the Stanley Cup to Slovenia for display twice, but this year your team did not make it to the playoffs. Were you very disappointed?

As it usually is, the disappointment was strong, especially because we had already won the trophy and we know what it means and how it feels. After that, everything except winning and taking a trophy comes as a disappointment.

But now you were able to return to your homeland sooner. Here, you your hockey academy and various charity activities keep you quite busy. This year's annual charity golf tournament will be the sixth in a row. Will the summer be long enough for everything you have planned?

We are slowly starting with the preparations for the golf tournament, which will take place at the end of August, so it is a little too early to say. I reached out to a long-time captain of the Slovenian hockey team Tomaž Razingar and together we founded the hockey academy, which is attended by around 150 players of different ages. We attracted coaches from all around the world, e.g. Finland, Canada, as well as some well-established local ones. I think everything will run smoothly and the children will have great and active holidays.

At the end of August, you will reunite with your national team colleagues to play in the qualifying round for the Minsk Olympic Games. Can we expect you to repeat the fairytale from Sochi 2014?

The goal is definitely to write the same story, which will preferably end with our national team playing at the Olympic Games. But it definitely won't be easy. The tournament is short and, in such cases, anything can happen.

Hockey was once the number one (team) sport in Slovenia. Today, the circumstances are different. How do you, as someone from the outside, see the situation with the Slovenian hockey and hockey clubs?

The situation with hockey clubs is certainly not great, but I hope things will turn for the better and that the Slovenian hockey will create new inspiring stories. Hockey is currently in decline in Slovenia, but I really hope things will change to the better.

Slovenians like to say that sport is an important part of their national identity. It is indeed exceptional that Slovenia, a nation of two million, qualified for all major international competitions in team sports (hockey, football, basketball, handball, volleyball etc.). Even in individual sports, the results are incredible. How do you, as part of these success stories, see all this?

I think we really are some kind of a phenomenon in the field of sports. Having so many Olympic, world and European champions, the fact that our football team qualified for the World and European Championships, and also our achievements in hockey are truly unbelievable in terms of population numbers.

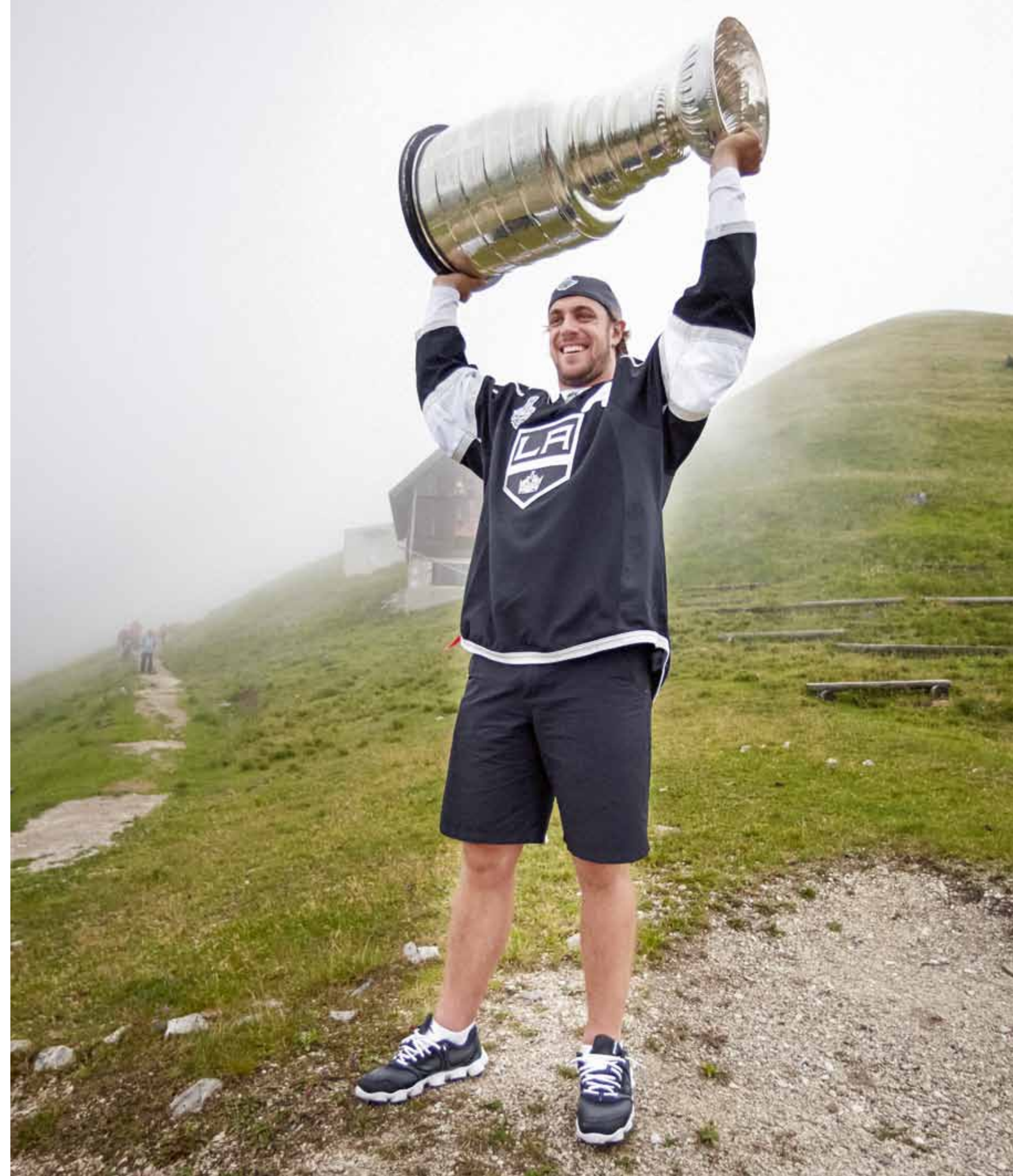
Of course, it would not be possible without the amazing support of our fans, and we can only thank them for their support.

What inspires you in Slovenia, how do you feel Slovenia?

Slovenia is and will always be my home. I come here to recharge my batteries. It is very relaxing and pleasant; for me, time stops here.

What are your plans for the future? Can you set even higher goals?

Higher goals are definitively possible. One of them is to win the Stanley Cup again, and that is not just one more time. Although some goals are difficult to reach, everything is possible with a strong character and a team spirit.



SPORTS VENUES FOR EVERY TASTE

A country of eager sports people

POLONA PREŠEREN



Slovenia could be said to be one great natural sports venue, and its diverse geography provides opportunities for a wide range of different sporting activities. Slovenians themselves are very fond of recreational sports – it's one of their most popular pastimes. Their country offers many places where it's possible to perform both professional and recreational sports activities.

All year round, these venues offer the pleasure of sport not only to Slovenians, but also to visitors. As the infrastructure is well developed, sports tourism is on the increase. Let's have a look at some of Slovenia's legendary sports arenas and some that are on the way to becoming famous.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CENTRE

"Very often, Slovenians, used to top-flight results by athletes, are not even aware of how big a success these results are for Slovenia, with its population of two million. In the sphere of sports, Slovenia is actually a superpower," said Prime Minister Miro Cerar in a speech marking the opening of the National Football Centre. The National Football Centre was officially opened in May at the idyllic protocol and event facility at Brdo pri Kranju. The grounds are a natural treasure. A place with a more than 500-year tradition. As the national protocol facility it has provided hospitality to numerous statesmen and top-level international meetings.

The magnificent property, which is in fact a park, was once a place where the royal family sought peace and solitude and met with world-renowned politicians. The park complex at Brdo pri Kranju is now home to a modern National Football Centre. It took 14 months to build, with the state providing the building lease, and the Football Association of Slovenia (NZS) providing the funds and taking responsibility for the implementation of the entire project.

The centre is a major addition to Slovenian football, featuring all sorts of options, and is one of the best things that has happened to Slovenian football in the era of the country's independence.

It includes three natural grass football pitches, stands, and a multipurpose sports hall (locker rooms, fitness centre, wellness centre, reception hall, etc.). The NZS also has its own administrative building there. It is part of the Brdo protocol complex, and lies in beautiful natural surroundings, so it has already been given the nickname “the Pearl of Gorenjska”, Slovenia’s alpine region. How could it not, when it offers the opportunity to train football with a spectacular view of the Slovenian Alps?

“This extremely beautiful football centre is a model for Slovenia, Europe and the world for what is possible in football and for football, for people of all ages, from children to older folks, who like to kick a ball around. This shows that a country like Slovenia has not only appeared in three major tournaments, but that with good leadership and vision it is possible to accomplish even more in this beautiful country,” said FIFA President Gianni Infantino at the opening ceremony, who as the general secretary of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) had already been involved in the construction of the centre at Brdo. Aleksander Čeferin, president of the Football Association of Slovenia, stated that they had built a centre for a sport which has long been known as the “beautiful game”. The centre is the impetus for a new football culture in Slovenia and a home for more than 40,000 men and women who are involved in football, including recreationally, regardless of sex, race, creed or other circumstances.

Undoubtedly, Slovenian football players were the most pleased with their new training grounds. National team manager Srečko Katanec described it in ringing superlatives, and his team have already tried it out when preparing for their most recent international match. The pitches and auxiliary buildings are complete, and are not only attractive to the Slovenian national team, but to foreign teams which want to train in a natural environment. The construction of a sports-medicine facility is planned for the next phase, which will allow the centre to offer a comprehensive range of services for athletes from all over the world.

LJUBLJANA’S SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Ljubljana is truly a sports city. This year’s European Green Capital is proud of its sports halls, parks, pools and infrastructure, designed

for the recreational needs of Ljubljana’s citizens and everyone who visits Ljubljana. The Ljubljana Institute of Sport is responsible for the majority of Ljubljana’s sports facilities, of which there are over a hundred. Several units operate under its auspices, whose renown has reached past the Slovenian border.

GYMNASTICS CENTRE

Let’s start with the newest – the modern Olympic and national Ljubljana Gymnastics Centre. The facility opened its doors last November, and its main function is the development and promotion of gymnastics disciplines.

Gymnastics has always been very popular in Slovenia, and Slovenian gymnasts (Leon Štukelj, Miroslav Cerar, Lojze Kolman, Aljaž Pegan, Mitja Petkovšek) have achieved exceptional results.

The facility provides first-rate conditions for training, and of course the opportunity to host top-flight international and national competitions.

The Ljubljana Gymnastics Centre includes a large gymnastics hall, stands, a warm-up area, locker rooms for recreational gymnasts and a gym for guided exercise, two sports halls with a modern fitness facility and an area for guided exercise, and of course a pub. Since the facility was designed for athlete training, it also has thirteen double-occupancy rooms and two single rooms, a large conference room and a sauna.

The total surface area of the competition and training areas is 1,951.5 m². It is split into a gymnastics hall with permanently set-up training equipment and a hall for training in rhythmic gymnastics, which is also designed for competitions. The stands seat up to 400 visitors, and give them an excellent view of the events in the hall. The gymnastics equipment in the sports hall is available at all times, and gymnasts can train there without interruption. The rhythmic gymnastics hall can also be adapted for other sports, e.g. volleyball or basketball.



Gymnastics Centre in Ljubljana. Photo: Ljubljana Sport and Leisure Facilities Archives



Stožice Centre.
Photo: Ljubljana Sport and Leisure
Facilities Archives

The fact that the centre offers accommodations which are suitable for athletes during their training preparations shows that it is a truly hospitable facility. In order to make their stay as comfortable as possible, they have access to a kitchen with an eating area, a multipurpose conference room and a sauna. Tennis courts, football pitches, an outdoor fitness course and a climbing wall can be found in the immediate vicinity of the centre. During the summer, visitors can cool off at the Kolezija municipal pool.

STOŽICE CENTRE

Undoubtedly the heart of sport in Ljubljana and Slovenia is Stožice Centre, the site of Slovenia's largest stadium. Stožice is home to both large popular events and elite sporting events. The centre complex includes a football stadium and a multipurpose sports hall, and outdoor playing fields will soon be available to visitors.

The centre has a striking modern design, with a high degree of interaction between sporting and commercial activities.

The Ljubljana facility was designed to contribute to the better health and well-being of all visitors to the centre. Stožice Centre opened its doors in August 2010. Since then, the centre has hosted world-renowned sports teams and numerous musical acts.

The stadium was designed above all for football fans and has a capacity of 16,038. The hall seats 12,484. Both the stadium and the hall are also designed to host concerts, exhibitions and other cultural events, and conventions.

Green areas adjacent to the stadium and the hall will be available for sports and recreation. The outdoor sports facilities will allow visitors to walk, run (year-round), use outdoor fitness equipment, play volleyball, football, basketball, etc., free of charge.

HALA TIVOLI

Hala Tivoli (Tivoli Hall) is located nearly in the centre of the city, in Tivoli Park, and just at the edge of a wonderful forest which is part of the Tivoli, Rožnik and Šišenski Hrib Nature Park. The hall is over fifty years old. The mark that it has made on Slovenian society, particularly in the areas of sport and culture, have given it nearly

cult status. "It was the first sports hall in the region and therefore it has a certain grandeur, a patina", says Tatjana Polajnar, director of the Ljubljana Institute of Sport, which manages the facility.

Hala Tivoli was designed by architects Stanko Bloudek and Marjan Božič. Although the facility was primarily designed for sporting events, and there were very many of them, there have been many other great events here, such as concerts by major stars, dog shows and even religious gatherings. Hala Tivoli is a hall with soul and is truly one of a kind. It is home to the Olimpija hockey, basketball and handball clubs.

The first international star to appear at Hala Tivoli was Louis Armstrong in April of 1965. This was soon followed by the first sporting event – the table tennis world championship. The year 1970 will never be matched, as the hall hosted three world championships – in gymnastics, ice dancing and basketball. The first of these featured Miro Cerar, who became world champion in the pommel horse for the third time, and the last featured the Yugoslavian basketball team, which with its Slovene captain Ivo Daneu became world champions for the first time. The memories of Ivo Daneu are still alive at Hala Tivoli. The world championships and the victory against the Americans in the final was the peak of his career, and he went out on top, retiring soon after. He still remembers the first game, when Olimpija played Real Madrid in the not-yet completed hall. "The atmosphere in Tivoli was unbelievable, those were real fans", recalls the Slovenian basketball legend.

Everyone in Slovenia probably has their own story involving Hala Tivoli. Going to a game, concert or some other event at Hala Tivoli has long been automatically assumed for Slovenians, like going hiking in the mountains.

We went to Tivoli for recreational skating, and to root for the Olimpija hockey team, and the Yugoslavian and Slovenian national teams, as the ice rink has hosted several world championships. When the basketball teams played, the entire hall shook. In the golden days of the Olimpija hockey and basketball club, it was nearly impossible to get tickets. And the athletes always remember the fans at Tivoli.

Tivoli was the centre of social and cultural activity, hosted an enormous number of concerts, and all of us remembers seeing worldwide stars who visited us at the height of their fame. The list of famous musicians who played at Hala Tivoli includes B. B. King, Ike & Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, Bob Dylan, David Bowie, Bryan Adams, Sting, The Cure, Iron Maiden, Ray Charles, Deep Purple, Queen and of course Nirvana, who played their last full concert in Hala Tivoli in 1994.

Hala Tivoli was a hub for a wide variety of elite and recreational athletes. And even though it has outworn its function and world-class sports facilities have been built in Ljubljana, Hala Tivoli remains the one and only, the house of Slovenian sport and a hall with soul.



Hala Tivoli.
Photo: Ljubljana Sport and Leisure
Facilities Archives

BRENDAN RODGERS, CELTIC GLASGOW'S COACH

“Slovenia is a wonderful country for sports practice”

POLONA PREŠEREN
PHOTO: ALEŠ FEVŽER



The Celtic FC was founded in 1888. It boasts 9 million fans from around the world, who were named globally the third best football fans in 2013.

Celtic, the legendary football club from Glasgow, chose Slovenia as the location for its pre-season preparations this summer. During their two-week stay in Slovenia, they played friendly matches and trained in Maribor and its green surroundings. “The friendly fixtures against Slovenian clubs are a good test for us,” said Celtic’s star coach Brendan Rodgers.

To train for the new season, Celtic played against Slovenian clubs NK Celje, NK Olimpija and NK Maribor. “Friendly fixtures against the Slovenian clubs were a good test for us and our physical condition. I am convinced there is an exciting season ahead of us. Our time in Slovenia has been wonderful, the hotel and the food are great, people are kind, friendly and accommodating, and everyone is willing to help us create suitable training conditions. We came here to work, but it is also very important for us to be able to enjoy ourselves and visit some parts of Slovenia,” said Brendan Rodgers. He was accompanied by 31 Celtic players – including Craig Gordon, the goalkeeper of the Scottish national team, Scott Brown, the captain of Celtic and the Scottish national team, Emilio Izaguirre, the captain of the Honduras national team, as well as Mikael Lustig from Sweden, Stefan Johansen from the Netherlands and Nir Bitton from Israel – as well as 16 staff members and a press team.

SLOVENIA – EXCELLENT DESTINATION FOR SPORTS TOURISM

The Scottish club’s decision to spend their summer in Slovenia shows that it is an excellent destination for sports tourism, preparations for world-class athletes and organisation of international sports events, while it also develops sports tourism products.

“During our past visits to Slovenia, we saw first-hand that the country has everything to become a centre of sports tourism: a favourable climate, world-class facilities, a passion for football and, most importantly, hospitality,” said Tony Asghar, General Manager of Revolution Sports Travel.

The company is active in sports tourism and has worked with elite sports teams such as Chelsea FC, Manchester City FC, Atletico de Madrid, Everton FC, Swansea City, Sunderland FC and RCD Espanyol. “We are convinced that Slovenia also has the necessary qualities and potentials to achieve similar success, so that it could host world football giants as soon as in four to five years.”

Slovenia has excellent conditions for developing sports tourism. Thanks to its rich natural features at the heart of Europe, various sports activities can be carried out throughout the year. “We are glad that such a legendary Scottish club and a renowned company operating in sports tourism recognised Slovenia’s potential as an exclusive destination for athletes’ preparations. Slovenia has a strong sports infrastructure network and Slovenians can boast profound knowledge that has already contributed to the development of various sports products. International audiences have already become aware of our athletes’ achievements, which improves Slovenia’s recognisability and promotion. Slovenians feel that sport is close to their hearts, a part of their culture and a way of life for many of them, and some also see it as a business opportunity,” said Maja Pak, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board.

The Slovenian Tourist Board will continue to make efforts to develop sports tourism and promote Slovenia as an excellent sports destination. As a matter of fact, this type of tourism is one of the fastest growing segments in the industry.

PLUNGING DOWN THE
SPILLWAY OF A DAM

Ljubljana-Tacen welcomes world's best canoeists at the 2016 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup Final

TEXT AND PHOTO: NINA JELENC



Tacen is one of the best-known canoe slalom courses in the world – and it includes a daredevil plunge down the spillway of a dam. Rich in canoeing history, the venue has hosted numerous competitions at the highest level, including three Canoe Slalom World Championships, European Canoe Slalom Championships and several World Cup races. This year the world's best paddlers will compete in there in the 2016 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup Final from September 9 to 11.

Ljubljana - Tacen is one of the most beautiful canoe slalom venues in the world, located on the Sava River, at the foot of the Šmarna Gora Mountain and Grmada peak.

This place has a rich history. It is believed that ages ago this region was home to a prehistoric settlement, whereas in time of the Roman Empire an important trade route passed through this area, crossing the Sava River at Tacen.

KAJAK KANU KLUB LJUBLJANA

Tacen is also a home of canoeing and has an important role in the history of this sport in Slovenia. The story goes back to 1931 when the first canoeing club was established in Ljubljana and was named after the city - Kajak kanu klub Ljubljana (Kayak Canoe Club Ljubljana).

Tacen became an indispensable part of Slovene canoeing history in 1939 when the Canoeing Championship of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was organized on the left bank of the Sava River. At this time the paddlers still began their race under the dam of the power-plant. In 1952 the competitors paddled over the spillway drop of the dam for the first time and since then this drop has been a trade mark of the course in Ljubljana.

IN 1955 CANOE SLALOM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOOK PLACE IN LJUBLJANA – TACEN

This was only the second World Championship in any sport organised in Yugoslavia and the first World Championships after the World War II. The event was a big challenge for the organising team which prepared many assembly objects, stands etc. The white water rapids and attractive sporting event allured over 15.000 spectators which was incredibly high number for that time.

After this championship the Tacen white water course became a renowned in canoeing world as one of the most attractive and difficult venues in the world.

The drop represents one of the most difficult parts in the course and challenges even the biggest masters of this sport. "The course is quite challenging and competition was always quite tough," said British paddler Richard Fox, who is one of the biggest names of canoe slalom with eleven medals from the World Championships in the years 1979-1993.

In the years following the 1955 Championships the course has lived through a lot and it slowly started to fall into decay, but everything changed in the 1980s. Before the second World Championships, which was set for the 1991, a big project was planned. The plan was to renovate a course and surrounding venue. This was the biggest change the venue has experienced in its history. The riverbed has been fortified with a concrete and the older dam has been replaced with an inflating balloon which made the passage through the drop more secure. "Paddling on the course nowadays is much easier than it used to be before the 1990. It was much

more dangerous before renovations. Many competitors broke their paddles here," Olympic Champion from Barcelona Pierpaolo Ferrazzi remembered. The stands that are still part of the venue have also been built for the occasion of the 1991 Championships.

In an interesting course of history, the first Canoe Slalom World Championships in Ljubljana in 1955 was the first in Yugoslavia after the World War II and the second Canoe Slalom World Championships in 1991 was the last World Championships in any sport organised before the Yugoslavia broke up.

LJUBLJANA - A HOST CITY OF SEVERAL WORLD CUP RACES

After the two World Championships in 1955 and 1991 came time to host the best Europe's paddlers at the European Canoe Slalom Championships in 2005 and five years later another World Championships followed. In between Ljubljana has been a host city of several World Cup races, the event which will be organised in Ljubljana this September for the 14th time in the history of Canoe Slalom World cups.

A home course of the 1996 Olympic Silver medalist in Canoe Slalom Andraž Veh-

... always brings much joy to the Slovenian fans of this attractive sport.

At all three Canoe Slalom World Championships that have been organised on the Sava River Slovenian paddlers won at least a medal as well as at the 2005 European Championships and every World Cup race in Tacen since 1995.

Back in 1955 Jože Ilija became the second Slovenian kayaker (at the time competing for Yugoslavia) to win a medal at World Championships. It took more than three decades for World Championships to return to Ljubljana, but the successful performances on a home course continued. Marjan Štrukelj picked up a silver medal in 1991 for Yugoslavia just days before the Slovenian independence. In 2005 Tacen hosted the European Canoe Slalom Championships for the first time (in 2017 European Championships returns to Ljubljana – Tacen) and Slovenian team won a gold medal in men's kayak team event with Dejan Kralj, Andrej Noliml and Peter Kauzer. The latter produced an excellent run also in individual event securing a silver medal. The third World Championships was organised in 2010 and Slovenia won two medals. Jure Meglič finished second in men's kayak finals and women's kayak team won

a first team medal at World Championships in history of Slovenian canoeing. Urša Kragelj, Nina Mozetič and Eva Terčelj won a bronze medal.

Equally impressive is also a medal count at World Cup races in Tacen. Before this year's World Cup final in September we have already seen 13 editions of World Cup events in Ljubljana – Tacen.

Slovenian slalomists won 22 medals, ten of which were gold and added six silver and six bronze medals.

Three times Olympian (Beijing, London, Rio de Janeiro) Peter Kauzer is the most successful Slovenian athlete with three wins at the World Cup races in Tacen – he was the best in men's kayak in 2008, 2011 and 2013.

The last two world cup races in Tacen (2013 and 2014) were the most successful for Slovenia – our representatives won seven medals in these two years. This gives much confidence also for this year's event as the team remains practically the same and the winning appetites will be as high as ever.



Top Skier Tina Maze Invites You to Slovenia

LIVIJA KOVAČ KOSTATINOVIC
PHOTO: ALEŠ FEVŽER

Sport has a significant impact on Slovenian tourism. We like to say that sport and tourism go “hand in hand”.

Top sporting achievements make Slovenia more visible in the world beyond. This has been shown by the successes of top Slovenian athletes and the renown of international sports events held in Slovenia. So the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) is cooperating with Slovenian athletes as part of its marketing activities to achieve the desired target position of Slovenia and Slovenian tourism on the world tourism map. It has forged close working relationships not only with Slovenian athletes, but also with international sports events and important sports facilities.

In doing so, the STB strives for an innovative, different and more daring approach to the promotion and marketing of Slovenia and its tourist offer. This arises from the umbrella story of Slovenia, defined as **green, active and healthy Slovenia**, strengthening the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand.

The story of green, active and healthy Slovenia combines sustainable or green tourism in connection with an active lifestyle – sport.

It is precisely for these reasons that the STB decided to include Tina Maze, the world-famous Slovenian athlete, in selected events and activities. In order to make Slovenia more visible and strengthen the I FEEL SLOVENIA national and tourism brand, Tina Maze will participate on social networks and at Slovenian tourism events organised by the STB abroad.

In this way, the visibility of Slovenia and Slovenian tourism is increasing, especially abroad, as is the visibility of the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand

in connection with sport. Thereby, the efficiency of partnerships and cooperation between different areas of the national brand is also strengthening.

THE AMBASSADORS OF SLOVENIA AND THE I FEEL SLOVENIA BRAND

We can say without a doubt that Tina Maze is an ambassador of Slovenia and the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand. As well as Tina Maze, the visibility of our country is also strengthened by other prominent personalities from the world of culture, music and other areas thanks to their excellent successes.

In order to support communication elements not only in tourism but also at the wider state level, the Slovenian Tourist Board has started cooperating with athletes and other prominent personalities in the project Ambassadors of the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand.

It has also invited other key institutions involved in the promotion of Slovenia to participate. It is a project that aims to become one of the most powerful supporting elements of our country in terms of communication. Thus, in the project, the ambassadors of the I FEEL SLOVENIA brand perform an active role as intensifiers of communications, also supporting the values of the brand and, through their example and their pride, inviting people to see and taste the best that Slovenia can offer the rest of the world.

Slovenia is a green country that invites you on an active break that preserves and restores health. Slovenia is a country of unique unspoilt nature that has encouraged many Slovenian athletes to achieve top sporting achievements. This includes the top Slovenian skier Tina Maze.

The Slovenian Tourist Board has included an invitation from Tina Maze to visit Slovenia in the marketing and communication tools and activities of Slovenian tourism. Thus, the top Slovenian skier Tina Maze, one of the most recognised Slovenian female athletes, invites you to visit the green, active and healthy country of Slovenia in the framework of the most eminent events abroad, on social networks and in promotional tools.



Tina Maze has been stringing up top results in Alpine skiing for several years and breaking records one after another. Her achievements are exceptionally well-known outside the sporting world as well.



The Slovenian Tourist Board has positioned the best Slovenian female athlete as the promoter of Slovenia and its tourist offer, since Tina Maze superbly embodies the identity of Slovenia as a tourist destination – an active and healthy country where unspoilt nature encourages top achievements.

ZORAN MUŠIČ, SLOVENE ARTIST KNOWN THROUGHOUT EUROPE

National Gallery opens a permanent collection of Zoran Mušič's works

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY



On 18th May the National Gallery opened a permanent collection of works of art by Zoran Mušič (1909-2005), a master of painting, graphic arts and drawing. Spanning different artistic periods and techniques, the works were donated and loaned by the Mušič family. His heritage is Slovenian, Italian, French, and as such forms part of the European cultural heritage.

Mušič expressed his own personal distress and experience through art as a form of humanity of fine arts. He maintained a close friendship with the late French president Francois Mitterrand, to whom he appealed for France to recognise independent Slovenia.

The family of Mušič's brother donated 56 works from the family collection to the gallery, and loaned a further 88 for shorter or longer periods of time. The exhibition includes another seven works by Mušič from the Gallery Collection.

The permanent exhibition displays the works of art of an internationally renowned artist and a person of many homelands painted in different periods, different techniques. Most of his series are represented, from the cityscapes of Venice, horses, Karst soil, and portraits and autoportraits, as well as works from his striking series *We Are Not The Last* (Nismo poslednji). Sixty-two works are currently on display. The most sensitive paintings will be gradually replaced to keep the exhibition alive. This is the most extensive donation ever received by the national painting collection. This precious gift of common importance, yet highly personal, symbolically it is a new beginning and the new century of the National Gallery.

The idea behind the donation of Mušič's works to the National Gallery and the Slovenian public arose from a desire to "bring inspiration, something beautiful and spiritual," said Vanja Mušič, the artist's niece.

As she added, the collection has been preserved through personal sacrifice in hard times, and now the time has come to put it on dis-

play for all to enjoy." The opening of the exhibition was also attended by a connoisseur of Zoran Mušič's oeuvre, Jean Clair, member of the French Academy of Science and Art.

BETWEEN VENICE AND PARIS

The majority of the exhibited works come from the art collection of Ljuban, Milada and Vanda Mušič. The collection covers the artist's creativity from 1935 including the first works he painted shortly after he had completed the academy in Zagreb to those he created in his last series.

Zoran Mušič (1909-2005), master of painting, graphic arts and drawing, spent most of his adult life between Venice and Paris. He constantly related his motifs to the Karst and scenes from karstic areas.

He gained the interest of the European public with his paintings of horses, and won international recognition with his series *We Are Not The Last* (Nismo poslednji). Among his most popular works are the cityscapes of Venice and poignant self-portraits in his old age.

Mušič was born in the village of Bukovica in the Primorska region. In 1944 he was sent to the Dachau concentration camp. After the war, he moved to Venice and married a fellow painter, Ida Cadarin. In the 1950s he moved on to Paris, which became his second home. From that time and nearly until his death he lived between Paris and Venice, where he is now buried. In the exhibition, the works are presented chronologically and by theme, also because at certain periods of his life Mušič painted series of paintings with a shared motif, using a variety of techniques. He would start working on the motifs

by drawing them on paper, then paint them in oil, producing a few graphics along the way. Mušič was a highly versatile artist.

Upon the exhibition, Vanda Mušič wrote that the family collection “was born out of the love and close relationship of the two brothers”. Zoran Mušič gave to his brother’s family what he had – his works of art. At first, he did that to ensure that the family would “have something aside for the hard times”, but he also wanted Maca, as he called his niece, to know she had an uncle. Although they lived a modest life, the Mušič family never thought of selling the paintings.

PERSONAL DRAWINGS

The significance of the family collection lies in its memory value.

“Mušič’s most intimate drawings, which he gave to his family and his niece Vanda in particular, are real treasures.”

imes”, but he also wanted Maca, as he called his niece, to know she had an uncle. Although they lived a modest life, the Mušič family never thought of selling the paintings.

PERSONAL DRAWINGS

The world-famous horse series is represented by small, private sketches which Mušič created as birthday presents for his niece. There is also a family Christmas card with horses, made in dry-point. Another special work is the cyclostyle of his painting *‘In the Bathroom’* (*‘V kopalnici’*), which was made after the liberation of Dachau, when prisoners were waiting to be transported home. These drawings are the gems of Mušič’s oeuvre. He donated most of them to various world museums.

The cycle of *‘Venetian Watercolours’* (1946-1948) will be exhibited in the first room. Gaily colourful motifs, such as the above-mentioned watercolours and horses, first featured in Mušič’s paintings after his return from Dachau. It can be understood as a form of healing; he needed colours. Only in the 1970s did Mušič first start expressing his pain through a series of scenes from the Dachau concentration camp titled *‘We Are Not the Last’* (*‘Nismo poslednji’*). Several works from the series occupy a prominent position at the National Gallery.

An exhibit of particular interest will be Mušič’s experimental tapestry which the artist created for the Augustus cruiser that carried a lot of works of art. The original tapestry is in the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome.

The National Gallery of Slovenia has acquired 144 works from the Ljuban, Milada and Vanda Mušič Collection. The acquisition consists of 29 oil and acrylic paintings, 81 graphics, one tapestry, and 40 works on paper made in a variety of techniques. The family of Mušič’s brother donated 56 works to the Gallery, and loaned the rest. Due to the sensitivity of works on paper, the selection of exhibits will vary at 6 months’ intervals. The first change of exhibits is scheduled for November, when nearly a half of the works will be replaced.

In addition to the National Gallery, other significant collections of Mušič’s works are at the Slovenian Gallery of Modern Art, Maribor Art Gallery, and at the Kambič Collection in Metlika. The Dobrovo Castle at Goriška Brda museum houses a permanent exhibition of graphics donated by Mušič. The artist’s works are held by the majority of the world’s major 20th century art museums, including the Tate Modern, Musée national d’art moderne at Centre Pompidou, and Kunstmuseum Basel, and featured in numerous retrospective exhibitions of European art.

JEAN CLAIR: MUŠIČ WAS UNIQUE IN HIS SEARCH FOR BEAUTY IN DEAD BODIES

Upon the opening of the exhibition, the overflowing auditorium of the National Gallery was addressed by art historian and member of the French Academy of Arts and Sciences, Jean Clair, a leading expert on the work of Zoran Mušič and a close friend of the artist.

Mušič was one of the greatest painters of our time, with a striking morphology of nude and dead bodies, said Jean Clair.

He spoke about the unusual visit of ‘Slovenian politicians’ at Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1986, during the setting of the exhibition *‘Vienna - The Joyful Apocalypse’* (1880-1938). As he explained, he had fought hard to overcome the resistance of Parisians when setting up the exhibition, since at the time Vienna was still not part of the French cultural space. During the exhibition he received a call

informing him that Slovenia’s Minister of Culture and his staff were waiting for him in his office. He was surprised as Slovenia did not exist as an independent state, but his visitors explained that it would, in a matter of time. He was really pleased, since the visit reminded him of his friend Mušič, who always talked passionately about Slovenia.

He had met Mušič, his friend of four decades, through Georges Lambrichs, at the time an editor of the literary magazine *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, in which Mušič published his Dachau notes. Having only known Mušič as an artist who painted the ‘Kras’ horses, he was profoundly shocked.

According to Clair, Mušič was born in a time of certainty, but already in his early years he witnessed the collapse of the system and became its victim.

He was pursued by Italians as well as Germans. In Venice, where he felt safe, he was targeted by the Gestapo and asked to join the SS. His

refusal was met with disdain and a deportation to Dachau, said Clair. According to the art historian, the most surprising element of Mušič’s work – after Dachau – is the morphology of nude bodies. “They are not heroic or erotic, they are horrific images of “corpses who no longer respond to wishes but only the spirit,” said Clair. Mušič painted fragile, elongated corpses without realistic proportions, like dry twigs about to break. Mušič said that corpses stacked in piles looked “white as mountain snow” or like “seagulls at the sea”. He would often compare them to trees in a forest that had been cut and left scattered on the ground. According to Jean Clair, Mušič saw beauty in this horror. Such art, however, is far from the Italian art of beauty or the French art that idolises reason. In his late period when, as Clair explains, Mušič often “lost himself in the night of memories”, the artist created several self-portraits of an old man placed in melancholic setting, torn between grief and rage. This was Mušič’s “black sun period”. Jean Clair was the director of the Picasso Museum in Paris for 18 years. He organised several exhibitions of Zoran Mušič’s works, including the most important, the grand retrospective exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1995.





KRESNIK LITERARY AWARD

A novel of an imagined childhood

DANILO MAŠIČ
PHOTO: STA

The Kresnik Award for the best literary work of 2015 has been conferred on popular writer, screenwriter and columnist Miha Mazzini. His autobiographic novel *Childhood (Otroštvo)* was selected among 115 novels published last year. This was his fourth nomination for the Kresnik Award. Mazzini was among the ten nominees for the Award in 2011 (for the first time) with his novel *German Lottery (Nemška loterija)*, in 2014 with *Paloma Negra* and in 2015 with *Erased (Izbrisano)*.

In the award-winning novel *Otroštvo (Childhood)*, the author uses fictional scenarios to portray childhood as an important part of an individual's life.

As an adult, he seeks to understand the meaning of his existence and uses fiction to deliver a story about growing up as seen through the eyes of a mature adult. Throughout the novel, the reader follows the same boy, the same fate. As memories of early childhood are like images in our dreams, the firm ground of reality is swept away. The reader is thrown into a maze of anxiety-inducing, sometimes grotesquely funny images. The novel features a grandmother, the main character, and her "fatal" diseases, courageous friends from the playground, a bitter and always absent mother, and uncles, among whom Vinko takes up the paternal role: "Remember, kid: memories are like taxes – you can never get rid of them."

The writer, whose books were published in the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Italy, Poland, Turkey and Macedonia, also has a PhD in anthropology and is very active in many areas. As an IT expert, a lecturer on screenwriting and author of numerous novels, handbooks, award-winning feature films and theatre plays, Mazzini received numerous awards for his achievements.

THE KRESNIK AWARD

The award was first bestowed in 1991 in the village of Razkrižje in the Prekmurje region. For the next five years, the award ceremony was held in the village of Muljava, the birthplace of Josip Jurčič (1844–1881). It is there where the existing award scheme was established. The ceremony was later transferred to Ljubljana where it was held at the Ljubljana Castle for two years, and then on Rožnik hill above Ljubljana, which has always been a popular walking destination for residents of Ljubljana, including some well-known writers. Every year on Midsummer's eve, 23 June, members of the judging panel meet in a room named after the writer Ivan Cankar (1876–1918) and choose the Kresnik Award laureate. After the announcement, the laureate is given the honour of lighting the bonfire. The winner also receives a financial award for his literary work.

The judging panel chooses and justifies its choice on the basis of literary impression, professionalism and authority.

Other nominees on the final shortlist of this year's Kresnik Award were writers Gabriela Babnik with her novel *Intimately (Intimno)*, in which the reader is presented with three different intimate love stories through which the author expresses her opinion on racism and individuals' helplessness in the society, Štefan Kardoš with *The*

Wind and the Echo (Veter in odmev), a story about a music teacher named Adam and his parallel world, Mirt Komel with *Pianist's Touch (Pianistov dotik)*, which is based on a true story of the pianist Glenn Gould, and Nataša Sukič with *Picnic (Piknik)*, a romantic novel about intimacy and emotions.

LOJZE KOVAČIČ – THE POSTHUMOUS SILVER KRESNIK AWARD WINNER

To mark this year's 25th anniversary of the Award and Slovenia's independence, the Silver Kresnik Award was posthumously awarded to writer Lojze Kovačič (1928–2004) for his autobiographic novel *Crystal Time (Kristalni čas)*. In 1991, Kovačič received the Kresnik Award for the same novel, whereas in 2004, he received a posthumous Kresnik Award for his novel *Childhood Things (Otroške stvari)*. In the novel entitled *Crystal Time (Kristalni čas)*, the author narrates his personal experience of the time before his birth, god, love, illness and death. He often reflects on family, moving and the four women of his life. The novel concludes with the thought that maturity is everything. The author pointed out that the core of his novel is: "A man between chance and obligation. We come to this world by chance, but as soon as we draw breath, we are subdued to obligations: establishing a civilized society, laws and regulations."

Every year on 23 June, on Rožnik hill above Ljubljana, decorated with flaming torches, a cultural programme takes place, during which the Midsummer night maids called "kresnice" accompany the jury to a private room to choose the best novel of the previous year. When the winner is chosen, the judges accompanied by kresnice return, crown the Kresnik Award winner with a wreath and confer the financial award. After that, kresnice accompany the laureate to the ceremonial lighting of the bonfire.

Kresnik is the Slovenian god of fire, sun, light and summer nights but also the god of thunder and lightning, whose feast is celebrated with a bonfire on Midsummer's Eve. During the ceremony, girls dressed in white – kresnice – are present.



ARCHITIZER A+AWARDS FOR ARCHITECTURE

Slovenian architects successful in New York

DANILO GOLOB
PHOTO: MIRAN KAMBIČ



The Velenje "Promenada" is an important city space and a vital city thoroughfare. It is one of the central axes of the centre of Velenje.

Promenada Velenje by the ENOTA firm and the *Bicycle Bridge across the River Sava in Bohinjska Bistrica* by the firm DANS arhitekti are among this year's award winners of the Architizer A+Awards programme. The *Brežice Wine Cellar* by the architecture office Studio abiro was also placed very highly.

Architizer A+Awards reward major achievements in architecture around the world and their positive impact on everyday life. Architizer.com is the biggest global community of architects on the internet, and has more than a million views a month.

Award winners are selected by a jury composed of 300 distinguished figures in various fields, such as fashion, publishing, design, real estate development and technology. This year's winners were honoured in a ceremony in New York.

PROMENADA VELENJE

The Promenada Velenje City Centre Pedestrian Zone project of 2014 won an award in the public parks category.

The initiative to repurpose the former road through the city of Velenje, which was converted into a pedestrian zone some time ago, was launched by the Municipality of Velenje, which carefully prepared the entire project, while the conceptual design for the renovation of the promenade was drawn up by the ENOTA architecture firm, which had already won an Architizer A+Award the previous year for its Ptuj Performance Centre.

So what was the aim of the Promenada Velenje project? "Since this had once been a road, in our opinion the paved surface was too wide to be user-friendly. We therefore narrowed the pathway and shaped it organically. This encourages people to stop along the way and stick around there for longer, and at the same time we obtained more green surfaces, which in this former garden city are lacking because of the expanding car parks," explains architect Milan Tomac of the ENOTA firm. In the place where the road once traversed the River Paka, they created an area that brings the aquatic element closer to visitors, an element that had previously been neglected.

PROMENADA - THE MAIN EVENT AXIS OF THE CITY

With the transformation, the Promenada is turning into a main event axis of the city, its centre being placed into the new amphitheatre along the river. The river Paka is a torrential river, which means that its watercourse swells up significantly a few times a year, but remains relatively shallow at all other times. As a consequence, the riverbed is very deep and until now, the river, which is an attractive element of any city, flowed out of sight somewhere down below. The wide bridge also meant that anyone walking across it had a hard time seeing the river at all. By narrowing the bridge and placing it off the former axis, the space for the construction of an amphitheatre, which slowly slopes down towards the river surface, is recovered.

The attractive amphitheatre by the river, with the new bridge serving as its backdrop, becomes the centre of the activity in the city, and the river may once again claim an important spot in the townspeople's consciousness.

Where the pathway ends there is now a covered car park with twice the capacity of the original parking lot that stood there. Cars are now hidden amongst the greenery and behind a semi-transparent facade. At the car park exit there are some public service facilities, including bathrooms. The roof of this part of the structure is designed as a stage for summer open-air performances.

The ENOTA team is happy that their arrangement has been well received among users, and that the new spaces are being used in the way they imagined. The fact that their work is outstanding is proven by the awards they have received. "All the awards we receive are first and foremost confirmation that we are doing the right thing.

The client has similar benefits, but still, at a time when the majority of investments are beset by all kinds of scandals, an award puts the project in a more friendly and more positive light," says Milan Tomac of ENOTA.

BICYCLE BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER SAVA IN BOHINJSKA BISTRICA

The Bicycle Bridge across the River Sava, constructed in 2013 by the DANS architecture firm, won an award in the transport and infrastructure category. "This award amidst global competition is one more confirmation of the quality of modern Slovenian architecture. It is important for us that our architectural approach is recognised, since this serves as an incentive for the future, for new orders and new success for us and our clients. Even more important than the award is the fact that the bridge is a source of pride, joy and aesthetic enjoyment for all the local people and visitors," say the successful DANS architects. The Bicycle Bridge across the River Sava in Bohinjjska Bistrica project also won them a First National Award for the Best Wood Construction 2013.

How did the idea for the project come about? "The construction of any bridge involves three determining elements: the river spanned by the bridge, the two banks that it connects and the path leading over it. New spatial relations are being established, and a pathway has appeared where there was none. It sounds simple, but it involves many layers of meaning. For this reason people have ascribed special importance to bridges since the earliest times," explain the architects.

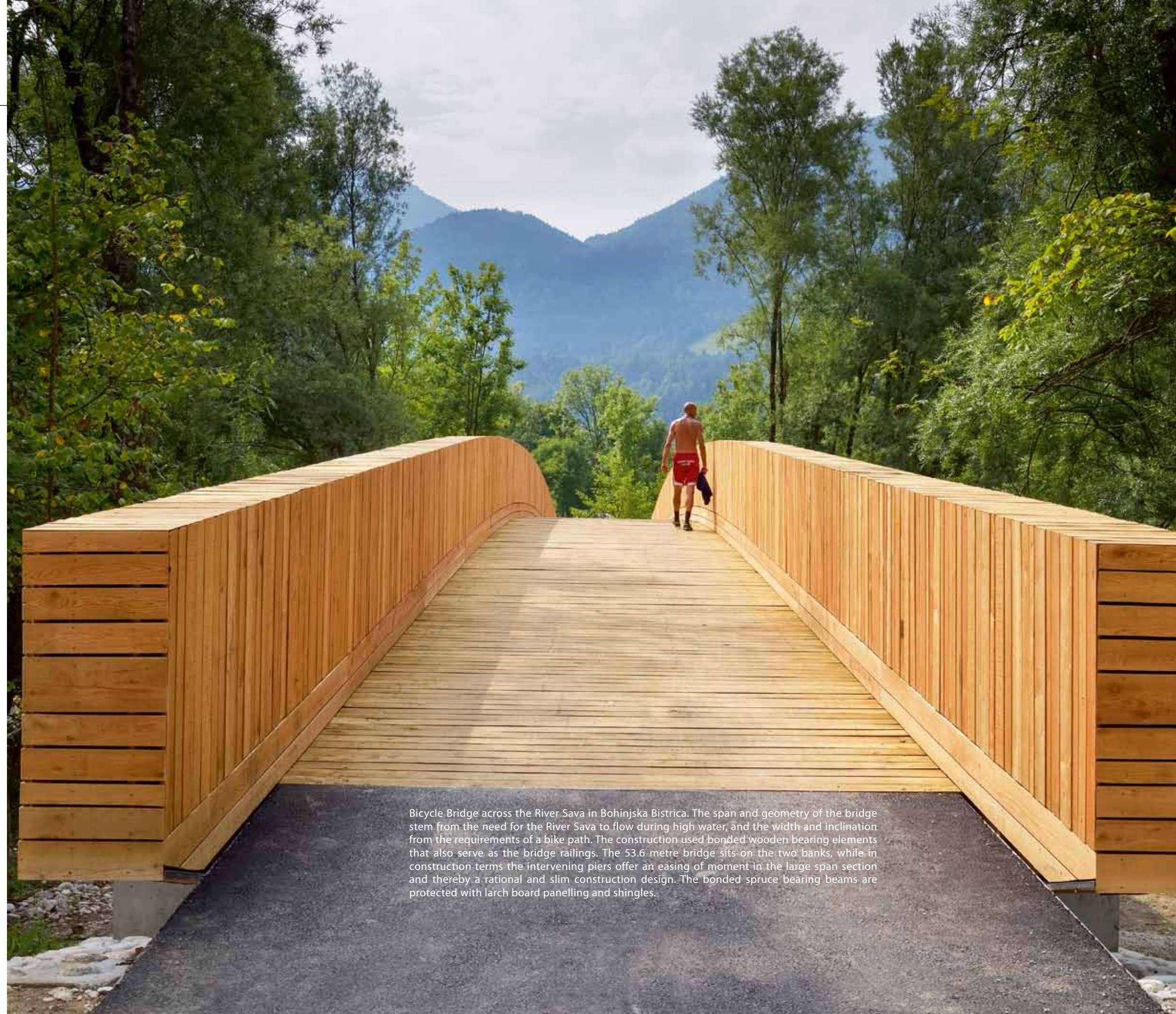
The bicycle bridge links the two banks of the River Sava by the confluence of the Sava and its tributary, the Bistrica, in a recreational and bathing area by the Danica campsite, which is attached to the recreational area next to the town and river.

The bridge was created as part of the picturesque cycle path from Lake Bohinj to Bohinjjska Bistrica, which is a municipal and tourism centre.

The new bridge spans the river in a long, elegant arch, which rises over the beach supported by two piers, whose design offers an abstract reproduction of rock boulders. The length and height of the bridge are such that it appears light and trim. On both sides of the river the arch rests on low grassy inclines.

NEW SCOPE FOR USE OF THE RIVERSIDE SPACE

The arrangement of the embankments is part of the co-natural landscaping of the riverbanks, and offers new scope for use of the riverside space. The raised wooden bridge allows free passage underneath for bathers along the beach. The slopes are designed so as to signify a design and functional complement for the beach. They have



Bicycle Bridge across the River Sava in Bohinjjska Bistrica. The span and geometry of the bridge stem from the need for the River Sava to flow during high water, and the width and inclination from the requirements of a bike path. The construction used bonded wooden bearing elements that also serve as the bridge railings. The 53.6 metre bridge sits on the two banks, while in construction terms the intervening piers offer an easing of moment in the large span section and thereby a rational and slim construction design. The bonded spruce bearing beams are protected with larch board panelling and shingles.

been arranged as grassy earth embankments running parallel to the stream. Between the river and the embankment is space for a riverside beach that has always been here. Here, at the confluence, the space opens up, with a wide river shoreline of rounded white stones lining the turquoise-blue water.

“The architecture of the bridge adheres to the principles of sustainable construction, whereby the construction site is changed as little as possible, and with the least possible input of labour and materials used we cause the least possible damage to the environment.

At the same time the design incorporates the rhetorical and symbolic potential of modern architecture.

We are convinced that tradition does not exclude progress, and that by using modern technology it is possible to design innovative local adaptations and fun interpretations of vernacular architecture,” say the architects.

BREŽICE WINE CELLAR

To date, Studio abiro has competed twice in the Architizer A+Awards, and both times it was placed among the five finalists: in 2015 in the sports centre category with its Planica Ski Jumping Centre, where together with landscape architects Studio AKKA it won 1st prize in the public voting and in 2016 in the residential interiors category with its Wine Cellar microproject, which did not win a prize, but was nevertheless a success in that such a small project (25 m²) was ranked among the five finalists.

The public voting award last year for the Planica Ski Jumping Centre was itself a really nice confirmation of our work, and also made us internationally known and recognised.

“The Architizer Awards have a global significance, with architects from all over the world applying. It can of course compare to sport-

ing wins in world championships. Where the Planica Ski Jumping Centre could expect to create more of a stir because of the facilities offered, the location and the natural setting, in truth we were all the more pleased with this year’s ranking among the finalists for the tiny Wine Cellar project. Especially since this involved very direct architecture, without any complicated details, expensive materials and magnificent pictures,” explains architect Matej Blenkuš.

The Wine Cellar project involved the renovation of the basement in a residential building as the final phase of the complete renovation of a home in the Posavje region. In the past the space served for the maturing and storage of home-made wine, when the homestead was still surrounded by vineyards on the southern and western slopes. Today the space is intended for socialising and to commemorate the wine tradition of the home.

Two basic materials were involved – reinforced concrete from the existing construction elements and massive oak timbers. In the renovation, all the existing bearing structures and columns were finely sanded, then a console counter in the same finish was hung from them. In this way, three periods of concrete elements were

unified by the design, and differences between them can only be noticed in the details. The floor of the cellar is also poured concrete with a smooth finish. The wall panelling, shelves and dresser are made of thoroughly brushed oak. Just as sanding reveals the rich structure of poured concrete, brushing massive wood elements enhances their texture, quality to the touch and resilience. The furniture added to the space – bench, chairs and table – adheres to the same design principles of simplicity and functionality, and use light joined panels of birch and alder.

A special feature of the space is the light wall of 200 concrete waves with back lighting. The concept stems from the desire that despite the conditions in the space no longer being suitable for storing bottled wine, it does not lose its memory of that original purpose.

What seems on the surface a very simple project is in truth full of tiny details, sources of light, reflections and angles of view. “The rich variety of experience thus contributes to expanding the perceived size of the space, which measures just 20 m², just as that number of guests were able to have a pleasant gathering there on the opening,” say the Studio abiro architects.



Brežice Wine Cellar. The “stone bottles” with their surprising appearance preserve the atmosphere of a proper wine cellar, while at the same time their fullness and weight inject a note of melancholic nostalgia into the space. With the back lighting, on the other hand, they seek a contrast in a sense of floating, translucency and indefinable depth.

RUSSIAN CHAPEL

Centenary of a church built in the suffering of World War I

SILVESTER GABERŠČEK



Its architectural features inspired by Russian churches and the fact that it was put up by Russian prisoners-of-war forced to build a steep mountain road in World War I make this chapel a unique attraction in Slovenia's Julian Alps. The wooden chapel of St. Vladimir on the Vršič pass, known as the "Russian Chapel" by the locals, has been declared a cultural monument. Located by the "Russian road", which winds up to the pass, it is one of the major attractions in the Triglav National Park.

In 1992, when Slovenian and Russian Church delegations and state representatives met by the chapel for the first time, the Russian Chapel became a symbol of friendship between Slovenia and Russia. Every year, a celebration of St. Vladimir's Day takes place on the last Sunday in July, which is a great opportunity to strengthen cultural, economic and other relations as well as develop powerful ecumenical bonds between the two Christian Churches.

In the last hundred years, the Russian Chapel – the chapel of St. Vladimir on the Vršič pass, has played an important historic role, completing the mission to raise awareness of the atrocities and the senselessness of war. At the same time, it encourages passers-by to respect the life and invaluable dignity of every human being.

The preservation of the Russian Chapel on the Vršič pass is a noble pursuit which enriches us and encourages the development of genuine relations, the prerequisite for mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

LANDMARK EVENTS

Unfortunately, people have taken advantage of this genuine harmony too many times, simply because they yearned for more than they needed or were entitled to. In the past, at least two such

events have put *the kingdom of Triglav* at the centre of attention.

The first known example dates back to Roman emperor Gaius Iulius Caesar (100 B.C. – 44 B.C.), who extended the tenth province (Venetia et Histria) so its borders reached the mountain peaks of the Black Sea/Adriatic watershed and thus also deep into the heart of the *Triglav mountains*. This action had a strong influence on the military outpost in the western part of the mountains, established in 50 B.C., i.e. the town of Forum Iulii bearing the name of Caesar, after whom the mountains in the hinterland of the then Forum Iulii – today's Cividale del Friuli – were named: "Julian Alps".

The second occasion when Triglav mountain range was in the centre of the world's history was at the time of the Isonzo Front when tens of thousands of young soldiers from more than 22 nations fought, suffered, bled and died on World War I battlefields. During the World War I, ten thousand Russian war prisoners were sent to the Slovenian territory, coming from distant battlefields of Galicia. Some of them were ordered to the extremely challenging mountain road construction site of the road across the Vršič pass, which reaches the altitude of 1,611 metres and was built for military purposes, i.e. to supply the upper part of the Isonzo Front during the war. In Kranjska Gora, a large shanty town was built for Russian war prisoners and other soldiers who worked on the Vršič road, and numerous working barracks had also been built at specific points along the 30 km long mountain construction site so that the soldiers were stationed closer to work.

TWO GIANT AVALANCHES

Prisoners were often exhausted due to hard work and illnesses, and many work accidents and natural disasters occurred. One of the worst accidents recorded were the two avalanches from the Mojstrovka mountain that occurred on 8 and 12 March 1916 and killed 300 Russian war prisoners who were working on the Gorenjska side of the pass. In the same year, another avalanche was triggered, this time in the Trenta valley on the Bovec side of the pass, which claimed the lives of another 60 prisoners.

On the basis of the military archival records, Kranjska Gora parish chronicles and other sources, historians estimate that during World War I, around one thousand Russian prisoners lost their lives on the Vršič road.

After the terrible avalanche disaster, a small Orthodox chapel made of wood and bark with two distinctive bulbous endings of the towers was built in a forest glade under the Vršič pass next to the medical shanties by the surviving Russian war prisoners, who wanted to honour the memory of their dead compatriots and give themselves spiritual support, whereas the bodies of the dead prisoners were buried in the nearby tomb. During the Vršič road enlargement works in 1937, constructor Josip Slavec from Kranj discovered skeletons, which were transferred, together with other remains of the Russian war prisoners, from the Kranjska Gora cemetery to the pyramid tombstone, which he built on the north-east side of the chapel of St. Vladimir.

With the help of the locals from Kranjska Gora, the surviving Russian war prisoners who stayed in Slovenia after the war was over and the Russians who joined them as refugees in 1921 have maintained and renovated the chapel throughout all these years.

In 2005, due to the weathering of bowls and especially the worn-out construction, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slove-

nia started a reconstruction and restoration of the interior design so that the chapel was completely renovated for its 90th anniversary in 2006.

PARADISE UNDER TRIGLAV

The Julian Alps of the Eastern Alps chain are really something special because of their geographical location and their white peaks of Trier and Jurassic limestones made from two hundred million years old Mesozoic marine sediments. A region with countless peaks, which reach from the mountain valleys up into the blue sky, studied with mountain lakes and clear waters; the north-eastern side is outlined by the Sava river with its river basin and its outflow into the Black Sea, and the south-western side with the Soča river and its outflow into the Adriatic Sea.

Today's image of the "paradise under Triglav", as we like to call the area that covers 4,400 km², was carved by the Triglav glacier at the end of the last ice age ten thousand years ago and in the next thousand years by man, who further contributed to the shape and appearance of this picturesque landscape with his presence and work.

Ancient myths and tales recount that the Triglav kingdom, named after the mighty mountain with the highest peak of 2864 meters, used to be ruled by white women, fairies and other mythical creatures who, with the help of Goldenhorn – a miracle goat with golden horns – jealously guarded the secrets of the kingdom from human greed and took especially vigilant care of marvellous treasures, carefully hidden in the Bogatin mountain.

A ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of the Russian Chapel was held on 30 July 2016. Upon the invitation of the honorary patron, President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin also attended the ceremony.





FIVE STATES DECIDE ON THE SUCCESSION TO EX-YUGOSLAVIA

15 years on from their agreement

BOJAN CVELFAR
PHOTO: BORUT PERŠOLJA

After the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1991, five equal and sovereign successor states had to settle amongst themselves how they would deal with the succession. The process of reaching an agreement was difficult and lengthy due to the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as well as contradictory positions regarding the fate of the former common state. An Agreement on Succession was finally signed on 29 June 2001.

THE ROUGH ROAD TO AGREEMENT

While Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia claimed that the common state has been dissolved, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia insisted that it constituted the continuity of the Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and that the other republics had seceded. The diplomatic battle on this issue was fought most fiercely within the United Nations, where both the Security Council and the General Assembly confirmed the dissolution in the end.

The peace conference on Yugoslavia convened in 1991 and the related Badinter Arbitration Commission played a decisive role in reaching the agreement. In 1992 and 1993, it adopted as many as 15 legal opinions on the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) in Geneva re-established a Working Group on State succession, while after the Dayton Agreement, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) took the leading role and appointed Sir Arthur Watts as Special Negotiator for Succession Issues in 1996, who contributed to the final text of the Agreement on Succession Issues.

Therefore, the substantive negotiations on all aspects of succession started no earlier than in 2000 when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia) applied for UN membership and thus consented to equal succession of all five sovereign states.

“PEACE TREATY ON YUGOSLAVIA”

After lengthy negotiations facilitated by the international community that took almost a decade, the successor states signed an Agreement on Succession Issues on 29 June 2001 at the Hofburg palace in Vienna.

The agreement was the key part of one of the most important political developments in the region which followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the creation of new, independent states and their integration in the international community in the late 20th century.

Since it is the first international treaty involving all states of the former Yugoslavia and because it settles the unresolved legal and substantive succession issues, it is often referred to as “the Peace Treaty on Yugoslavia”. The Agreement finalises the just distribution of rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the former Yugoslavia among its successor states. The following seven annexes regulate various aspects of succession:

- Annex A: Movable and immovable property
- Annex B: Diplomatic and consular properties
- Annex C: Financial assets and liabilities
- Annex D: Archives
- Annex E: Pensions
- Annex F: Other rights, interest and liabilities
- Annex G: Private property and acquired rights

The Agreement was deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and it entered into force on 2 June 2004 after it was ratified by the last signatory Croatia.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

The Standing Joint Committee of Senior Representatives of Successor States

sor States to the SFRY was tasked to oversee the implementation of the Agreement. Thus far, the senior representatives have made 18 recommendations to the governments of the successor states. In 1994, the Succession Fund of the Republic of Slovenia was established, tasked with implementing the Agreement on Succession Issues and exercising the rights of the Republic of Slovenia and settling its liabilities in the division of property, rights and obligations of the former SFRY.

In accordance with Annex A of the Agreement, Slovenia has so far identified 313 objects of tangible movable state property of the SFRY that are of great value for its cultural heritage and located in Serbia. From May to October 2015, the National Gallery of Slovenia hosted an exhibition entitled Return of Ambassadors of Art, featuring selected works by Slovenian artists which had once decorated the walls of diplomatic missions and consulates of the former SFRY. The exhibition marked the culmination of many years of efforts to achieve the restitution of this part of Slovenia's cultural heritage.

The Agreement also provides for the distribution, retention and copying of the archives of the former SFRY and allows archivists from all successor states free and unhindered access to them.

In 2006, Slovenia prepared a list of archives that should be returned to Slovenia, which is being constantly updated through continuous recording in the Belgrade archives, and sent it to the Serbian side.

Slovenia has also identified 126 international treaties of the former Yugoslavia relating only to the Slovenian territory, the original copies of which should pass to Slovenia pursuant to the agreement. The Archives of the Republic of Slovenia have taken the lead in the preparation and implementation of a project to digitalise the common archival heritage of the former Yugoslavia.

Given the considerable value of the property, the division of diplomatic missions and consular posts of the SFRY is extremely important for the implementation of the Agreement. Annex B lists the

majority of the Yugoslavian state property all around the world, allocating a share of 14% to Slovenia. To this date, Slovenia has already taken over the allocated properties in Washington, Klagenfurt, Milan and Rome.

The financial assets of the former SFRY and the National Bank of Yugoslavia are to be distributed in line with the proportions set in Annex C. Slovenia has been allocated 16% of all financial assets. The relevant Committee of the successor states took up its work in 2001 and has already passed around forty resolutions and resolved numerous issues during its sessions. Slovenia has already received its portion of Yugoslavia's assets in cash, gold and other precious metals, foreign currency deposits with foreign commercial banks and securities. As part of the settlement of the "Russian" clearing debt, Slovenia acquired the Triglav patrol boat.

The issue of the old foreign currency deposits, which were guaranteed by the former SFRY, is one of the most complex and controversial succession issues. The failure of the inter-state negotiations due to opposition of certain successor states resulted in numerous court proceedings initiated by individual savers whose deposits had not been repaid due to diverging views and measures of the successor states. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of the savings of deposit holders. However, the issue of a just distribution of the former Yugoslavia's debt among the successor states remains unresolved.

KEY TASKS FOR THE FUTURE

The comprehensive implementation of the Agreement is the foundation of stable, long-term and friendly relations among the signatory states. For this reason, efforts for an effective resolution of outstanding succession issues remain one of the priorities of the Slovenia's foreign policy in the region. Other key issues include:

- a fair distribution of the guarantees for foreign currency deposits,
- the final distribution of the remaining diplomatic and consular properties of the SFRY and the completion of their list,
- the distribution in kind or sale of the largest embassies and diplomatic residencies of the SFRY,

- the distribution of cultural heritage,
- free and open access to all archives of the former SFRY,
- the distribution and return of the archives pertaining to successor states,
- digitalisation of common Yugoslav archives,
- the distribution of the SFRY debt to international organization, including the United Nations,
- the distribution of financial assets in banks with mixed capital,
- a consistent protection of private property and acquired rights of citizens and legal entities of the former SFRY in successor states.

In cooperation with the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs organised, alongside the conference entitled "Agreement on Succession Issues – 15 years later", an exhibition dedicated to this subject.

The exhibition presents the content and importance of the Agreement, which was recognised as a sign of hope for stability in the region and the foundation of good political, economic and cultural relations among the newly established states.

Key agreement-related events and specific achievements of Slovenia related to the succession after the declaration of independence are presented, as well as the issues which have not yet been resolved. In autumn, the organisers would like to display the exhibition in other states as well, especially those which used to be part of the former Yugoslavia.



TRANSLATING TO STIMULATE DIALOGUE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A Manifesto for Translation

UROŠ MAHKOVEC

PHOTO: STANKO GRUDEN/STA



Languages are like Ulysses: they travel. There are translation roads, just like the silk and spice roads of long ago. Works travel, with varying amounts of baggage. But without translation, books and other works become cultural luggage left behind. The language of this journey, the traduction of the text, is translation itself.

The challenges and opportunities of translation were examined in a two-day "Translation for Dialogue" Conference, co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), on 23 and 24 June 2016 in Piran. At the end, participants adopted a Manifesto for Translation.

Umberto Eco once said that translation is the language of Europe. Translation is the language of the Mediterranean. And yet, all the studies show that there is an extraordinary lack of translations and an unequal, asymmetrical exchange of languages in the Euro-Mediterranean area. "Mare nostrum" it may be, but what about "linguae nostrae"? Without multilingualism, there can be no cultural diversity. Without translation, there can be no intercultural dialogue.

Our two Mediterranean shores face many of the same dangers. In the geopolitics of emergencies, culture often takes a back seat in our diplomacy and communiqués. The "clash of civilizations", if there is one, is above all a "clash of de-civilization". Armed language, the language that kills, needs no translation.

The Mediterranean has always been a place of knowledge and exchange, one of transmission and enrichment. Today, the temptation to withdraw behind barriers and the monolingualism of hatred pose a dual threat to the free movement of works, creators, talent and translators.

Translators are the irreplaceable conveyors of works and knowledge, the messengers vital to our cultures. We call for action to support their recognition, training, mobility and reception.

In a new policy for a dynamic and ambitious Euro-Mediterranean cultural agenda, translation is one of the keys to our shared identities. Not one language for all, but rather access to languages for all.

The Manifesto for Translation calls for an ambitious Euro-Mediterranean policy that supports the translation of works and cultural expressions. This is a matter of urgency for languages and their translation. All those in the translation chain need to be involved: authors, publishers, distributors, bookshops, libraries, public and private institutions, and also national actors, the European Union and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation forums. The first Euro-Mediterranean conference on translation was held in Portorož, Slovenia, on 23 June 2016. We want this "Manifesto for translation" to be a call for active mobilization in favour of a concrete policy supporting translation and cultural works in the Mediterranean.



Slovenia takes centre-stage in Buenos Aires

PETRA KEŽMAN
Photo: MARKO VOMBERGAR



On the occasion of 25 years of Slovenia's independence and Argentina's bicentenary, a "Slovenian Month" was launched in June in Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital and the most important cultural centre in South America. The Vatican Square (Plaza Vaticano) in front of the prestigious Teatro Colon hosted the exhibition "I feel Slovenia. I feel 25" in its Spanish version. It was inaugurated by the city's Culture Minister Dario Loperfido and Slovenian Ambassador Jadranka Šturm Kocjan, who stressed the creative power of Slovenian artists and the importance of the culture for her country's international visibility.

Thousands of visitors strolled among 38 photos of Slovenia's natural and cultural heritage, sharing their impressions and good wishes for Slovenia on its anniversary on social media platforms.

Denise Tomšič picked the photo "The village of Grant in Baška Grapa" by Andreja Peklaj, commenting that "this is THE photo because it captures a motive for pride for all Slovenians – their taking care of the planet. The planet that doesn't belong to us. The planet that deserves a better treatment. I wish Slovenia kept it that way. 25 is only an official number, not the real one. Slovenia's been growing for many more years; growing in every single house. My great grandparents arrived to Argentina with Italian citizenship and Slovenian heart. Already in that very moment, Slovenia was growing."

During the "Slovenian Month", one of Buenos Aires' central cinemas Espacio INCAA Cine Gaumont hosted "Slovenian Film Days", showing a selection of seven recent films, headed by "A Trip" by Nejc Gazvoda who visited Buenos Aires on this occasion. Argentine National Radio emitted two programs on Slovenian classical music and composers. The brand-new Cultural Center Kirchner hosted the dance show "Othello – Shakespeare in Tango", produced by Zavod BA, staging

Slovenia's best tango dancers Andreja Podlogar, Blaž Bertoneclj and Uroš Andič.

On Slovenia's national day, June 25, Buenos Aires' central avenue Avenida de Mayo between the Argentinian presidential palace and the parliament vibrated with Slovenian rhythms, food and energy.

The celebration "Buenos Aires celebrates Slovenia" attracted thousands of passers-by.

On the main stage, Slovenian music and dance groups from Argentina presented themselves along with the invitees from Slovenia, the duo Sounds of Slovenia – Janez Dovč and Boštjan Gombač and the dance couple Podlogar - Bertoneclj. National day festivities were crowned in the classic Argentinian way by the "Slovenian Milonga" in the tango club La Viruta de Solanas with Slovenian dance couple Podlogar - Bertoneclj as guests of honour, accompanied by other dancers from Slovenia.

The "Slovenian Month" was rounded up in the city's main cultural centre Usina del Arte where the Sounds of Slovenia charmed the public with their vivid and charismatic contemporary interpretations of the traditional Slovenian music.



BLED STRATEGIC FORUM

Addressing unparalleled challenges to security

MATEJ GREGOREC

At a time of geostrategic turbulence, the annual Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) will seek answers to pressing threats and challenges which have shaken the foundations of our global security. Recent events have undermined a common feeling of security, stability, and freedom. The world has been caught in a maelstrom of geostrategic upheavals, which call for a common response based on shared values and norms.

As a leading conference in Central and South East Europe, the 11th Bled Strategic Forum, taking place on 5 and 6 September 2016 under the title 'Safeguarding the Future', will provide a high-level platform for discussion of pressing regional and global issues. The main event will again be accompanied by the Business BSF and Young BSF, whereas less common topics will be the focus of the debates on Hidden Dimensions of International Relations.

The complex and interdisciplinary challenges of today's globalised world require comprehensive solutions and in the past years, our sense of global security, stability and freedom has been seriously undermined by various threats.

Thus, our response to these challenges will have an important impact on our common future, based on universal values, standards and norms.

MAIN TOPICS

Attracting several hundred participants, including heads of state and government, ministers, diplomats, representatives of the business sphere, scholars and the media from the entire world, the Forum will kick off with the Leaders' panel, held under the patronage of the President of Republic of Slovenia. The consecutive debates, spanning over two days, will address issues such as water risks and positioning water as an essential factor of cooperation and an instrument of peace, future the European Union and weakening trust and solidarity among its member states, challenges posed by global energy trends, security of the individual, as well as the need for adaptation of European security and defence structures.

Western Balkans, a traditional topic of discussion, will look into the enlargement process, which has been one of the most successful EU policies. Nonetheless, due to a number of crises in the past couple of years that have abruptly exposed the EU's vulnerabilities and weaknesses, the panel will attempt to assess how long the EU can retain its pull factor and attractiveness in the region.

An integral part the Forum, the Business BSF, organized in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia and IEDC-Bled School of Management, will be devoted to discovering innovative opportunities and focus on key challenges of European and global economy. Participants will be able to listen in on debates about digital transformation, how taking use of the information and communications technologies is advancing us to the age of smart cities, as well as how the contemporary developments are challenging our well-established concepts of mobility and automotive industry. In light of Ljubljana being the 2016 European Green Capital, tourism and sustainability experts will also try to answer questions of global security challenges and sustainability in today's tourism industry.

Bled Strategic Forum in brief

The Bled Strategic Forum has become established as a leading international high-level conference in the region and is developing into a successful platform for in-depth strategic debate among leaders and decision-makers from the public and private sectors on pressing regional and global issues. Attracting some 500 participants, including heads of state and government, ministers, diplomats, business professionals, academics, young people and media representatives from around the globe, it offers ample opportunities for bilateral and multilateral meetings and networking among political and business leaders.

INNOVATIVE DISCUSSIONS AND YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAMME

In addition, the BSF will continue its tradition of discussing less conventional issues – the Hidden Dimensions of International Relations. The 6th Young Bled Strategic Forum (Young BSF), featuring a select group of young leaders, will be taking place under the title 'Global Citizens' in the days preceding the Forum.

With the ever-changing global situation, the BSF remains determined to strive towards innovative thinking and forward-looking visions.

Enabling a unique opportunity for bilateral and multilateral meetings with the foremost regional and global stakeholders, and a possibility for extensive networking between political and business leaders of today, it is our hope that the Forum will continue to grow, evolve and influence various policy agendas and solutions of tomorrow.



SAVE THE DATE

www.bledstrategicforum.org



5 - 6
SEPTEMBER
2016

NIZKOCENOVCI

An online travel platform is Slovenian start-up of 2016

DANILA GOLOB
PHOTO: NIZKOCENOVCI ARCHIVES



The Nizkocenovci team, who were awarded the Slovenian Start-up of 2016 Award, is developing a solution that will enable an easier search of the cheapest flights and other means of transportation.

The Nizkocenovci company has been awarded the Slovenian Start-up of 2016 Award at the international Podim conference in Maribor. The award recognises companies and teams that have become role models in the start-up environment through hard work, global achievements and bold development vision.

The innovative young team developed an on-line platform called GoAvio, which allows users to search, explore and discover low-cost flights in Europe and around the world.

"We were very happy about the award and we see it as a recognition that we are on the right path with our start-up. However, this is just a recognition, not an achievement. We still have to travel the same path to reach the goals we have set," said Matej Gaser, initiator and founder of Nizkocenovci.

LOW-COST FLIGHTS IN ONE PLACE

Even though flight tickets can be very expensive, it is often possible to find much cheaper, low-cost flights. However, the problem was that there was no website that would offer all these data in one place. Until now.

Nizkocenovci brought all low-cost airlines together in one place and thus enabled users to search for affordable flights in a faster and easier way.

"We got the idea because we faced the same problem when we wanted to fly to Berlin and had to search for low-cost flights on the web sites of each carrier separately," said Matej Gaser. Some time afterwards at a start-up weekend, they tried to see if others deal with similar problems and found that such a search engine would indeed be useful for many people. They conducted a thorough survey on the needs and desires of potential customers and started looking for new solutions. One year later, the website nizkocenovci.si/goavio.com was completed. It is unique because it displays lines on a map through which the users can explore all flight connections of low-cost airlines

in Europe to find the nearest direct connection to their destination. Both websites have a monthly visit of 12 thousand users, but the goal of the highly motivated team is to attract thousand times more.

The web site allows passengers to take a look at all options offered by low-cost airlines in their vicinity because the team figured out that a lot of people do not look for a flight on a specific date, but first check where they could travel and on which days the tickets are the cheapest, and only then decide to buy a ticket on a given date.

By using GoAvio (www.goavio.com) you can:

- Explore low-cost flights and discover destinations you can fly cheap.
- Find the day with the cheapest flight and fly when it's the cheapest.
- Discover the nearest direct low-cost flight to your desired destination.

TRAVELLING GREEN AND THRIFTY

After setting up the web site, they recorded great numbers of visitors, but they wanted even more. At the time, they did not yet have a business model, but today they are on the right path. "We found a business model that will allow us to extend our technology to a wider range of users. This means we will be able to help more people. We are currently working on a technology that would combine planes, trains and buses and find cheaper routes between cities," explained Matej Gaser.

The technology will optimise the organisation and realisation of travels to the fullest extent and will be useful for large search engines dedicated to travels, flights and other means of transportation.

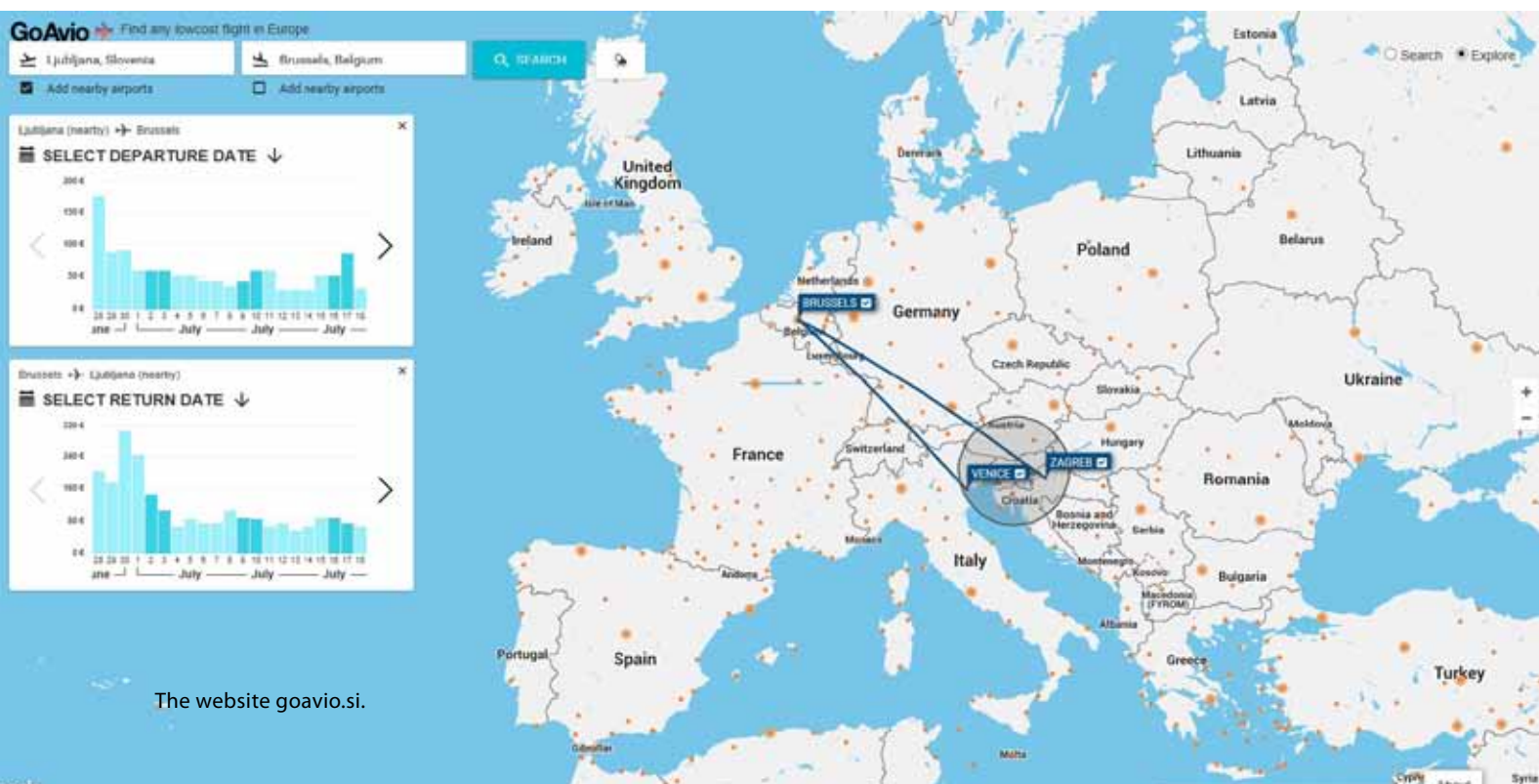
GoAvio currently includes more than 120 low-cost airlines and more than 10,000 connections from all around the world; with an investment of one million euros they want to enter the European market in the first phase. The planned upgrade of the system will include rail and bus connections, so that their system will be able to find the cheapest, fastest and most ecological connection to any place in Europe.

This new technology will make travelling more affordable, optimally fast and friendlier to the environment. Matej Gaser is confident that they can find a cheaper and better way for approximately 40 million passengers per year.

THE WINNING TEAM

After the British investment and the investment by the Slovenian Enterprise Fund at the beginning of 2016, the team acquired further €300,000 from the Bulgarian venture capital fund Launchub and the Czech fund Credo Ventures.

In this year, the Nizkocenovci company expects a turnover of €15 million, which is a high, but realistic number if they manage to carry out all agreements made with major search engines dedicated to travels, flights and other means of transportation.



The website goavio.si.



Matej Gaser, initiator and founder of Nizkocenovci.

ECO RESORT BENEATH VELIKA PLANINA

Candidates from all over the world for dream jobs as shepherds

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: ECO RESORT ARCHIVE



People from France, Spain, England, Ireland, Finland and even Australia, the U.S. and New Zealand are applying for very special jobs as shepherds at the foot of the picturesque Velika planina plateau.

The campaign is part of promotion of Slovenia as a tourist destination. The emerging Eco Resort at the foot of Velika planina, which is to welcome the first visitors in September, is looking for 10 individuals with positive energy who like children, animals and nature and speak English. Besides looking after the animals in this pleasant retreat, the new shepherds will have the opportunity to transform into masters of the resort. The only requirements the employers are looking for are knowledge of English, love of children, nature and animals, a good work ethic and good communication skills. Do you have what it takes to win a dream job at Velika planina?

Successful candidates will be given the opportunity to get to know the rich ethnological heritage of Velika planina, arguably one of the most beautiful and well-preserved plateaus in Europe, according to the company behind the project Palmieri, producer of prestigious dessert wines and premium olive oils.

The dream job will include living in one of the wooden cottages with all the modern kitchen and bathroom appliances in the Eco resort, enjoying high-quality local food and having one's own garden of vegetables and herbs.

The use of spa, a swimming pond and various other activities offered by the resort such as workshops and guided tours are in the job description. All that the shepherds will have to do is provide for the cows, sheep, goats and poultry at the resort, make domestic craft products and pass the skills on to children of the families holidaying there.

The 10 chosen applicants will take turns in living at the resort the whole year through and will be able to choose the time as well as duration of their stay. The minimum stay will be two weeks and the maximum four.

The first condition is for candidates to share the promotional video for the job, also presenting Slovenia's top tourist sights such as Lake

Bled, Triglav Mountain and Velika planina. The video was first released on Facebook on 11 March. So far over 170,000 people saw it and over 2,000 applied for the job by sharing it. Candidates from around the world are interested in the job with most of them coming from Slovenia, the US and New Zealand. The candidates are mostly highly educated people and travellers.

A NEW PRODUCT IN TOURISM

The emerging Eco resort beneath Velika planina could be a case study for marketing and promotion. More than 3,000 applications for the dream job of an Eco Resort shepherd have already come in, surprising even the initiators of the project.

The creative dream-job promotion video that was published on the Internet has been met with overwhelming response from across the globe. According to the representatives of the Eco Resort, the applicants come from all walks of life and from the entire world, from America to Australia, with a considerable number of applications from Hungary and Slovenia. Among the short-listed candidates, two have already been selected for the job: a rich man from the USA and a barely literate boy from Macedonia.

The first successful candidate is a businessman from the States, director of a Boston-based software company, who is not applying for the job to improve his financial situation. In his brief presentation, in which he even offered to pay in order to be allowed to do the job, he persuaded the commission by saying that he longed to escape to green Slovenia, its beautiful environment and pristine nature that is home to the Eco Resort beneath Velika planina. He considers working as a shepherd a type of anti-stress therapy, which most of the applicants are looking for in the hectic pace of their everyday lives.

The other selected candidate is a skilled shepherd from Macedonia, whose application clearly showed his heartfelt desire to get this experience. As much as 200 sheep will wait for him at home while

he shares the knowledge and experience of being a shepherd with the holidaymakers of the Eco Resort beneath Velika planina.

Two Slovenian pop singers, Nuša Derenda and Frenk Nova, have also been selected for the job. They stated strong love of children and animals, and expressed a wish to work in the peaceful environment of pristine nature. Both celebrity candidates are looking forward to their retreat from busy schedules into the realm of nature and fresh air at the foot the Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

The advertisement continues to draw applications. The event was broadcast by the Hungarian and Croatian national television, and many commercial TV stations, which has led to the incredible response. It can be concluded that we are talking about a new product in tourism.

A new Eco Resort beneath Velika planina, near Kamnik, less than an hour's drive from Ljubljana in the heart of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, will open its doors in September 2016. The resort will offer unique accommodation in 'glamping' houses shaped like shepherd's huts. Velika planina is among the rare preserved shepherd's settlements in Europe, and shepherds still live and work there in the warmer part of the year. The new eco-glamping tourist village, the Eko resort beneath Velika planina, will be located in the village of Godič near Kamnik in northern Slovenia. The scent of wood, the cosy environment, and the view through the window conjure up an enchanted atmosphere in the lovely shepherd's village, perfect for all generations. After the opening in September 2016, it will offer accommodation in 24 wooden glamping houses for 4 people, imitating the shepherd's huts from Velika planina, and in 9 glamping tents for 2 people.



**Photographic exhibition marking the 25th anniversary of Slovenia's independence
»I Feel Slovenia. I Feel 25.«**

11 August–23 August 2016, Helsinki (Keskuskatu)

25 August–7 September 2016, Tallinn (Vadabuse Square)

12 September–30 September 2016, Riga (Riga Town Hall Square)

Exhibition is organised by the Government Communication Office of the Republic of Slovenia in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Berlin, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Copenhagen, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Warsaw and Slovenia Press Photo.

