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# Sinfo

15 years of independence

Interview: Janez Janša

Slovenian Istria

## Main Macroeconomic Indicators of Slovenia

Polona Prešeren

Slovenia has come a long way from a general consensus on independence to international recognition and stable economic growth. In the beginning, the situation did not look all too bright. Our country had to implement a number of major economic and other reforms. The privatisation process took its toll, and unemployment grew. Nevertheless, the country has managed to overcome the burden of the transitional period to become one of the success stories. Today, Slovenia is an economically well developed and stable country, and the first new EU member state to enter the Eurozone.

A favourable geographical position is also one element facilitating economic growth. In addition, a diverse industrial

history, a tradition of openness to the world, and a well-managed state economic policy contributed to the fact that Slovenia has been a success story in the transition from a socialist to a market economy. In the last fifteen years Slovenia has privatised its economy, stabilised inflation and wage increases, halted the growth of unemployment, strengthened its currency, relaxed the flow of capital, and modernised its system of taxation.

Slovenia's macroeconomic indicators are steadily approaching the structure of advanced industrialized economies. Also, the growth of private and public services is increasing. The share of services in GDP is already close to the EU average.

	Real growth rates in % <sup>1</sup>			
	1991 <sup>2</sup>	2005	2006 Forecast	2007 Forecast
<b>Value added by activities and GDP</b>				
GDP per capita in EUR	4,986	13,677	14,500	15,440
GDP per capita in US\$	6,331	17,008	17,406	18,525
Rate of unemployment by ILO in %	7.4	6.5	6.6	6.7
Labour productivity (GDP per capita)	-3.4	3.1	3.4	3.3
Inflation (annual average)	117.7	2.5	2.1	2.1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	-2.5	-3.7 <sup>3</sup>	4.0	-4.9
Industry and construction	-11.5	2.9 <sup>3</sup>	4.6	3.9
Services	-6.3	4.5 <sup>3</sup>	4.1	4.1
<b>International trade – balance of payment statistics</b>				
Exports of goods and services- real <sup>4</sup>	-20.1	9.2	8.2	7.9
Imports of goods and services-real <sup>4</sup>	-22.4	5.3	7.6	7.4
Current account balance				
in EUR m	N/A	-301	-480	-390
Average exchange rate SIT/EUR	35.0	23 9.6	239.6	239.6
Average exchange rate SIT/US\$	27.6	192.7	199.6	199.7
Foreign exchange reserves, in EUR m	N/A	8,832	-	-
Gross external debt, in EUR m	N/A	19,566	-	-
<b>Domestic demand – national account statistics (as % of GDP)</b>				
Private consumption	54.8	55.4	55.0	54.3
Government consumption	19.0	19.6	19.6	19.4
Gross fixed capital formation	20.6	24.8	25.5	25.8

Sources of data: Statistical Office of the RS, Bank of Slovenia, Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development - Spring Report 2006. Notes: <sup>1</sup>Year 1991 (constant 1992 prices), year 2005-2007 (constant 2004 prices); <sup>2</sup>The calculation in euros for 1991 is theoretical and based on national currencies of the countries that adopted the euro; <sup>3</sup>Estimate; <sup>4</sup>Balance of payments statistics (exports F.O.B., imports F.O.B); real growth rates are adjusted for inter-currency changes, and changes in prices on foreign markets. N/A – not available.



Sabina Popovič

## FIFTEEN YEARS

Slovenia is celebrating fifteen years of independence. On 25 June 1991 the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia implemented the outcome of the plebiscite in favour of independence, and adopted the Constitutional Act Implementing the Basic Constitutional Charter on the Independence and Sovereignty of the Republic of Slovenia, and the Declaration of Independence. Thus Slovenia obtained de jure sovereignty, which was solemnly proclaimed on 26 June in Trg republike Square in Ljubljana. The following day, the Ten-Day War began.

In this month's interview, Prime Minister Janez Janša shares with us his views on the fifteen years of Slovenia's independence, her achievements, and other important issues, while Foreign Minister Dr Dimitrij Rupel discusses the anniversary in this month's Viewpoint.

The Savica waterfall is considered one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Slovenia, and holds a special cultural and historical significance. It has an important role in the Romantic epic poem 'Krst pri Savici' (Baptism on the Savica), written by the greatest Slovenian poet, France Prešeren. The poem is still regarded as one of the most profound Slovenian national epic works in which every period of Slovenian history is represented through symbols and hidden meanings.

The Tone Tomšič Academic Choir is also celebrating an important anniversary this year. It was established eighty years ago by Dr France Marolt, an esteemed researcher of Slovenian musical and folklore tradition. We have visited a region that hides in his bosom old vineyards, olive trees, idyllic villages and a rich cultural heritage. Far away from the crazed world, bathed in the scent of the sea, and removed from the holiday hustle and bustle lies Slovenian Istria, a place accessible from any town on the Slovenian coast.

We also present Edvard Clug, a ballet dancer, choreographer, and director, Cockta, 'the beverage of your youth and our own', and much more. Enjoy your reading!

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# Monthly Report

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## AHTISAARI AND SLOVENIAN LEADERSHIP ON KOSOVO

Ljubljana, 16 May

Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, visited Slovenia for talks on Kosovo with Slovenia's President Janez Drnovšek, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dimitrij Rupel, and Prime Minister Janez Janša. Mr Ahtisaari said that the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo resembled a marathon. After a



PM Janez Janša with Martti Ahtisaari. Photo: Nebojša Tejić

meeting with Mr Rupel Mr Ahtisaari said: "Many kilometres remain ahead of us so don't ask me what my time will be at the finish". The UN special envoy stressed: "It is very important that I have a chance to consult with representatives of the countries from the region, who know the issue very well".

## THE FIRST SLOVENE IN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT; DRNOVŠEK PROPOSES MEETING WITH NAPOLITANO

Rome, 18 May

For the first time in history, a member of Slovenian minority in Italy holds a position in Italian government headed by Romano Prodi. Miloš Budin, an MP for the Ulivo (Olive Tree) alliance and member of the Left Democrats Party was appointed one of the two under-secretaries for European affairs and international trade at the first session of the Prodi cabinet on 17 May. MP Budin said it was important that a member of the Slovenian minority holds a position in Italian government as this helps reduce the deceptive distance between the country and its minority imposed by history. He added that this was a proof of the fact that the minority is fully included in Italy's institutional development.

In an interview for the La Repubblica daily on 18 May, President Drnovšek proposed a meeting with Italian President Giorgio Napolitano as an opportunity for both countries to put an end to historical disputes and turn their attention towards the future in a spirit of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect. Mr Drnovšek was one of the first foreign

state officials to congratulate Mr Napolitano on his election. When asked about his expectations regarding Slovenian-Italian relations, he replied: "As neighbours, we need to foster good relations. The two World Wars and the period after WWII were sad times, but both sides must endeavour to refrain from delving into the past. There are still people who cannot stop talking about past suffering. I believe we should put an end to it and look towards the future."

## SLOVENIA WELCOMES THE REFERENDUM IN MONTENEGRO

Ljubljana, 21 May

Slovenian leadership welcomed the referendum of 21 May, which saw the citizens of Montenegro vote in favour of independence for their country away from the state union with Serbia, and expressed happiness that the process was peaceful. President Drnovšek made an unannounced visit to Montenegro and personally congratulated his counterpart, Filip Vujanović, expressing his hope that Montenegro would successfully continue the process of joining European integrations. Prime Minister Janša welcomed the organisation of the referendum and emphasised that the voters' choice was "clear, and therefore all sides involved must respect it and contribute to its realisation". He also expressed hope that the decision would not cause additional tensions in Serbia and Montenegro. Foreign Minister Rupel asserted his counterpart, Miodrag Vlahović, that Slovenian political leadership is willing to continue its support to a constructive dialogue between Podgorica and Belgrade, and Podgorica and Brussels. He also expressed the wish that collaboration between Slovenia and Montenegro would strengthen further. Mr Rupel said that Slovenia would recognise Montenegro "probably soon", which was subject to co-ordination with the EU. The referendum was also monitored by a delegation of the foreign policy committee of Slovenian National Assembly, while the head of the European Parliament observers was MEP Jelko Kacin.

After the session on 8 June, the Slovenian government sent the following resolution to be discussed and passed by the National Assembly: "The Republic of Slovenia recognises the Republic of Montenegro as an independent and sovereign state." The government proposed that the National Assembly decide on the resolution immediately, after a competent body of the European Union has announced a decision on the recognition of the Republic of Montenegro.

## 22 MAY – SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY DAY

Ljubljana, 22 May

Slovenia commemorated the Slovenian Diplomacy Day, an official recognition of Slovenian diplomats for their achievements before and after Slovenia's independence. On this occasion the foreign ministry organised an open-door day, and Minister Rupel presented Slovenian diplomacy at a press conference. According to Mr Rupel, the most demanding challenge facing Slovenian diplomacy is the preparations for the country's presidency of the EU in 2008,



FM Dimitrij Rupel presented Slovenian diplomacy at a press conference. Photo: Arsen Perić

which will put a significant strain on the entire diplomatic network. This year, Slovenia is a member of the OSCE Troika, and in June it will take over as Human Security Network Chair. Among other tasks of Slovenian diplomacy this year, Mr Rupel mentioned that relations with neighbouring countries and European relations needed more attention. There are currently 445 diplomatic workers employed at the foreign ministry, of which 239 work in internal services and 206 at Slovenia's diplomatic offices abroad. The highest number of Slovenian diplomats, fifty-two, are stationed at the Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. Slovenia has embassies in thirty-seven countries, which are responsible for an additional forty-one countries, and consulates general in six countries.

## SEVEN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS LAUNCH ITER PROJECT

Brussels, 24 May

Seven international partners – the European Union, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and USA – signed an agreement on the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project which is expected to establish nuclear fusion as an energy source of the future. In the next ten years the partners will build a research centre with an experimental thermonuclear reactor in Cadarache, France, and begin research for the commercial production of nuclear fusion. After the agreement was initialled the EU Science and Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, said this was a truly crucial moment for the ITER project and for global scientific

cooperation in general. The Commissioner explained: "The essence of fusion is to tap energy from reactions like those that heat the Sun or the stars. It is environmentally friendly and a long-term answer to problems with the supply of energy we have been currently witnessing". The agreement must now be ratified by all partners – ministers responsible for competitiveness will do this on behalf of the EU sometime in the autumn. The construction of the reactor in Cadarache is expected to start at the beginning of 2007 and cost €4.57 billion, of which forty per cent will be contributed by the EU, and ten per cent by each remaining partner. Twice that amount will be needed to maintain the reactor during its twenty-year operational life. According to Mr Potočnik, the ITER project is a major opportunity for European industry including Slovenia. Negotiations between the partners had taken several years, mainly over the question of location for which both the EU and Japan competed. Eventually, Cadarache in France was selected, while Kaname Ikeda of Japan was assigned to the post of Director-General.

## RECIPROCITY BETWEEN SLO AND EU CANDIDATE COUNTRIES IN PROPERTY MARKET

Ljubljana, 30 May

The National Assembly passed the Law Stipulating Conditions for the Acquisition of Title to Property by Natural Persons and Legal Entities of the European Union Candidate Countries. The law stipulates reciprocity as the prerequisite



Prince Albert II of Monaco and Slovenian President Janez Drnovšek. Photo: Primož Lavre

for purchasing property in Slovenia, thus providing the opportunity for Slovenian citizens and companies to acquire property in those EU candidate countries where purchasing property is subject to the same condition, including Croatia. The aim of this law, which was opposed only by the Slovenian National Party (SNS), is to ensure that the countries that stipulate the principle of reciprocity as the prerequisite for purchasing property (Croatia and Turkey), would open their market to Slovenian citizens in line with their existing legislation.

## PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO VISITS SLOVENIA

Ljubljana, Brdo pri Kranju, Postojna, Piran, Bled, Goriška Brda, 31 May – 1 June

Prince Albert II of Monaco arrived on an official two-day visit to Slovenia on Wednesday, 31 May. First he met his host, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Janez Drnovšek, with whom he discussed strengthening relations between the

countries, and the crisis in Darfur. Prince Albert expressed his support for President Drnovšek's efforts towards solving the crisis.

On the first day of his visit, Prince Albert was also received by the Mayor of Ljubljana, Danica Simšič, and attended a dinner reception at Brdo pri Kranju with his host, President Drnovšek.

On the second day of his visit, Prince Albert visited Postojnska jama, and Piran, where he was taken on a tour of the Marine Biology Station by the Mayor of Piran, Vojka Štular. He expressed strong support for continuing the close collaboration between Monaco and Slovenia on the protection of marine ecosystem.

The Prince continued his visit in Goriška Brda, where he met Prime Minister Janez Janša. They discussed Slovenia's economic development, the country's export potential and ways of increasing tourism revenue, and global humanitarian campaigns, particularly one in Madagascar. Prince Albert then took a tour of Triglav National Park and Bled, and concluded his visit with a reception at Vila Bled, where he presented Pedro Opeka, a Slovenian missionary committed to fighting poverty in Madagascar, a cheque for SIT 36 million.

## SLOVENIA TAKES OVER AS HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK CHAIR

Bangkok, 2 June

After Thailand, Slovenia began its one year term as Chair of the Human Security Network (HSN), a group of like-minded countries dedicated to solving contemporary international issues which pose a direct threat to people's security. Slovenian foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel, who attended the network's eighth ministerial between 1 and 2 June in Bangkok, said that the HSN would play an important role in the newly-founded UN Human Rights Council. He outlined Slovenia's priorities which will include encouraging intercultural dialogue and protecting women and children against violence in armed conflicts. Slovenia will also continue the activities of the HSN aimed at banning landmines and the control of small arms and light weapons. Against the backdrop of the ministerial, Mr Rupel also met his Thai counterpart Kantathi Suphamongkhon to talk about bilateral relations and touch on current challenges in international relations. Mr Rupel emphasised the issue of energy security, intercultural and inter-civilisational dialogue, and international migration. Slovenian foreign minister then met Surakiart Sathirathai, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, and one of the three Asian candidates for the new UN Secretary-General, with whom he discussed the reform process of the UN.

## SLOVENIAN CARDINAL FRANC RODE ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT

Ljubljana, 3 and 4 June

Following an invitation from the Archbishop of Ljubljana and Slovenian Metropolitan, Alojz Uran, Cardinal Rode arrived on a two-day official visit to Slovenia.



The service in St Nicholas' Cathedral gathered numerous members of the clergy, believers and representatives of Slovenia's cultural, business and public life. In his address, Archbishop Uran spoke of a day of great happiness, not only as the day was a celebration of the Whit day, but because his compatriot and guest had recently been appointed Cardinal by the Pope Benedict XVI, which he heartily deserved. He added that the honour for Cardinal Rode is a tribute to the whole Slovenian nation.

During the sermon cardinal Rode said: "I do not accept this much-awaited honour as a sign of benevolence towards me personally, but as a recognition of the Slovenian nation and the Slovenian Church".

Cardinal Rode expressed his national consciousness by saying: "Dear Brothers and Sisters! I cannot stress enough how deeply connected I feel with the Church matters in Slovenia and with the spiritual history of the Slovenian people". He added how pleased he felt at the level of development his homeland has experienced in recent years.

In his sermon Cardinal Rode touched upon Slovenian people's faith, Slovenian natural beauties, so often appreciated by visitors, as well as the decreasing birth-rate in the country.

## HIGH (5.1 PER CENT) ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE FIRST QUARTER

Ljubljana, 9 June

In the first quarter of 2006, economic growth in Slovenia increased by 5.1 per cent compared to the same period last year, one of the highest increases in the last six years. Karmen Hren, head of the national accounts department for the Statistical Office of Slovenia has noted that one of the main characteristics of the first quarter is substantial increase of exports and imports.

Exports have increased in real terms by almost 14 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2005, while imports growth was higher by 12 per cent. The contribution of net exports to economic growth has decreased, and domestic expenditure has become the major source of economic growth as it accounted for 80 per cent of GDP's growth in the first quarter. Gross fixed capital formation, particularly in machinery and equipment, has surged.

If the figures on economic growth are adjusted by seasons and working days, the real increase of economic growth in the first quarter of 2006 stood at 0.8 per cent in comparison to the previous quarter, and 4.7 per cent in comparison with the same quarter of 2005.

The general government gross debt has continued to fall. According to preliminary figures, gross debt amounted to SIT57.07 billion (approx. €237.8 million) in the first quarter of 2006 or 3.5 per cent of the GDP, i.e. 0.8 percentage points less than in the same period last year.

Slovenian Cardinal Franc Rode arrived on an official visit to Slovenia. Photo: Arsen Perić

# WHAT MAKES THE NEWS



Andreja Šonc Simčič, photo: Bobo

## Government and Business Delegation Visit the Russian Federation

**At the end of May, the Prime Minister Janez Janša, accompanied by strong official and business delegations, visited the Russian Federation, where he met with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov. Both PM Janša and President Putin said they were pleased with business cooperation between the two countries, after the trade in goods reached the planned one billion dollars, and expressed support for Russian investment in the Slovenian economy. After his meeting with PM Fradkov, Mr Janša said that the repayment of Russia's clearing debt would be concluded in the next five years.**

At a press conference after the meeting between the two PMs, Mr Janša said that an agreement on the repayment of \$129 million of clearing debt to Slovenia, which the Russian Federation had inherited from the Soviet Union was near, and that the debt would be repaid in the next five years. Both PMs agreed that there are ample opportunities to increase trade in goods; however, it needs to be diversified. According to Mr Janša, the governments of both countries are planning to double the trade in goods and services over the next few years. Among the possibilities for strengthening

collaboration, the Slovenian PM emphasised state-of-the-art technologies, tourism, banking and insurance.

At his meeting with the Slovenian PM, President Putin also expressed support for the diversification of trade in goods, which is currently limited to a narrow range of products. He said he was pleased that the Slovenian PM was accompanied by such a strong business delegation (representatives of 98 companies), which will give a new impetus to business cooperation. Mr Putin also expressed satisfaction that trade in goods between the two countries had reached one billion dollars, which, given the population of Slovenia, is the highest amount per capita in Europe.

PM Janša called on Russian business to invest in Slovenia's economy. According to the PM, the second wave of privatisation of Slovenia's state-owned companies in the steel industry, telecommunications, energy and the financial sectors would prove interesting to Russian investors, while in addition, there are also ample opportunities for Russian investment in logistics, steel manufacturing and electronics,

and in commercialising scientific and technological projects. Mr Janša added that new business opportunities had emerged recently, particularly in the energy industry, which the Slovenian government would strive to see bear fruit.

The PM also said that the Russian Chapel on Mt Vršič, dedicated to Russian POWs who died there during the First World War, was an important link between the two countries. The ceremony on the occasion of the Chapel's 90th anniversary will also be attended by Sergey Mironov, Chairman of the Russian Federation Council. Mr Janša added that Slovenia would endeavour to continue successful cultural cooperation also through the Forum of Slavic Cultures, which aims to promote cultural exchange between all 'Slavic-speaking' countries.

PM Janša also presented his hosts with Slovenia's preparations for the presidency of the EU in the first half of 2008, with one of the tasks being the continuation of strategic partnership between the EU and the Russian Federation. He added that Europe cannot be successful without Russia, and that Slovenia is counting on Russian support during its EU tenure.

Several business agreements were signed during the visit: a memorandum on cooperation in the agriculture and foodstuffs industry, a protocol on cooperation in the construction industry, an agreement on cooperation in mutual assistance in customs affairs, and a memorandum between the courts of audits. The countries also signed a programme on cultural, scientific and educational cooperation for the period 2006-2008, and an agreement on cooperation between the defence ministries.

Mr Janša was accompanied on his official visit to the Russian Federation by Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, Defence Minister Karel Erjavec, Economics Minister Andrej Vizjak, and Agriculture, Forestry and Food Minister Marija Lukačič.

The PM also met Boris Gryzlov, Speaker of the Duma, and Yuri Luzkhov, Mayor of Moscow, and opened both a Slovenian-Russian conference and the 'Pyotr I' Hotel in the centre of Moscow, which was renovated by Slovenian companies.







## Centre for New Ideas

Andreja Šonc Simčič, photo: Primož Lavre

**On 23 May, Jable Castle saw the grand opening of the Centre for the European Perspective (CEP). The Centre will provide substantive and technical support to the countries with the European perspective to succeed in meeting the demands of the integration process. In his speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dimitrij Rupel, said that the future of the countries of South-Eastern Europe lay within the EU. "This Centre was established to facilitate the development of new ideas for dealing with some of the issues the EU, and Europe in general, is facing today," said Mr Rupel. "Therefore, the CEP will primarily focus on future enlargement, strengthening infrastructure, democracy, and institutions, and also on how to ensure security, economic growth, social development, and protection of human rights."**

According to the Minister, the current task which lies ahead of politicians, experts, and the newly-founded CEP is to find the right balance between European integration, EU enlargement, and a common Europe. He stressed, however, that finding the balance would not be easy. "Slovenia has been given the opportunity to become a country which, with dedication, can offer support to those still waiting for the green light to join the EU, and to those aiming to strengthen their relations with the EU or individual member states," concluded the foreign minister.

The Prime Minister, Janez Janša, who also attended the opening, said in his speech that the idea to open the Centre was a logical consequence of Slovenia's foreign policy priorities, i.e. accession to the EU and NATO. Upon joining Euro-Atlantic organisations Slovenia defined as one of its key priorities supporting countries wishing to join the EU.

According to the PM, the CEP is the first institution of its kind in the Republic of Slovenia, and it also brings together a number of concepts which had been developed by government, non-governmental, and academic circles since Slovenia became an independent country. The CEP is the result of endeavours to establish a national centre for defining the key strategies of Slovenia's foreign policy. "So

far, strategic consideration about Slovenia's foreign policy priorities have been limited to the initiatives of individuals from political and academic spheres, but we did not have a specialised institution which would cover this important area systematically," added the PM.

The PM believes that no-one has the right to erect new barriers between European nations in the name of national self-interest. Only a united Europe is a strong Europe, and only as such will it preserve its role in globalisation.

Peace, security, political stability, economic development, and social cohesion in the countries of South-Eastern Europe are not only strategically important for Slovenia and the region, but also for the EU and the entire international community.

"It gives me great pleasure that numerous esteemed foreign politicians, diplomats, and academics have accepted our invitation to cooperate in the CEP's activities. The initiative for the Centre came from a small country. A country which is not indifferent to the problems its closest and more distant neighbours face in the process of joining the EU. Slovenia is also aware that the success of the Centre depends mainly on inter-state solidarity on a broader, pan-European level. We believe that our initiative will be welcomed by our EU partners, and the entire international community," concluded the Prime Minister.

The opening of the CEP began with a founding meeting of the CEP's advisory board, which comprises international political figures and is chaired by former Norwegian foreign minister, Jan Petersen.

Opening ceremony was also attended by the foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mladen Ivanić, the foreign minister of Montenegro, Miodrag Vlahović, the Hungarian foreign minister, Ferenc Somogyi, the Macedonian foreign minister, Ilinka Mitreva, the foreign minister of Serbia and Montenegro, Vuk Drašković, the Croatian State Secretary for European Integration, Marija Pejčinović Burić, the former German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the former US ambassador to Slovenia, Victor Jackovich, the former Norwegian foreign minister, Jan Petersen, and the former foreign minister of Serbia and Montenegro, Goran Svilanović.



## Orientation Week at the Bled School of Management on its Anniversary

Vesna Žarkovič, photo: IEDC Archive

**IEDC – Bled School of Management, which was the first institution dedicated to management development in Central and Eastern Europe, celebrates twenty years of existence this year. For this reason, it was decided to introduce a broader audience to the school in its own unique environment. Therefore, the school organised orientation days in the last week of May accompanied by lectures and cultural events.**

Since 1986, more than 35,000 students from fifty-seven countries have participated in various IEDC courses. The school has become an internationally known and recognized institution and has received international accreditation by the Association of MBAs (AMBA) for the postgraduate courses. As many as 70 per cent of all students come from abroad, with over fifty different countries represented, which is a percentage hard to beat for other schools in Europe. IEDC – Bled School of Management will celebrate its anniversary with various events held in students' home countries. The school will also host two big international conferences in Bled, one in June and another in October. The celebration will reach its culmination on 20 October with a big official conference entitled 'Leadership for a Better World'. Over 500 renowned guests from all over the world will attend the conference, including business and political leaders, IEDC friends and graduates, top lecturers and managers from the business world, public and non-governmental organisations. They will all be considering key future challenges and what the institutions they manage, themselves personally and all of us can do for a brighter future. The world-famous management guru and leading expert in change management Dr Ichak Adizes will be one of the lecturers. A round table with renowned professors and businessmen from Slovenia and abroad will also take place.

On this occasion IEDC - Bled School of Management will publish a book entitled *Leadership for a Better World*, which will reflect the views of experts who have cooperated with IEDC – Bled School of Management, and award five people who have contributed most to the founding and success of IEDC.

In the past twenty years, IEDC - Bled School of Management has become one of the leading business education institutions in Europe. It is an international centre of excellence and is an important meeting place, as well as an environment which encourages managers to learn and think creatively. The Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN) and the Europe Leadership Centre (ELC) both have headquarters at IEDC. The school currently has eight graduate clubs in various European countries. Leading world media houses have reported on IEDC in the past few years and many famous businessmen and politicians have paid a visit to IEDC, including George Soros, Guenter Verheugen, Dr Janez Potočnik, Dr Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Prince Rdu Hohenzollern-Veringen, Dr Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, Tom Peters and many others. On the occasion of the school's 10th anniversary, the now deceased world-leading management thinker Peter Drucker, gave a lecture via satellite.

Honouring its 20th anniversary, IEDC-Bled School of Management will organise many other events in the year 2006. The event 'Trends in European Management and Success Stories' (1 and 2 June in Bled, within the framework of the European Leadership Centre) was led by professor Pierre Casse, Dean of the Berlin School of Creative Leadership and world-renowned lecturer in management. Among the most distinguished speakers were: Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and former Vice Chancellor of Austria, Pauline van der Meer Mohr, Senior Executive Vice President, ABN AMRO Bank, Josefina Topalli, Speaker in the Albanian Parliament, Alain Heurtebise, Vice President, Exalead, USA and France, Roberto Siagri, President, EuroTech, Italy, Pavel Teplukhin, President and CEO, Troika Dialog Wealth Management, Russia, and Valter Trevisani, Assistant General Manager, Assicurazioni Generali, Italy, Mark Stoddard, Associate Editor, Business Leadership Review, Great Britain and various managers from Slovenia and abroad.

In May, IEDC – Bled School of Management organised orientation days, accompanied by lectures and cultural events. Since the celebration of IEDC is also a celebration of the town of Bled, twenty scholarships for different IEDC courses taking place throughout the year will be awarded to the people of Bled in 2006. With more than forty Bled locals, the lecture 'Effective and Efficient Manager' held by professor Danica Purg, IEDC Dean and Director, was the best attended event of the Orientation Week. Professor Purg presented basic team roles and stressed the fact that in order for any team to be successful, the right combination of roles is essential. She also spoke about priorities and brought to attention the fact that managers spend too much time dealing with activities that are not important but urgent. At the end, the visitors had the chance to test their teamwork abilities by taking a test. Afterwards, they continued their discussions at a reception on the school's terrace.



Jubilee of a Great Academic Tradition

## Still Young After 80 Years

Jože Osterman, photo: Tone Tomšič Academic Choir Archive

**It was certainly a beautiful and memorable sight. At the end of the special concert held in honour of the 80th anniversary of the Tone Tomšič Academic Choir in the packed Gallus Hall of Cankarjev Dom, the nation's finest cultural hall, the audience stood to its feet and erupted into a frenetic applause. They were acknowledging not only the singers' excellence but also the fact that they had proven themselves to be excellent successors to one of Slovenia's brighter cultural traditions – the work and existence of the academic choir.**

The Academic choir is no ordinary choir. It is nowhere near the oldest of choirs and it is far from being the most numerous. Without a doubt, one might claim that at this point in time, it is the best choir – but that could change overnight. However, there is no doubt that the Academic Choir has the best possible blend of the characteristics that any top artistic corpus should have; famous founders, a proud history infused with great patriotism, youth and innovation which decorated it through all the periods of active life, and numerous awards collected all over the world, reaffirming the choir's quality. It is this synthesis that makes the choir a national institution worthy of our deepest respect.

The choir was established in 1926, only seven years after the first Slovenian university was founded, and represents an important part of the university's identity. It was established by France Marolt, an esteemed researcher of Slovenian musical and folklore tradition. In the beginning it was active as a men's choir, while the girls didn't come along until 1939. During the Italian occupation of World War II, the choir gave a stirring concert and then declared cultural silence, with the majority of its members joining the ranks of the partisan resistance. In 1946 the choir sang again in a mixed formation, adding to its list of participants the name of Tone Tomšič, a young leader of the anti-occupation resistance movement. From then on, it was led by many famous conductors, under the auspices of whom, the choir received some of the most prestigious choir awards; three grand prizes at the Grand Prix in Tours, France, five at the Seghizzi festival in Gorizia, Italy, one in Varna, Bulgaria, and one at the European Grand Prix competition in Arezzo, Italy. Since 2004 it has been led by Urša Lah, the first

female conductor in the history of the choir, who is continuing fabulously the heritage left by her predecessors.

Being a member of a choir is no laughing matter; it takes hard work and demands a great deal of the choir members' leisure time and determination. However, for those who are determined and persevere are rewarded in the end, as membership in the choir is a special honour and confirmation of maturity as a human being. It is therefore not surprising that the membership register includes the names of many esteemed scientists, artists, ministers and mayors, company directors and headmasters, i.e. the elite members of Slovenian society. To date around 1,600 singers have sung in the choir, and they all still share a special bond. The choir is a great family of singers, made up of all generations and even today, many of them still sing in other Slovenian choirs. Although academic traditions are not numerous in Slovenia, this choir is perhaps the most solid among them.

As is the case in other first-rate choirs around the world, this choir's present work hangs somewhere between tradition and avant-garde. The choir is not only the finest interpreter of Slovenian musical heritage, but also actively encourages the creation of contemporary musical literature. For its 80th anniversary concert the choir performed exclusively Slovenian choral works. More than half of the selected works had never before been performed in concert! Can you imagine the motivation felt by a composer who knows that his work will be performed for the first time by the best Slovenian choir?

In a newspaper interview, Urša Lah, the young, pleasant and ambitious choir director, described the energy of her choir with the following words: "To take over a choir like this one, a choir with such great tradition and avant-garde at the same time, was a task of challenge and responsibility. Today, I see the choir as a body of intellectual power, as it consists of students from various faculties who are good at what they do and are prepared to give a lot of themselves; most of them are also very hard-working and successful in their studies.

All this drive and ambition rubs off on the conductor as well, so that they can also be the best in what they do. It is also a source of motivation for the conductor to constantly seek new knowledge, improvement, and try to develop their personality as much as possible..."

# WHAT MAKES THE NEWS



Text and photo: Andreja Comino

## Father Pedro Opeka, Missionary

his life to helping the poorest. As a white man, Pedro was given sideways glances at first, because the white man is master there and one is expected to serve him, not have him help you and live among you as an equal. However, the people from the edge of society soon accepted him as one of their own. "I didn't preach of a better life. I simply began living as they did, and they soon began to follow, wishing to lead a better life themselves," Pedro recalls. Together they build a clinic, some modest but sturdy stone houses, sporting grounds and other valuable structures, restoring hope to the people from the edge of society.

The humanitarian cause ("I did not choose to become a priest, I was chosen for it.") drove Pedro forward, to Madagascar's capital city of Antananarivo, where more than a quarter of a million people lived in extreme poverty on a public garbage dump. Along with his colleagues, he began to fight alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution and gambling, which were destroying the fringe population already stricken by poverty. "Many of them spent all the money they earned by selling useful things others had discarded on alcohol, gambling or drugs, forgetting their children who often died because of their parents' neglect," Pedro tells us. News of his success and cause soon spread across Madagascar's borders. Even as far as Monaco.

## International Foundation

On a territory dominated primarily by numerous banks, there are also quite a few charity organizations. One such organization, in which the Prince is especially active, is APPO (Aide au Pere Pedro Opeka – Aid for Father Pedro Opeka). Together with other individuals and organizations they raise funds for Pedro's Akamasoa (good friends) society, dedicated to helping the poorest people of Madagascar. During his recent visit to Slovenia, the Prince donated a cheque for €150,000 to Pedro Opeka. Monaco's charity donors finance the salaries of 150 teachers providing education for over 7,000 children and adults. This is only a part of the humanitarian aid with which the Prince hopes to increase the global recognition of Monaco, known as a meeting place of the famous, wealthy and powerful. The Prince aims to increase the world reputation of the pocket-sized state with a population of 32,000 in various ways. One of the ways is by endorsing Pedro's humanitarian cause. Prince Albert has travelled to Madagascar many times and seen for himself how the money was being used. In recognition of Monaco's aid, many buildings across Madagascar built with the money from the principality are named after members of the Grimaldi dynasty. Pedro and the Prince have formed a close friendship over the years, which they both cherish greatly.

Pedro Opeka has helped the poor in Madagascar for over forty years. His success is enormous – he has helped build over 3,400 houses and saved more than a quarter of a million people from extreme poverty.

**During a recent visit to Slovenia, the entourage of Prince Albert II of Monaco to Slovenia attracted a lot of attention. Among forty special guests, most of them wealthy businesspeople and politicians, one stood out in particular. Although modestly dressed and wearing a tarnished cross around his neck, he was an equal among his peers. This was the Slovenian missionary Father Pedro Opeka, who has been helping the poor for over thirty-five years in Madagascar, an idyllic but poverty-stricken island.**

It was decades ago that the country of Madagascar abandoned its people, who found themselves in poverty unimaginable in the Western world of today. Many people made a living by begging or rummaging through garbage. When the missionary Pedro Opeka, born in Argentina to Slovenian parents, first travelled to Madagascar on a brief visit in 1970, he knew that this was the country where he would spend his lifetime helping the less fortunate. And it would take many more years than that to succeed. Six years later, Pedro returned to Madagascar and went to Vaingaindrano, a village in the southern part of the island, where he dedicated

# A Warrior of Hope

## Plans for the Future

Although Pedro will celebrate his sixtieth birthday in two years, he is not yet considering retiring and moving to some other place. "There is so much left to do, there are so many impoverished souls we still need to help that I simply have no time to think about myself," said the man who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, and received numerous awards around the world. Pedro receives invitations from all parts of the world, asking him to come and show them his way of fighting poverty.

Pedro says that the most important thing is to give the people an education. Only with education will they have a real chance for a future. School system developed by Pedro is the most successful system in Madagascar. More than ninety percent of all pupils and students finish their education in professions like masonry, stonemasonry, carpentry, teaching and others. The Father, or Pater, as he is called in Madagascar, is particularly proud of one person from the garbage dump who received a grant and is on his way to finishing his doctorate at the Paris University of Sorbonne. In addition to material aid,

Pedro feels it is very important to offer moral support to the people, to offer consolation when they are anguished by drugs and alcohol. "Sometimes the word of gospel is enough to make them go forth and find the strength to keep them from falling back into the abyss of despair and poverty," says Pedro, who has learned to distinguish the truly impoverished from impostors and fraudsters over the years. Even so, he is still occasionally swindled – but he has learned to forgive, because helping the truly impoverished outweighs all the bad experiences.

## Life in a Book

Just before Pedro's visit to Slovenia, the Mohorjeva Družba publishing company published the book *Bojevnik upanja* ("A Warrior of Hope"), a detailed account of Pedro's life and his reflections. Of course, he did not write it himself, being simply too busy for something like that, but he had help from Carole Escaravage and Gregory Rung. The book also reveals Pedro's hidden passions: in his villages, Sundays are dedicated to sports.

As a naturalized Argentinean, he has embraced the love for sport and he passes it on to the people he is helping. So, playing football is his favorite Sunday pastime apart from holding the service. During that time, he forgets all his cares and worries about whether aid will arrive in time or whether it will be delayed due to various bureaucratic complications. But hope dies last, and the strength and resolve of Pedro Opeka to help his people from the garbage dump are immense.



## Robert Lešnik, Car Designer

Andreja Comino, photo: Iztok Dimc

ROBERT LEŠNIK, WHO COMES FROM MARIBOR, WAS BORN IN 1971 AND HAS LIVED IN GERMANY FOR SIXTEEN YEARS. HE IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SLOVENIAN DESIGNERS, HAVING DESIGNED A NUMBER OF THE LATEST VOLKSWAGEN CAR MODELS, INCLUDING THE NEW PASSAT B6 AND THE EOS. BESIDES THESE TWO, HE IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXTERIOR DESIGN OF A NEW CAR, WHICH WILL SOON START BEING MANUFACTURED. WHICH CAR THAT WILL BE IS, AT THIS MOMENT, THE HOTTEST SECRET IN THE BUSINESS. MOST DESIGNERS CAN ONLY DREAM OF THE SUCCESS ROBERT HAS ALREADY HAD BUT FOR HIM, THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

## A Triumph at

Robert, who is a highly successful but modest man, used the following words to describe his profession: "A car is one of the most demanding products of industrial design. It can take years to design, and construct its separate parts into an end product. Afterwards, an engine is put into the car, then checks are made to ensure it meets environmental and safety regulations, before it is tested in the factory and finally tested on the road. The designer's goal, however, is always to design a fresh and attractive product, which is a challenge that we, as car designers, face on a daily basis. More than ninety percent of our work is never realised and you have to be very lucky for the car that you have designed to get chosen." Robert only returns to Slovenia once or twice a year for the most important holidays. The last time he was here was to visit the Magdalena International Festival of Creative Communication in Maribor where a lot of people came to listen to his interesting lecture.

### Forced to Go Abroad

Ever since he was a boy, Robert knew that he would one day be a car designer, although he did not know a lot about the profession. After he finished the Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering, he wanted to enrol in the industrial design course at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, where a part of the course includes car design. "I tried to enrol three times but I always failed the entrance exams. While waiting for another exam, I did my military service and worked for a car remodelling company. When I failed the entrance exam for the third time, I decided to go abroad,"

Robert Lešnik, the most successful Slovenian industrial designer.

remembers Robert. He passed the entrance exam at the Pforzheim School of Engineering the first time he took it. Pforzheim School of Engineering, where it is also possible to study other design courses including fashion design, is the only university in Europe offering the course of transport vehicle design. He was awarded a scholarship immediately, which enabled him to live comfortably without having to worry about day-to-day survival.

## Being Abroad is Natural

"I spent all my time studying hard so success came very quickly. Volkswagen accepted my application for an apprenticeship at their company, where I worked throughout my studies and got a job immediately after I graduated," said Robert. He has already been employed at Europe's largest car factory for seven years. He works as one of the team leaders of external design and has received many international awards for his work. He travels a lot and has just recently returned to Germany from California where he lived with his wife, who is a fashion designer, and their two-year-old son. Robert worked at the Volkswagen studio in Los Angeles and came back because his third car was chosen for serial production.

many years of hard work. There are always many projects going on at the same time, because one never knows which one will end up being successful.

Robert is happy because his dreams have come true. He does not think of his job as work but more as a hobby, which is why spending long days in the office is not difficult for him. "I never divide my time into work time and leisure time, as it is impossible to do in creative professions. Improving and altering a design is constantly on your mind when you are a designer and the brain is switched on at all times," said Robert, who is happiest when he comes home to his wife and son.

Although Robert works in the car industry, he is not a typical man when it comes to cars. "I drive a Passat, a company car, and my wife drives a five-year-old Alfa Romeo. I see my car as a means of transport and not in terms of horse power and cubic metres," said Robert. He also said that he was happy with his car and does not have a wish to own a Ferrari or some other sports car, which men usually want to show off their power. At the end of the interview, I asked him where he felt most independent and confident. He immediately said that when he goes mountain biking and he races up hill and down dale. To find that perfect hill, he sometimes drives 100 km. However, even when he is on his bike, he still thinks about future car lines and models.

# Volkswagen

"Half of the designers in Volkswagen are German, while the other half are foreigners. I am happy because my work has been appreciated ever since I worked here as a student and I have never come across any prejudice or had any difficulties because I am not German," said Robert, who can, naturally, speak fluent English and German. Because his wife is German, the only time he speaks Slovene these days is with his parents, who live in Maribor, and his sister, who is five years his junior.

## Car Manufacture is a Complicated Project

As Robert has a very important position, we would expect him to go to work wearing a suit and a tie, but this is not the case. "Car designers move around constantly and have things to do all the time. After having sketched the car on the basis of the demands made by the marketing department and buyers, and after meeting all the technical demands, the car is then put into real measurements. Right at the very end, we design a car in its natural size using a special kind of clay. You can imagine how messy this work can sometimes be," said Robert and laughingly added that he had just given us a very basic and simplified description of the car manufacture process which is otherwise a very long procedure involving

"Car manufacture from the idea to the end product is a complicated process," said Robert.



# WHAT MAKES THE NEWS



Wine making is the most typical activity in Goriška brda and wines from this region are famous all over the world. Rebula, Tokay, Pinot, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet are the most typical varieties. In Dobrovo, which is also an administrative centre of Goriška brda, the Dobrovo wine cellar has a very long tradition. Over the last few years, private winemakers have been successful abroad. Their boutique wines excite the guests' palates in the world's most prestigious restaurants.

Due to its climate, Goriška brda is not only abundant with good grapes, but is also suitable for growing different fruit trees. Cherries, which the locals learn how to pick when they are only children, are by far the most famous fruit of Goriška brda. Growing cherry trees has such a long tradition here that every year, at the beginning of June, the locals organise a cherry festival to honour this ripe red fruit. The festival, which attracts thousands of visitors every year, dates back more than forty years.

The cherry festival programme is always very varied and includes ethnological and cultural events as well as entertainment and business events. As in so many years before, the entertainment part of the festival was held in Dobrovo, while the cultural part took place in Šmartno and included an art exhibition featuring various artists. The events of the festival included the traditional carriage procession, the choosing of the Cherry Queen, expert cherry appreciation and a cherry exhibition as well as a cycling marathon from Ljubljana to Maribor. The festival reached its culmination with the traditional procession in which the locals presented the history of the Goriška brda region.

## The Goriška brda Cherry Festival

Polona Prešeren, photo: STO

**Goriška brda, which is situated in the westernmost part of Slovenia, is a very special region lying on the right bank of the Soča River. The warmth coming from the Adriatic Sea and the gentle breeze from the Alps make this part of the country perfect for vine growing, which is why Goriška brda is an area known for its unique wines, available in the best restaurants of New York, London, Milan, Berlin, Tokyo and Moscow. Despite such success, the doors of the Goriška brda winemakers are always open to visitors.**

There are 5000 people living on the hills leading to the Friuli Lowlands, which are marked by a unique Mediterranean climate. Most locals live in pretty villages with churches topping the hills, surrounded by vineyards and orchards. The scenery looks like a small paradise, created by the diligent locals who have had to be very resourceful at times, since decades ago connections with other parts of the country were quite poor. Although this is no longer the case, the locals have remained hard working and resourceful people who pride themselves on their many unique customs. Because of their strong work ethic, the local people produce top quality wines and fruit, which were once sold as far away as Vienna, while today there is not a Slovenian market that does not stock their famous produce.







**Janez Janša,**

**the Prime Minister:**

**“We have made  
the right decision.”**

Polona Prešeren, photo: Primož Lavre



**JANEZ JANŠA IS INTRICATELY TIED WITH SLOVENIA. HE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE. THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA HAS COME FROM BEING A DISSIDENT, WHICH RALLIED THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC IN THE END OF THE 1980S, THEN DEFENCE MINISTER IN THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT DURING THE TEN-DAY WAR, TO BEING THE PRIME MINISTER. HE IS FOCUSED ON THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE, ON MEETING CHALLENGES OF THE PROPOSED STRUCTURAL REFORMS, AND ON SLOVENIA'S PRESIDENCY OF THE EU.**

**One of the turning points which gave impetus to Slovenia's independence process is also thought to be your arrest and trial in a military court in 1988. How do you see these events now?**

Looking back, fifteen years later, I see these events as belonging to a known historical context, as events which had particular, but dramatically positive consequences for Slovenia. None of these events could have been foreseen back then. When Slovenian secret police, that is the State Security Service arrested me in the end of May 1988 and handed me over to the repressive Yugoslav People's Army, under the instructions of the League of Communists of Slovenia, my life came to a halt for a while. My life was limited to a solitary few square metres, with no running water or toilet. The same happened to Ivan Borštner and David Tasić.

**Your arrest spurred the masses, and mass demonstrations took place. Was this a step toward democratisation of Slovenian society?**

Of course! Even though most of the people in the streets probably did not believe that changes would happen so quickly, the main focus was on the fight for human rights. However, this could not be substantiated in a one-party system. Consequently, the fight for respecting human rights was in essence also a fight for political freedoms and for bringing down a one-party communist rule.

**In 1990 first democratic elections took place in Slovenia. You ran as a candidate of the Slovenian Democratic Union, were elected MP, and became the defence minister in the first democratic government. Then independence period followed.**

That was a crucial and momentous period. After the spring turmoil in Slovenia the Slovenian citizens had an opportunity, for the first time, to democratically express their will in elections and Slovenia elected its first democratic government.

The Demos government did all that it could under the circumstances. The contribution of Dr Jože Pučnik, the leader of Demos, was particularly significant. He is the father of Slovenian statehood. Without his wisdom, his personal history and deep belief that the Slovenes are a state-building nation, the situation would have been much more difficult. He knew we had to persevere when most were giving up.

Many people, at home and abroad, doubted that establishing sovereignty and independence was sensible. I am more than convinced that in the past fifteen years it has been proven many times that we made the right choice.

**The celebration on the occasion of independence had just ended when YPA's tanks set off to the streets. The ten-day war was a great trial for the newly-established state, and for you as defence minister.**

When YPA's tanks targeted the Slovenian nation, many firm supporters renounced socialism. Unfortunately not everyone; for example, the editorial staff of Dnevnik

newspaper, some editors of Mladina magazine, a part of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and a part of the Union of the Association of the War Veterans and the Participants of the National Liberation Struggle welcomed their interference or criticised the Slovenian government, which headed the resistance. As the overwhelming majority decided for resistance at the plebiscite, these examples of collaboration with the aggressor did not yield any major consequences. Then, we had to take decisions, which were not easy to make overnight. Actually, it was first a personal decision from each of us who participated in the independence and defence projects, and our answer was a common one. In those days, in the hardest moments for our country and its people, we could not turn to anyone. We had to ensure by ourselves that the results of the plebiscite would be securely implemented. The war in Slovenia was not lead by Slovenian generals, who were on the other side, or were retired or simply hiding, but by much lower-ranking officers, who, however, were more dedicated, courageous, and determined.

**After your tenure of defence minister ended, you spent years in the opposition. How did you feel when you became Prime Minister after an overwhelming victory at the elections in autumn 2004?**

I had mixed feelings. I was very pleased and glad, but at the same time I felt a great deal of responsibility. Even then,

immediately after the elections in autumn 2004, I did not promise one hundred thousand new jobs or a very high level of economic growth, nor a quick increase in salaries and pensions. In such a position one cannot do such things overnight. I did promise, however, that I would put every effort into running the country in line with the Constitution, to manage it efficiently, fairly, and justly, and to improve conditions which would facilitate sustainable development of individuals, entrepreneurship and culture.

**How do you see Slovenia's achievements after fifteen years of Slovenian state?**

As a young country, Slovenia has achieved very much; she has joined the EU and NATO, and will introduce the euro in 2007. New business, scientific, and study opportunities are arising at home and abroad. In the past, Slovenes achieved consensus on opting for their own state and also about the EU accession. Now we need to achieve consensus on our future. There are strategic, positive circumstances, which could facilitate sustainable development and growth. The future is much more predictable than it has ever been. It would be a great shame if we could not take advantage of this historic opportunity, which is why we need to reach a basic level of consensus. I believe we have come closer to achieving this goal by signing the Partnership for Development.

On the fifteenth anniversary of Slovenia's independence we



saw an epilogue to the disintegration of the former SFRY – Montenegro's decision for independence. I remember the fervent statement of a YPA's Lieutenant Colonel, who yelled at me during questioning, what did Slovenes believe they would achieve with their 'bravado'. Literally, he said: "Even if all Slovenes resist and we kill all of you, Yugoslavia's population will be lower by only eight per cent, but she will be stronger without you." What blindness and what a high price millions of people had to pay. We can be glad that we made the right choice at the right time.

**On 1 January 2007 we will introduce the euro. This means Slovenia has healthy public finance and solid economy. However, which measures would need to be taken to achieve development impetus and a better future for Slovenia?**

Despite macro-economic achievements Slovenia's competitiveness has not been developing fast enough. If we wish to boost economic growth and our success in the foreign markets, we need to carry out structural reforms, which we proposed within the Framework of Economic and Social Reforms. Slovenia needs to establish a different balance between the economic efficiency of the market, and the social responsibility of individuals and the partner state. To facilitate faster progress towards the most developed EU countries, the system's parameters need to be changed. We need to provide a better institutional development environment and stimulate individuals and companies to be more active and to invest more in quality. Good work and management should be rewarded, while the younger generations should have access to education of the highest quality possible.

**In the past fifteen years, Slovenia's path has sometimes been strewn with obstacles and challenges: the efforts towards gaining international recognition, OSCE chairmanship, EU and NATO memberships. Slovenia is currently in the midst of intense preparations for EU presidency. This is a great challenge for a country, which is in fact a novice in the European arena. How is Slovenia preparing herself for this challenge?**

Slovenia is the first new EU member state to be entrusted with EU presidency in the first half of 2008, which is a great recognition and also a great responsibility. This task, however, is not coincidental. We fulfil the criteria of the Stability and Growth Pact, we can adopt the euro and by 2007 at the latest, we will join the Schengen area. One of the most important tasks of Slovenia is to show the founding members that new members can be successful as well. This is what we will try to prove during our presidency. We started the preparations thoroughly and soon enough, at the beginning of last year. We have established all major organisational structures. Our cooperation with Germany and Portugal, with which we are preparing a joint eighteen-month programme is very good.

**Therefore it seems that Slovenia has fulfilled most of the foreign-policy goals, put forward after independence.**



**What will the future foreign-policy priorities be? Perhaps to play a cohesive role in the region?**

Slovenia will continue to put special emphasis on the relations with the EU's neighbours and particularly the Western Balkan states, which is also what the other members expect. At the same time she will remain involved in all other areas and regions where the EU is assuming a more important role, and we will take over our share of responsibility for global stability. We have been participating in the EU's civil and military crisis operations and have contributed within our power to achieving millennium development goals. We will continue our contribution to strengthening and expanding the dialogue between the EU and its strategic partners, for example the USA and Russia. The EU can equally establish itself as a pillar of global stability, peace, and progress, provided that it continues the policy of internal cohesiveness, strengthening common core beliefs, open-door policy, and the policy of establishing its own forces to respond to crisis situations; strengthens the historic strategic alliance with the USA, the trans-Atlantic cooperation, and assumes the role of an equal partner; gradually forms a long-term strategic economic and political cooperation with the Russian Federation.

**The Scent of Russian Oil and Gas**

Last month in Slovenia revolved mainly around attracting Russian (and other foreign) investors.

It began with the visit of Vagit Alekperov, Member of the Board of Directors and President of OAO Lukoil, on 18 May, who

company, Gazprom. They discussed Slovenia's proposal to sign a long-term contract for the supply of natural gas. Mr Miller reiterated his interest in collaborating in the privatisation of the only Slovenian refinery, the Nafta Lendava company, and in the construction of a transit pipeline



The Nafta Lendava company. Photo: Miško Kranjec

discussed the possibilities of Lukoil's investment in Slovenian enterprises with Prime Minister Janez Janša and the Minister of the Economy, Andrej Vizjak. Lukoil representatives had expressed interest in entering the Slovenian market already at their visit to Slovenia in November last year. According to Minister Vizjak, the Russians were at that time interested in entering the ownership structure of Petrol. Alekperov confirmed the company's interest in strategic cooperation with Slovenia, particularly with the companies Nafta Lendava, Luka Koper (shares of which are designated LKPG on the Ljubljana Stock Exchange), and Petrol (PETG). Mr Janša agreed to the proposed cooperation, but stressed that concrete decisions were the domain of the business sector.

**Gazprom talks to high-ranking Slovenian officials**

During the PM's official visit to Moscow, Minister Vizjak met with Alexey Miller, Chairman of the Management Committee of the world's biggest oil

that would run through Slovenia to Italy. Gazprom is also interested in entering the Slovenian market as a retailer; however, according to Minister Vizjak, this remains subject to further discussion. Talks between Slovenia and Gazprom continued in June at the 9th Annual General Meeting of the European Business Congress chaired by Mr Miller.

**Drnovšek and Chair of Gazprom on the transit pipeline through Slovenia**

Against the backdrop of the 10th St Petersburg International Economic Forum, Slovenian President, Janez Drnovšek, met with Mr Miller on 13 June. They discussed the possibility of constructing a transit pipeline that would run across Slovenia to Italy. Mr Drnovšek is keen on the idea, particularly as it would "eliminate the need for the problematic LNGs in the Gulf of Trieste."

The Slovenian President also met with Valentina Matvienko, Governor of Saint-Petersburg, to discuss business

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cooperation, specifically in tourism and the construction of infrastructure. Drnovšek was one of the honorary speakers at the opening of the Forum dedicated to the current challenges of globalisation and development issues. In his address to over 3,000 participants, he stressed the need for 'liberalism with a human face', sustainable development, and the conservation of energy, which, in his view, includes the struggle against climate change. In his statement to the Slovenian press, Mr Drnovšek said the trends were changing in this direction, and an increasing proportion of the business sector was aware of this.

**Slovenian Capital Market Day in Frankfurt**

At the beginning of June in Frankfurt, representatives of Slovenia's six most successful companies and brokerage houses were looking for foreign portfolio investors. Participating companies were the prime market issuers of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange (LJSE): Gorenje (GRVG), Intereuropa (IEKG), Krka



Marko Simoneti, CEO of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange. Photo: Domen Grögl

(KRKG), Luka Koper (LKPG), Mercator (MELR) and Merkur (MER), while the brokerage houses included Ilirika, Nova Ljubljanska banka, Perspektiva, and Publikum. Their representatives met with potential investors at a number of individual meetings.

“By promoting our activities in European financial centres, we seek to increase recognition of the Slovenian capital market and its most prominent issuers among institutional investors,” said Marko Simoneti, CEO of the LJSE. According to Mr Simoneti, international portfolio investors hold the lowest proportion of market capitalisation of shares in Slovenia in comparison with other European markets; however, their activity has been on the increase lately, which is encouraging.

The LJSE organised a presentation in London last year, and for later in 2006 they are planning two similar events; in Vienna in September, and in London in December.

### Total turnover of the LJSE in May nearly €90 million

The total turnover of the LJSE in May 2006 was SIT21.3 billion (€88.9 million), which is SIT13.2 billion (€55.1 million) more than in May 2005. Turnover in shares of listed companies amounted to 84.2 per cent of activity, followed by shares in investment funds (9.7%), and trade in bonds (6.1%).

The fifth month of the year also saw a rise in the value of all stock exchange indices. The Total Market Index SBI 20 gained two per cent in May. It reached a low for the month on 24 May at 4,881 points, while it peaked on 10 May at 5,159 points, setting a new record. In the last twelve months, the SBI 20 has gained 8.5 per cent. The Blue-chip Index SBI TOP gained somewhat less (1.9%), and also peaked on 10 May at 1,205 points. The Investment Funds Index PIX and the Bond Index BIO gained 0.6 and 0.03 per cent in May, respectively.

On the official market of the LJSE, prices of fourteen of the twenty-six shares increased. Among those included in the SBI 20 index, the biggest growth was recorded by the shares in Petrol (8.6%), followed by Luka Koper (6.9%). The biggest falls in May were recorded by shares of Mercator (2.2%), and Pivovarna Laško (PILR – 1.5%). The total market capitalisation of all shares traded on the LJSE amounted to SIT1,823 billion (€7.6 billion).

### Changes of Mobitel CEO

The Supervisory Board of the mobile telecommunications operator Mobitel, which is part of the state-owned Telekom Slovenije, relieved CEO Anton Majzelj of his duties at the end of May. The Supervisory Board entrusted Bojan Dremelj, President of the Management Board of Telekom Slovenije, with the director’s responsibilities until the appointment of a new CEO is finalised.

### Telekom takes over Kosovar company Ipko.Net

In Prishtina in mid-June, representatives of Telekom Slovenije signed an agreement on the takeover of the majority share of the Ipko.Net company from Kosovo. Telekom invested €19.5 million to secure a 75 per cent share in Kosovo’s leading internet service provider. Just over half of the investment capital (€10 million) has been earmarked as a capital injection to ensure opportunities for investment in further construction and modernisation of fixed-line and data networks in the next two years.

Bojan Dremelj, President of Telekom’s Management Board, announced that the company would also try to gain a concession to operate mobile telephony.

Ipko.Net employs 110 people, and its turnover in 2005 amounted to €4.6 million with pre-tax profits reaching €2.4 million. The company also owns a fixed-line and a wireless network covering over 80 per cent of Kosovo’s populated area.



The Port of Koper. Photo: Primož Lavre

### Luka Koper to cooperate with Koreans

Robert Časar, President of the Management Board of Luka Koper, and Aldo Babič, Deputy President of the Management Board, have concluded negotiations with representatives of Glovis, the largest logistics company in South Korea. The contract applies to the use of the Port of Koper, where Glovis Europe Corporation will establish a subsidiary to provide transport and logistical services to the new automobile factories that the



Telekom Slovenije. Photo: Grega Wernig



twenty-seven metres long. It will have a maximum capacity of 24,600 m<sup>3</sup> of water and two turbines, with a power rating of 18.2 megawatts. The price of a kilowatt-hour is predicted to stand at six eurocents.

**Economic sentiment indicator falls in May**

According to the findings of the Statistical Office of Slovenia, economic sentiment in Slovenia worsened in May. The seasonally adjusted sentiment indicator deteriorated by one percentage point in comparison with the previous month. Compared to May 2005 it was up by five percentage points and was seven percentage points above the long-term average. In addition, the confidence indicator for manufacturing fell, while retail trade, construction, and services confidence indicators rose. Similarly, consumer confidence also increased.

years. A referendum was even held, with voters deciding that shops be closed on Sundays. The provision stipulating that the shops be closed on Sundays came into force in the beginning of the year. However, representatives of trade companies and the government reached a compromise on shops to be exempted from this law.

**Significant 'euro' increases in prices more of an exception than a rule for the time being**

The first results of the price-watch project, carried out by the Slovene Consumers' Association (SCA), show that so far there have been no major increases in prices preceding the planned introduction of the euro. Between February and May, prices of selected foods and groceries rose on average by 0.46 per cent. However, there have been some unduly high increases, such as in some brands of bacon, rice, dairy products, coffee, fruit, frozen fish, washing powder and trainers.

The SCA follows the prices of 104 selected goods and services, including those which have increased the most in the countries that have already introduced the euro – restaurant services, hairdressers', drycleaners', car parks, and lotteries. The SCA has concluded there have been no major increases in prices so far, however, the price flow is expected to change in the next three months.

Korean companies Kia and Hyundai are building in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The contract stipulates an annual increase in vehicle transfers and containers. "We've managed to secure a business deal despite fierce international competition, which was also due to the fact that our transport minister has good relations with his foreign counterparts," said the statement from Luka Koper, which celebrated its 49th anniversary end of May.

**End of the Sunday shops dispute**

Shops can stay open on Sundays. At the end of May, representatives of employees and employers successfully concluded negotiations on Sunday shop opening hours, which will be regulated by a collective labour agreement, expected to be finalised by 30 September. Sunday shop opening hours have been in the Slovenian political and public spotlight for several

**Riko builds a hydroelectric power plant in Macedonia**

At the beginning of June, the foundation stone for the Sveta Petka hydroelectric power plant was laid on the Treska River in Macedonia, not far from the capital Skopje. The plant is being built by Riko, a Slovenian company. HPP Matka II is the last electricity plant of which the building is being backed by government guarantees. The project, with an investment value of €42 million, is expected to be finished in three years. Rico has financed it through a loan at the London office of the Depfa Bank. Both Macedonian and Slovenian companies are participating in the project. The Matka II dam will be seventy metres high and one hundred and



Shops can stay open on Sundays. Photo: Leon Vidic

# Slovenia celebrates 15 years of independence and achievement

Slovenia is celebrating fifteen years of independence. On 25 June 1991 the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia implemented the outcome of the plebiscite in favour of independence, and adopted the Constitutional Act Implementing the Basic Constitutional Charter on the Independence and Sovereignty of the Republic of Slovenia, and the Declaration of Independence. Thus Slovenia obtained de jure sovereignty, which was solemnly proclaimed on 26 June in Trg republike square in Ljubljana. The following day, the Ten-Day War began.





26 June 1991 - Solemn proclamation of Slovenia's independence and sovereignty.

In fifteen years Slovenia has come a long way, building a new political and economic system and gaining international recognition. She has successfully completed all major tasks put forward during independence, is today an esteemed member of international community and is set to preside over the EU in near future.

Independence, which was supported by all major political forces, facilitated the replacement of the one-party system with a multi-party parliamentary democracy, although a multi-party system had actually been in force since as early as 1989. The centre-right coalition Demos, comprised of new democratic political parties and headed by Lojze Peterle, won the first democratic elections in April 1990.

Demos was dissolved at the end of 1991, and Peterle's government lost a vote of no-confidence in April 1992. Janez Drnovšek, leader of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS), became the new Prime Minister. With the exception of six months with Andrej Bajuk as Prime Minister, Mr Drnovšek headed centre-left governments until 2002 when he was elected President. He succeeded Milan Kučan, former chairman of the League of Communists of Slovenia, who had previously won the election for the President of the Presidency of Slovenia in 1990.

The political balance was altered at parliamentary elections in October 2004, when the centre-right SDS won a convincing victory and the LDS landed in opposition after many years. Janez Janša, the leader of the SDS and one of the key independence figures, was appointed Prime Minister.

The major projects initiated immediately after independence,

3 October 2004 - The National Assembly elections are held, won by the Slovenian Democratic Party. Photo: Uroš Hočevar



which, due to the complex procedures involved, the Janša government was left to finish, included denationalisation. However, numerous reforms have been implemented in the fields of justice, education, and the health system. The reorganisation of the judicial system in the mid-1990s created backlogs, due to which Slovenia has lost many cases at the European Court of Human Rights. Some institutions, including foreign ones, have warned about the 'erased persons' and Roma issues. In addition, national consensus has not been reached on the issues of post-war killings and mass graves. However, respecting prevailing views, Slovenia has largely preserved the welfare state system. The unions claim that it may be endangered by the economic and social reforms proposed by the government, which stipulate the introduction of a flat tax, privatisation measures, the withdrawal of the state from the economy and changes to higher education. 'Slovenia is a social state,' says the Constitution of Slovenia, which was adopted on 23 December 1991, but which has since been amended several times. Due to EU and NATO accession articles on foreigners' property rights and Chapter 1 had to be changed. In May this year the National Assembly began the procedure to change the Constitution to enable the establishment of regions, which will complete the reform of local self-government begun in 1994 with the establishment of municipalities.

## A successful market economy

At first, the Slovenian economy experienced many difficulties. Companies were cut off from their business partners in their most important market, the former SFRY, virtually overnight. International distrust of Slovenia grew, as the National Bank of Yugoslavia imposed a financial blockade in July, practically eliminating the country from the Yugoslav monetary system. In October 1991 Slovenia opted for a new currency and consequently made the decisive step in its monetary policy by introducing the tolar on 9 October. The tolar was under much pressure in the first few years – in 1991 inflation stood at 247 per cent and only at the end of 1995 did it fall to a single-figure annual rate. However, the tolar has grown into a solid currency, enabling Slovenia to be the first new EU member state to be able to adopt the euro in 2007.

In the first few years after independence, economic growth was negative, many major manufacturers failed and the employment rate fell. Enterprises had to find new markets, particularly in the EU. The government began to rehabilitate banks and transform ownership of public-owned companies.

# COVERSTORY



9 October 1991 - Slovenia made the decisive step in its monetary policy by introducing the tolar. Photo: Arsen Perić

These processes ended only in 1998, creating a privatisation gap, which the government had to guarantee with state property.

In the middle of 1993, economic growth finally turned positive and in 1996 Slovenia's GDP level was the same as it had been before independence. In the period of transition into a market economy Slovenia was one of the most successful transition countries.

Now, she is striving to reach the European development average, which is why the government is planning structural reforms to strengthen the competitiveness of the economy and boost employment.

## Establishing international reputation

After deciding on independence, Slovenia urgently needed to achieve international recognition, a demanding task for a young diplomatic corps. In the autumn of 1991 Slovenia established relations with the Baltic states, while on 16 December 1991 the EU resolved to recognise Slovenia and Croatia from 15 January 1992. The process of international

recognition was completed on 22 May 1992, when Slovenia was accepted into the United Nations. As early as 1998 she presided over the UN Security Council.

The most important foreign policy tasks put forward at independence included joining the EU and NATO. The path towards the EU was marked both by successes and setbacks. In June 1993 Slovenia signed an Agreement on Cooperation with the EU and began negotiations on an Association Agreement the same year, which are prerequisites for applying for EU membership. However, obstacles emerged. Italy made the signing of the Association Agreement conditional on the return of real estate confiscated after World War II to the so-called optanti. After hard negotiations, following the proposal of Javier Solana, then the foreign minister of Spain, Slovenia accepted the so-called Spanish Compromise and made a commitment to quickly open up its property market to EU citizens. Slovenia signed the Association Agreement on 10 June 1996 and submitted a request for full membership on the same day.

Contrary to the negotiations on the Association Agreement, the mediation on the Accession Treaty ran rather smoothly. While Austria did raise particular issues such as duty-free shops and Lipizzaner horses, and Brussels warned about the slow rate of privatisation and denationalisation, there were no major setbacks, as Slovenia was thought to be a model candidate country.

Slovenes demonstrated their determination to join the EU at the referendum on 26 March 2003, when an overwhelming majority of almost ninety per cent supported EU accession, while also voting in favour of NATO membership. On 16 April 2003 Slovenia signed the Accession Treaty and became the first, and so far the only, country of the former SFRY to join the EU in May 2004. However, Slovenia has not yet fulfilled all its goals. Next year it will be the first new member state to adopt the euro, and is to join the Schengen area.

Slovenia had to wait longer than expected to join NATO. Ten years after first seeking NATO membership, Slovenia

23 March 2003 - Referenda on Slovenia's accession to the EU and NATO take place: 89.64 percent of voters opt for joining the EU, 66.08 percent opt for joining NATO; electorate turnout is 60.4 percent. Photo: Primož Lavre





5 December 2005 - OSCE ministerial meeting takes place in Ljubljana. Photo: Primož Lavre

joined the organisation together with six other countries on 29 March 2004. Sixty-six per cent of electorate voted in favour of NATO, although public support for membership had fluctuated.

Slovenia gained affirmation that she had successfully established herself in the international arena by being elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The two-year tenure began in January 1998 and during that time she presided over the Security Council twice. Perhaps the OSCE chairmanship in 2005 was even more demanding. However, Slovenia, the reference point for South-Eastern European issues in the international community, is facing the new challenge of being the first new member state to preside over the EU in 2008.

### First outspoken demand for independence

In February 1987 the 57th issue of *Nova revija* magazine was published. Therein, a group of intellectuals publicly expressed a demand for the independence of Slovenia, and for the abolition of the monopoly of the Communist Party. The demand was published in a time of escalating crisis of the Yugoslav socialist self-management system, which had been growing since the mid-1980s and which, according to the historian Janko Prunk, was also reflected in the inter-ethnic crisis.

Efforts towards democratisation and independence strengthened when Janez Janša, David Tasič and Franci Zavrl, *Mladina* magazine journalists, and YPA officer Ivan Borštner were arrested on 31 May 1988. They were tried in a military court in the so called 'trial of four'. Igor Bavčar organised the Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Janez Janša, later renamed into the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights. The public rallied massively behind its efforts. Consequently, the Committee became the strongest organisation of civil society during the Slovenian Spring.

On 8 May 1989, the new political parties published the May Declaration, in which they demanded a sovereign Slovenia state and political pluralism. Despite opposition from the Yugoslav authorities and against the will of Belgrade, Slovenia adopted a multi-party system in 1989.

In 1990 confederation was still an option when discussing Slovenia's future in the SFRY. As the discussion did not bear any fruitful results, the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia passed the Plebiscite on the Sovereignty and Independence

of the Republic of Slovenia Act on 6 December 2000. On 23 December 1990 93.2 per cent of the electorate turned out for the plebiscite and 95 per cent of the voters, that is 88.5 per cent of the total electorate, voted in favour. The results were announced on 26 December 1990, now a national holiday – Independence Day.

### The Ten-Day War

The independence of Slovenia, fiercely opposed by Belgrade, did not pass smoothly. Already during the proclamation of independence on 26 June 1991 air fighters of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) flew low over Ljubljana. On the same day, YPA tanks took the Primorska border crossing without resistance. During the night of 26- 27 June the YPA armoured battery crossed the Croatian-Slovenian border, while other units set off from army barracks towards border crossings and Brnik Airport.

On 27 June the first arms were fired at a Territorial Defence barricade near Metlika. The Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia passed a resolution on the implementation of preparatory measures to hinder the advance of YPA forces, block infrastructure, and defend buildings and communications. The resolution enabled the police forces and Territorial Defence to begin stopping the YPA.

In the ten-day war four members of the Territorial Defence died, while eighty-nine were wounded. Four Slovenian police officers died and twenty-two were wounded, while there were thirty-nine deaths and one hundred and sixty-three wounded on the YPA side. There were fifteen civilian deaths.

During the fighting, diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis continued, leading to the signing of the Brioni Agreement, which stipulated that Slovenia enforce a three-month moratorium on its independence efforts, while the YPA would cease all further intervention in Slovenia.

During these three months, Slovenia was recognised by Croatia, Lithuania, Georgia, Latvia, and Estonia. As no new agreement was reached by 8 October, the fact that Yugoslavia had disintegrated was internationally accepted. The YPA finally left Slovenia on 25 October 1991.

At the end of the moratorium Slovenia de facto became an independent state by introducing her own currency, establishing border control, and passing the Constitution on 23 December 1991, becoming a full member of the United Nations on 22 May 1992, and of the Council of Europe in May 1993.



Photo: Personal Archive

**Dr Dimitrij Rupel,** Minister of Foreign Affairs

## Fifteen years of Slovenia as a state

On 25 June 1991, in the face of (minor) domestic complications and reservations from abroad, Slovenia was ready to begin life as an independent country. Some of the complications and reservations were connected to the general (mis)understanding of democratic processes in Central and South-East Europe, the movements that started around 1980 (Solidarnost in Poland, the initiative to start the Nova revija magazine in Slovenia). 9 November 1989 saw the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and exactly six months after Slovenia had declared her independence on 25 December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed.

Compared with other Central and Eastern European countries, Slovenia faced a much more demanding task fifteen years ago. While Hungarians,

Poles, Romanians and others fought for democracy, we the Slovenes had first to create a country and detach and separate from Yugoslavia. As we can see, in many ex-Yugoslavian nations time has stopped, while in others it definitely runs slower than measured by clocks around the world. We, too, lost some time, which is natural. Had history not demanded that we first build our own country and struggle to win a proper place in the international community, we would have made it a few years earlier. The efforts towards an independent state absorbed some of our energy and diverted our attention, both of which could have been invested in developing democratic institutions. In the name of 'national interests' we formed an alliance of all political parties in 1991, which led some people to believe that nothing would change.

Abroad, many, even favourably disposed observers, supported Belgrade, and above all Ante Marković as they saw in him someone who strived to save Yugoslavia. State sovereignty and inviolability of borders had always been highly esteemed values in international relations, albeit they had come 'under threat' from a new democratic value, the right of nations to self-determination. For some, the disintegration of Yugoslavia – justifiably - anticipated the collapse of the Soviet Union. They feared civil wars and the outbreak of more widespread instability. Others were pro-Serbian. Then, there were those who lamented the end of the one-party system and socialism, and worried most about its (and even more about their own) 'gains'. Because of these fears, many failed to recognise the urgency and history's inevitability, but most of all, the villainous plans of Milošević's regime. Millions suffered because of misguided policy and blurred views. Historical and other disputes have lasted throughout these fifteen years, and, in a way, are not entirely over, which is reflected in hostilities among nations and ethnic groups of the former Soviet Union, the independence of Montenegro and negotiations regarding the future status of Kosovo. Despite successful economic development, and the achievements of her foreign policy within the UN, OSCE, EU, and NATO, Slovenia has not gone unaffected by these disputes. I am referring to the problem of inertia. In fifteen years, Slovenia has accomplished much and has been extremely successful; however, she could have achieved even more, were it possible to overnight do away overnight with certain habits that she formed while living in Yugoslav socialism. I am mainly referring to the culture of indifference, leisureliness, carelessness and the inside-party 'connections and acquaintances'. I am referring to the relatively closed up Slovenian economy, and the rigid economic policy which allowed Slovenia to be bypassed by a number of important foreign investors. I am also referring to the ideological and personal persistence of the majority of the media, and the judicial and educational systems. The combination of these systems and local authorities, which had been placed in their positions (and which have survived more or less unnoticed and unaffected) in order to realise the ideas of the party nomenklatura, significantly prolonged the transition from socialism to the modern European society. Slovenia declared her independence on 25 June 1991, and the European Union, following Germany's lead, recognised this as a fact already by the end of the

year. Our efforts to achieve international recognition were relatively brief and highly successful. Here, we need to mention two facts. The first is that Slovenia had kept to the agreements concluded in Brioni in July 1991. At that time, Slovenia was crisscrossed by European monitors, who we called ice-cream-men, because they wore white suits. Slovenia was already an independent state, but we needed official confirmation. This was the task of the emerging Slovenian diplomacy, which was facing serious challenges, particularly due to the predominance of Serbian ambassadors and envoys, who were simply taking advantage of Yugoslav facilities and connections, and due to the uncertain situation in the Soviet Union. Other large countries also had reservations regarding Slovenia's (and Croatia's) ambitions. The second fact is related to the support from Germany, Austria and Italy, i.e. the Holy See. Had it not been for the support of German Chancellor Kohl, and foreign ministers Genscher and Mock, it would have been impossible to envisage a quick and favourable resolution of Slovenia's story of international recognition. The proof that the influence of these people was really significant is the sheer fact that the United States of America recognised Slovenia together with Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as late as 7 April 1992, while the old Yugoslav flag lingered at the UN for a long time; despite the fact that the three countries were admitted to the organisation only six weeks later. When compared with the duration of the systems and combinations in which Slovenes had lived before independence, fifteen years seems a very brief period, albeit marked by turbulent history and giant changes. Some events and changes have been a result of our own endeavours, the resourceful efforts of devoted individuals, but apart from these we were sucked in history's stream, which rushed us forward, and rewarded us the same as other Central and Eastern European nations.

Some of our observers have not yet come to terms with the group of countries Slovenia was in when she joined the EU and particularly NATO. As we all know, both were the cases of 'Big Bang'; a vast enlargement bringing in ten and seven new members respectively. The basic concept behind the enlargement was to push the West's Eastern boundary as far East as possible, while providing consolation and compensation to all those who suffered under the Soviet communist regime: hence the 'mistake' our observers spotted in the blink of an eye. When the EU and NATO

were expanding, foreign media held – according to our commentators a wrong, but in fact correct – view that the countries in question were former members of the Warsaw Pact, as the enlargement had in the first place been intended for them. Slovenian commentators wanted to point out two things, namely that Slovenia had never been a member of the Warsaw Pact, and that Slovenes had not been suffering under communism, or at least not to such an extent as our Czech, Hungarian, and Polish friends, let alone the people of Romania and Bulgaria. The commentators acted appalled: "Now they are comparing us to Romanians and Bulgarians!" They mocked those of us who had made every effort towards Slovenia's accession to NATO: "You want to join a worthless club!" Of course, it was not just about bad company but much more.

When Slovenia joined NATO, some Slovenian politicians and the majority of Slovenian media went into uproar. Admirers of Slovenia's exclusivity (who also call themselves defenders of Slovenian national interests) are today still in a state of shock or denial. Those who opposed NATO had opposed independence, the multi-party system and the market economy. But when changes eventually occurred, they attempted to explain them as a continuation of the former system, and assign them to Slovenia's self-government and non-alignment policy, which was supposed to be democratic in its own right, and had been allegedly preparing the independence process before 1990. Of course, they could only sustain this mythological image of Slovenia by denying their connection to the one-party communist system and the fundamental similarity to the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. When the time came, they discarded Yugoslavia, but they would not admit that communist rule had been immoral and backward.

In fifteen years, Slovenia developed from a Yugoslav socialist republic into a relatively modern and reputable European country, which can be entrusted with the leadership of prominent international organisations, and even the European Union. In fifteen years, Slovenia had to detach and separate from Yugoslavia, establish state structures, including armed forces and diplomacy, achieve international recognition, join international organisations and win their trust, i.e. establish herself as a reliable and trustworthy country.

Fifteen years ago, Slovenia stood where Montenegro stands now. Let us hope that Montenegro catches up with Slovenia

in less than fifteen years. Other former Yugoslav republics have the upper hand over Montenegro, and some of them began developing their state-building processes and reforms simultaneously with Slovenia but are now lagging behind. I am not saying this to extol or degrade anyone, but because I want to warn against the arrogance of those who see themselves as superior to the aforementioned ten countries. Neither Romania nor Bulgaria had to build a new country. Neither Poles nor Czechs or Hungarians had to establish armed forces and diplomatic corps. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, even Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia were once independent countries. Even Montenegro was once an independent country.

When we talk about what we have achieved in fifteen years, we first have to set ourselves certain criteria. To appreciate what we have achieved, we need to compare ourselves with others. We have definitely gained considerable experience, and we definitely established our cultural and material foundations in Austria, in the Illyrian Provinces, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and in different Yugoslav combinations. But fifteen years ago Slovenia had neither her own diplomacy nor her armed forces.

For a country which, fifteen years ago, had neither her own diplomacy nor army, membership of the EU and NATO is quite an achievement. It is a fact that during these fifteen years, Slovenia has had a number of devoted people, who worked in volunteer or local Slovenian and Yugoslav structures, most of whom proved themselves as true patriots in decisive moments. We have built our country out of patriotism and heroism anchored in our collective memory, which draws on numerous historic trials, including both World Wars, Partisan and volunteer traditions, the tradition of the Territorial Defence, and the heritage of pre-war, post-war and older diplomats. Therefore, we need to compile and arrange the records on Slovenian diplomacy quickly and in a reliable way. Of course, even more than the historical overview of Slovenian diplomacy researched by the Centre for European Perspective, university programmes in diplomacy are necessary.

But most of all, in Slovenia we need a new attitude towards the country and her achievements. If we fail to include proper information on the beginnings and the significance of the Slovenian state in educational and media programmes, we cannot hope to secure the patriotic spirit essential to each and every country.

DIMITRIJ RUPEL



MADE IN SLOVENIA



# The Beverage of Your Youth and Our Own

David Dolinar, photo: Archive of Droga Kolinska

In the years following World War II, i.e. the late 1940s, when our country (Yugoslavia), like the rest of Europe, found itself in the midst of great activity brought on by major social and political changes, post-war restoration efforts and revival of economic activities, our part of the world was not yet flooded with world-famous refreshing beverages. These were various colas boasting their decades-long heritage, and it was obviously only a matter of time until internationally renowned beverages would penetrate our market. The young people of the time would drink various non-alcoholic beverages mixed by local soda jerkers, and one such beverage that was particularly popular was the 'kraherle', which was basically soda mixed with raspberry syrup.

It was then that the management of the company Slovenijavino, which held a monopoly on the market, came up with the idea of producing an original Slovenian refreshing beverage which would later be able to compete against foreign refreshing drinks. They entrusted the development of this new product to the chemical engineer Emerik Zelinka, an employee of the Slovenijavino research labs at the time. His job included studying various herbs and the hint was more than obvious: a drink should be developed using local herbs while at the same time making it original rather than trying to copy similar foreign drinks – it should have a novel,

characteristic and unimitable taste. This was not an easy task, but engineer Zelinka and his team were successful – and Cockta was born with a new, defining taste derived from a blend of eleven different kinds of herbs. One of the herbs that contributes to its familiar and characteristic aroma is rosehip, previously used only during the season of the common cold for making rosehip tea, which is known to be rich in vitamins.

The development and promotion of the new product – Cockta was one of the first market-based projects in



our country, which at the time rejected the market economy, since everything was managed through central planning. The marketing campaign was very carefully prepared: it brought in designers, including some students of architecture, who designed the corporate image using the modest selection of typefaces they had at their disposal. They also had to design an original characteristic bottle, based on the contemporary beer bottle design, and finally the cardboard packaging and delivery vehicles.

## Pioneers in industrial design

Many older Slovenes will still remember the posters which swept over the entire country as part of the marketing campaign: they featured a suntanned young woman with a haircut that was considered trendy at the time, pony tail and blue eyes, holding in her hands a bottle of the mysterious new beverage. The poster was created by the architect and graphic designer Uroš Vagaja. His work is still held in high regard both as a designer product and as a symbol of the beginning of modern marketing in Slovenia and Yugoslavia of the time.

In the promotional activities that followed, the creators of the new drink enjoyed much good fortune. Slovenia's first premium-quality refreshing beverage and its excellent corporate design were presented to the public for the first time in March 1953 at the traditional international ski-jumping competition in Planica. You would be hard pressed to find a better place for the inauguration, as Planica then, as now, boasted the longest ski-jumps in the world, and the annual event continually attracted the top competitors. Cockta had a strong presence at the Planica ski-jumping competition. There were beautiful colour posters everywhere and thousands of spectators were received by girls in red dresses carrying cases of Cockta bottles, handing out free samples of the new drink.

This made one of the market-driven objectives a success – to associate the new Slovenian product with Planica, one of the most internationally established symbols of Slovenia. This hinted at what future Cockta marketing campaigns would focus on: a drink for the young and not-so-young generations, for everyone who



appreciates a healthy lifestyle; its market was not meant to be limited to Slovenia but the whole of the former country of Yugoslavia – and even back then marketers were exchanging flirtatious glances with the neighbouring countries. Another interesting fact from today's perspective is that, in some way or another, Cockta has been associated with Planica for over fifty years, mainly as a sponsor of the world ski-jumping competition over the last few years.

In the first year of production, four million Cockta bottles were sold in Slovenia alone, and ten years later sales climbed to 71 million. From Slovenia, Cockta spread to other markets of ex-Yugoslavia, where it established licensed and proprietary bottling facilities. Cockta sales peaked in 1967, when Western competition penetrated the Yugoslav market and caused them to fall. The reason for this was weak marketing activity, unreliable quality from some bottling facilities, and poor packaging. The Slovin Corporation, which owned Cockta at the time, decided on a thorough restructuring in 1975. They changed the bottle and label, they began to bottle it in one-litre bottles and they devoted more attention to marketing. It was then that the familiar and popular motto '**Cockta – the Beverage of Your Youth and Our Own**' was invented, referring to the drink's long heritage. Cockta sales increased for several years, and then began to decline again. In 2000, the Cockta brand was bought by the Kolinska food company, known as DrogaKolinska d.d. today.

Under its new owner, Cockta is living a new life. Sales in former Yugoslav markets are increasing again, and it holds a 10 per cent market share in Slovenia's non-alcoholic beverage market segment, making it the second largest brand. Cockta is among the most popular beverages of its kind on the Serbian market, and slowly it is penetrating the Western-European market through large supermarket chains.

In the spirit of its slogan, Cockta lives in the hearts and minds of the young and the not-so-young generations, it refreshes us and keeps our spirits fresh. It is an undisputed fact that the beverage is the fruit of Slovenian know-how and, in spite of the fact that it will probably never be able to compete with the large global brands, its great quality and benefits are yet to be discovered by other foreign markets.

Klara Krapež

## CARMINA SLOVENICA WITH A NEW PROGRAMME

World-renowned women's choir Carmina Slovenica, led by Karmina Šilec, has prepared a new programme entitled 'O Deus'. It includes sacred musical works of Eastern and Western Christianity by composers who wrote between 9th and 20th centuries, including the Byzantine Kassia, the Slovene Adam Bohorič, Georgius Prenner, Daniel Lagkhaner, Hildegard and Stevan Mokrajnc. In addition to these, the programme also includes numerous, as yet unknown, composers. Thus, in this project the choir will be singing chorales from the codex 'Las Huelgas', the Renaissance motets from Lagkhaner's collection 'Flores Jessaei', the music from the period of slave ownership in America and the missions, including chants from Africa and South America. All these compositions have in common a spiritual dimension, which is timeless and calls to the glorification of God. Carmina Slovenica have already presented the cycle 'O Deus' at concerts in Ptuj, Maribor and Slovenska Bistrica. In May, the choir toured Portugal where they gave three performances in the Third Youth Choir Festival in Coimbra. The Portugal tour was marked especially by their performance in the pilgrimage basilica of the Fatima Sanctuary. The singers will end this year's concert season with performances in Slovenia.



## MONUMENT FOR SLOVENIAN ARCHITECT JOŽE PLEČNIK IN PRAGUE

Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik, who worked in Prague from 1920 to 1935 at the invitation of then Czech president Masaryk, was in May honoured with a monument in the castle of the Czech capital. The Slovenian architect left an indelible creative stamp on the Czech Republic by renovating and reforming the appearance of Prague Castle - the seat of Czech rulers and presidents. The recently unveiled monument, whose erection was supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Prague and the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, was created by the architect Vladimira Bratuž, Plečnik's pupil. The monument was modelled in 1951 and stands also in the atrium of Plečnik's Križanke complex in Ljubljana.

## THE SLOVENIAN HOUSE IN BRUSSELS PRESENTS NOVA GORICA

As part of the days of Slovenian culture, the Slovenian house in Brussels, which has only recently opened its doors, presented the border town of Nova Gorica. Visitors could see the exhibition by internationally-established photographer Rafael Podobnik, listen to chansons sung by Lara P. Jankovič and enjoy presentations of the tourist attractions on offer in this area.

The photographic exhibition, which was on display until the end of June, presented photos from Podobnik's authorial cycles 'Person', 'Marked Stones', 'Landscape after the 50s' and 'Photographer's Dreams'. Lara P. Jankovič, actress of the Slovene National Theatre Nova Gorica, and among other things winner of several awards, prepared a selection of chansons in different musical genres for the Brussels concert, from tango, cabaret and gypsy songs to the chansons of Edith Piaf translated into Slovene.

The monument of Jože Plečnik in the atrium of Plečnik's Križanke complex in Ljubljana. Photo: Primož Lavre

## SLOVENIAN PRESENTATION IN EUROPA - PARK RUST IN GERMANY

Between 28 May and 6 June Slovenia was presented in Europa - park Rust near Freiburg in Germany. This event marked the 15th anniversary of the country's independence, and a temporary Slovenian village was erected in the park for the occasion. Visitors were able to taste typical Slovenian foods and wines and get to know Slovenian culture. On the opening evening, the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra performed. The Europa - park Rust is visited annually by three million people, and with its presentation Slovenia wanted particularly to draw attention to itself as a small yet important and culturally rich European member.

## TRANSLITERATED EDITION OF PLETERŠNIK'S SLOVENE - GERMAN DICTIONARY I-II

The publishing house of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts published both the printed and electronic edition of the Slovene - German dictionary I-II by Maks Pleteršnik, transliterated from the gothic script. The work was first published between 1894 and 1895 and is considered a classical work of Slovenian lexicography; at the same time this is the most extensive Slovenian dictionary besides the fundamental work, the Dictionary of Standard Slovene. Pleteršnik's work contains 102,522 headwords from the standard language and dialectal vocabulary of the 19th century and earlier periods, dating back to the 15th century. The author compiled it on the basis of the material collected by Slovenian linguists, adding also his own records. The modern edition corrected the technical and editorial inconsistencies of the original text and some discrepancies due to copying particular words from cited sources. They added two texts, entitled The Transliterated Edition of Pleteršnik's Dictionary and Geographical Names in Pleteršnik's Dictionary, plus a cartographic presentation of more than 350 locations of the vocabulary represented in the dictionary. Being transliterated from the gothic script,



this edition of the dictionary brings the entries closer to the modern user, while the electronic version provides the possibility of quick searches based on headwords, German counterparts and the content of dictionary texts.

## POLISH LODZ PRESENTS SLOVENIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

During the 5th International Festival of Photography, showcasing world photography in four sections with the central theme 'Consumer Oriented Society – Its Disadvantages and Advantages', Slovenian artists were also represented. Among the participating photographers, Barbara Jakše Jeršič and Stane Jeršič presented their solo exhibitions, whereas the works by Aleksandra Vajd and Hynek Alt were on display as part of a group exhibition, 'Image – Central European Self-stories'.

## SLOVENIAN DIRECTOR AWARDED IN CANNES

Slovenian scriptwriter and director Blaž Kutin received the New Talent in the European Union Award from Vivian Reding, Commissioner for Information Society and Media. At the ceremony, taking place against the backdrop of the Cannes Film Festival, on Europe Day 2006, Commissioner Reding said about Kutin's project entitled 'Lara': "This fine example of contemporary European film-making is the work of a very talented, sensitive and exceptionally emphatic writer."

She pointed out that the Slovenian writer is 'a great observer of life' and that according to the European Commission it is very important to support young European talents such as Blaž Kutin.

The award was first conferred in 2004 and goes to the best script by a European author under 35 years of age who had taken part in the training funded by the MEDIA programme.

'Lara' is a story of a woman who, on her 60th birthday, at her son's piano concert, evaluates her life and remembers her unrealised wish to become a celebrated pianist herself.

Slovenian Director and Scriptwriter  
Boštjan Hladnik. Photo: Uroš Hočevar

## A GOODBYE TO BOŠTJAN HLADNIK, SLOVENIAN DIRECTOR AND SCRIPTWRITER

Boštjan Hladnik, "enfant terrible" of Slovenian film, has died at the age of 78. In the 60s, he brought Slovenian cinematography closer to European modernism. His most known films are 'Dancing in the Rain', 'Erotikon', 'Sunny Whirlpool', 'Maškarada ('Masquerade)', 'Ubij me nežno' ('Kill me Softly') and 'Čas brez pravljic' ('A Time Without Fairytales'). In addition, he made a number of short films and received numerous awards, among them the Badjur award in 1999 and the Golden Order for Services to Filmmaking in 2005. The films by Boštjan Hladnik exhibit a constant flow between reality and playful imagination, and a distinctive personal approach of his free stream of consciousness, for which he was often misunderstood or even condemned.

Boštjan Hladnik was born on 30 January 1929 in Kranj and graduated

from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana. He drew early attention to himself with his documentary film 'Fantastična balada' ('A Fantastic Ballad') and in 1952 he received an award at an amateur film festival in Salerno for his first short film 'Deklica v gorah' ('A Girl in the Mountains').

Hladnik's films were influenced by the French New Wave, which he encountered while studying at the Institute of High Film Studies IDHEC in Paris between 1957 and 1960. In this period he worked with famous directors such as Claude Chabrol, Philippe de Broca and Robert Siodmak. These experiences helped him to achieve the expressive level of contemporary European modernism with his 1961 feature debut, 'Dancing in the Rain'. In addition to the New Wave, which Hladnik brought to Slovenian film, he also brought film noir to Slovenian cinema, but later turned away from pessimism, although he still swore by originality, inventiveness, unconventionality and dreaminess.



## ARTES GALLERY PRESENTS WORKS BY SILVESTER PLOTAJŠ SICOE

The author was born in 1965 in Ljubljana, where he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and finished his postgraduate studies in painting and graphic arts. He later continued his studies at the Academy Minerva in Groningen, the Netherlands. Characteristic of his work is a structural multilayered language of painting in which he connects expressive figurality, strong colours, imagination, irony, comic strip images, graffiti, quotations from the artistic past and current messages. His canvases are powerfully expressive and full of vibrant colours, definitely placing Sicoe amidst the more visible Slovenian colourists of the younger generation.

## ALAN HRANITELJ'S EXTRAVAGANT CREATIONS ON SHOW IN LJUBLJANA

An exhibition of costume designer Alan Hranitelj's creations will be on view at the International Centre of Graphic Arts (MGLC) between 1 June and 10 September. The exhibition presents 150 theatre, opera and film costumes, festive outfits, and fashion accessories.

Extravagant Creations of Alan Hranitelj. Photo: Arsen Perić



'Kostumografija 1986-2006' comes at a time when clothing production is so automated that the human role is reduced to robotic programming, with everything simplified to such an extent that the whole world is dressed in uniform. "Yet Hranitelj still tailors by hand, and sews together the most sumptuous garments, into which he invests experience, a particular feeling for harmony, many metres of silk, much time and energy," wrote the curators at his last exhibition. Theatre costumes represent the most extensive part of Hranitelj's oeuvre. They come alive only when worn by an actor or actress playing a particular role. The exhibition is, however, a narrative about how costumes can become works of art when placed outside the context of the theatre or opera stage, says MGLC.

Art historian Jure Mikuž says that one of Hranitelj's sources of creativity is in imitating nature, especially the animal world, to which he then adds zoological features to his creations. He also finds aesthetic inspiration in art history, but his garments are neither baroque, post-modern or avant-garde, but classic and timeless - a mixture of all styles.

Alan Hranitelj, born in Zagreb in 1968, has been working in Ljubljana for 20 years, since he was a young make-up artist for Dragan Zivadinov's groundbreaking and legendary theatre production 'The Baptism Below Triglav'. He continues to delight audiences today, both in Slovenia and abroad, and has held exhibitions in Copenhagen and London.



Marathon Swimmer Martin Strel.  
Photo: Primož Lavre

## MARATHON SWIMMER MARTIN STREL SWIMS THE DRAVA RIVER ON THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF SLOVENIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Professional marathon swimmer Martin Strel, a world record holder in long-distance and non-stop swimming, Honorary Ambassador of the World Wildlife Fund since 1997, decorated with The Order of Freedom of the Republic of Slovenia in 2001, nominee for the Laureus Alternative Sports-Person of the Year in 2003 in Monte Carlo, swimming under the motto 'For peace, friendship and clean water' has decided to swim 450 kilometres of the Drava River, which stretches for 707 kilometres, and connects four countries, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Slovenia's independence. The start will be on 19 June, in Toblach, Italy, and the finish on 26 June in Varaždin, Croatia, where the Drava flows into a lake that drains into the Danube. Along the river, Martin Strel will present beautiful tourist destinations, the rafters of Drava, who keep alive a several hundred-year old tradition, the Drava, which is becoming cleaner by the year and is vital to the chain of hydropower plants which exploit it, angling, and other sporting activities along and on the river. As has become a custom, the project will go live on his web site.

# Slovenian Istria With the Scent of the Sea

A magnificent view of Sečovelje Saltpans and the source of Dragonja River.

Andrej Žagar, Jože Prešeren, photo: Iztok Hočevar

Far away from the crazed world, among the hills and the rustling of the wind, lies hidden the hinterland of the Slovenian Mediterranean. With the scent of the sea, yet removed from the holiday hustle and bustle, a mysterious countryside extends, hiding in its bosom old vineyards, olive trees, idyllic villages and a rich cultural heritage. It is almost unbelievable how close but still remote this part of the Istrian peninsula, lying on the Slovenian side of the border, is. Numerous yet narrow roads lead from the teeming beaches, where holidaymakers enjoy their vacation, to the Istrian hinterland. In our exploration of the littoral hinterland we encountered only a few cars but therefore more lovers of nature, cultural heritage, good wine and different forms of recreation.

One can start exploring Slovenian Istria from any town on the Slovenian coast. You can find almost anywhere a road that will take you to this romantic world. Our route towards Istria starts before Koper when we leave the motorway and turn south. We start our journey through the littoral hinterland in the village of Hrastovlje. The houses, secluded from the winds blowing in from the sea, hide in their midst a real pearl. Hrastovlje is a typical Mediterranean village with stone houses and serried streets. Over the village, on a karstic hill we can admire rectangular camp walls dating to the 16th century. The church and the walls served as a retreat from the Turk and Uskok invasions. The church itself, where once

Hrastovlje, Church of the Holy Trinity.



a pagan temple stood, conceals the famous frescoes by Johanes de Caustro, dating from 1490. The frescoes, only discovered in 1951, depict the work of peasants during different seasons, the Genesis, the expulsion from Eden and scenes from Christ's Passion. The most famous among them all is the one depicting the Dance of Death.

We encounter a completely different scene when, amidst the hills where olive trees and vines catch sunbeams, we arrive at Merežige. Albeit quite a new settlement, with luxury houses and with the view of the sea somewhere in the distance, it is about to celebrate a real Primorska festa (party). We join in the tasting of wine and other delicacies. It is above all the excellent food that attracts the gourmet visitors to these places. They like to indulge in the excellent culinary treats characteristic of this region of Slovenia. The gastronomy here is a mixture of the Istrian, Karstic and Vipava influences. The special taste of this otherwise rather simple food is the work of contemporary chefs. The traditional foods covering the plates of Slovenian Istria are often corn and wheat flour dishes, potatoes, cabbage, beans, various herbs and of course the indispensable olive oil. In season, there are often asparagus delicacies on the plate. The region is famous far and wide for its truffles, bringing a priceless additional value to the dishes. The renown of restaurants in Pomjan, Korte, Kubed and other towns reaches far across the state border.

A vineyard – Slovenian Istria is famous for its wines.





## The Ways of Nature

The geographical image of Slovenian Istria is formed by the Šavrini hills, covering a total area of approximately 400 km<sup>2</sup>. On the substratum of flysch alternating with marl, sandstone and in some places also limey calcarenites and conglomerates, the tectonic forces formed the characteristic hills. On the steep terraces, the inhabitants had long ago cultivated the plantations of olive trees, vines or vegetables. In the soft flysch stone the streams formed the characteristic ridged hills, now covered with densely built villages. Nowadays, many of them are abandoned and overgrown. From Koper, the largest coastal town, to the Šavrini hills there leads a varied path.

One of the most expressive and distinctive landscape characteristics of Slovenian Istria is the contact between sea and land. In some parts nature has created magnificent cliffs, and the mouth of the river Dragonja is particularly extraordinary, its water level fluctuating considerably according to the season. The river is forty-six kilometres long altogether, but it still formed two completely different landscapes – in its upper reaches it indents the local tali, and where it flows into the sea it forms an extensive plain. The Dragonja valley with its side valleys represents the green area in Slovenian Istria. In spite of the human presence in this area, the natural equilibrium and the numerous animal and plant species have been preserved. The most visible traces of human presence are, although now abandoned, cultured terraces and numerous mills.

Olive trees are a typical feature of Istria.

## Ethnographical monument

At the edge of the Dragonja valley we climb up to the village of St Peter in the middle of which there is a real ethnographical monument – Tona's house. The neighbour Marija opens the doors for us, she is appointed by the Maritime Museum of Piran as the caretaker of the ethnological house, a building dating back almost 400 years where during renovation they preserved the characteristics of Istrian rural architecture, the presentation of oil making, and everyday peasant life. Marija says that until four hundred years ago a Mrs Tona, who had no descendents, lived in the house. The caretaker first takes us to the cellar, to the old torkla (Istrian for oil press) where olive oil used to be made. First, they ground the olives with the help of horses and then four strong men tightened the press to squeeze the ground olives.

Some such small oil presses as can be seen in Tona's house were owned by individuals, elsewhere they were set up by village communities and were thus their property, but there were also such oileries that were church-owned. In such small oileries three or four oilmen, for the most part fellow villagers or relatives, usually worked alongside the proprietor.

The residential part of Tona's house has open roofing replacing the ceiling. What is special about this house is that its beams were carved out of oak, including parts of the roots. The exhibited objects were still used in the first half of the last century when the hearth fire was still alive. Homemade



furniture, or that made by village craftsmen, predominated. But in time these products were in wealthier houses, replaced by furniture and accessories bought in shops. The exterior of the house is typical of the region, the stamp given by its simple stonemasonry details on windows and doors. The olive trees and mulberry trees of a venerable age growing around the house complement its Istrian appearance.

From Tona's house we continue our journey along the ridge of the Šavrini hills to Krkavče, a settlement with a church in the middle. Krkavče was built on a bedrock and is renowned for its ethnographical sites and the mysterious Krkavče stone near the village. Koštabona is architecturally the most beautifully designed village in this part of Slovenia.

## Rich History

From the earliest times the area of Slovenian Istria has been settled continuously. As elsewhere in Europe and the Mediterranean the Roman Empire left its mark also in these parts. The Slovenian Littoral belonged to the Roman province of Venetia et Histria. In the period of the Migration of the Nations, the Slavs came to this territory. Later the region

flourished as a trade link between the coast and hinterland. Despite the constant conflicts between the Habsburgs and the Republic of Venice taking place in the area, these parts flourished in the Middle Ages. We can read of how charming and pleasant the Slovenian coastal towns are in a letter that the poet Petrarca wrote to Boccaccio inviting him to leave the stuffy Venetian climate and come to Koper for some fresh air.

The most traumatic historical period took place after WWII when, according to the London Memorandum, Trieste with part of the hinterland was annexed to Italy, while Koper, Izola and Piran with the hinterland of Slovenian Istria remained in Yugoslavia. The region recovered only in the 1960s when the economy, tourism and culture began to flourish.

Because of its distance from the coastal tourist centres, Slovenian Istria has preserved its heritage. And the villages such as Hrastovlje, Krkavče, Glem, Pomjan, Koštabona and others seem almost forgotten. But exploring the coastal hinterland we still encounter curious visitors to these parts. Slovenian Istria has always been on the crossroads of different cultures and interests. It preserved its rich natural and cultural heritage created throughout the centuries by different nations coming to this area from all directions and all corners of the world.

Tonina hiša - Ethnological collection at St Peter.





## Gubanica

### Ingredients for dough:

200 g (7 oz) flour  
125 g (4 1/2 oz) butter  
2 egg yolks  
lemon juice  
splash of rum  
salt

### Ingredients for filling:

200 g (7 oz) ground walnuts  
50 g (1 3/4 oz) chopped candied orange peel  
125 g (4 1/2 oz) raisins  
50 g (1 3/4 oz) pine nuts  
125 g (4 1/2 oz) sugar  
2 egg whites  
1 egg  
1 egg to brush

**Dough:** Divide flour into two equal parts. Mix one half with egg yolks, lemon juice, rum, and enough water to make a softer dough. Knead the other half with butter. Roll both pieces of dough into rectangles, place the butter dough onto the rum dough, and roll them together quite thinly.

**Filling:** Whisk egg whites until stiff, and beat one egg. Brush the dough with beaten egg, and pour over the meringue. Sprinkle with ground walnuts, sugar, chopped candied orange peel, raisins and pine nuts. Roll up, place in a greased baking tin, and brush with beaten egg. Bake for 35 minutes at 175°C (350°F). When done, let it rest overnight.

Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik  
Food prepared by: Peter Lenče

## Istrian Risotto

### Ingredients:

150 ml (3/5 cup) oil  
 1 tbsp tomato purée  
 2 garlic cloves  
 350 g (12 1/3 oz) rice  
 300 ml (1 1/5 cup) white wine  
 350 g (12 1/3 oz) fish  
 vinegar to taste  
 15 g (1/2 oz) butter  
 50 g (1 3/4 oz) parmesan cheese  
 pepper  
 parsley  
 salt

Sauté tomato purée and chopped garlic. Add washed rice, stir well, and salt. Add 350 ml (1 2/5 cup) water, bring to the boil, and cook until water has evaporated. Then add wine, and simmer until done. Boil the fish for 20 minutes in salted water to which you have added a splash of vinegar. When done, let the fish cool, then remove the bones, and stir in with the rice. Season with chopped parsley, butter, and a pinch of pepper, and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.



## Primorska-Style Minestrone

### Ingredients:

2 l (8 cups) water or stock  
 1 kg (2 1/5 lb) diced vegetables – cauliflower, celery root, carrots, cabbage, leek, kohlrabi, etc.  
 50 g (1 3/4 oz) smoked bacon  
 2 tbsp oil  
 1 finely chopped onion  
 4 tbsp rice  
 2 tbsp tomato purée or 5 fresh tomatoes  
 2 tbsp parmesan cheese

Sauté chopped bacon and onion, then add vegetables, and fry for another ten minutes. Add water or stock, and let it simmer. When the vegetables are almost done, add rice, tomato purée, and salt. Sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese. If you are using fresh tomatoes, sauté them at the beginning with other vegetables.

### Ingredients:

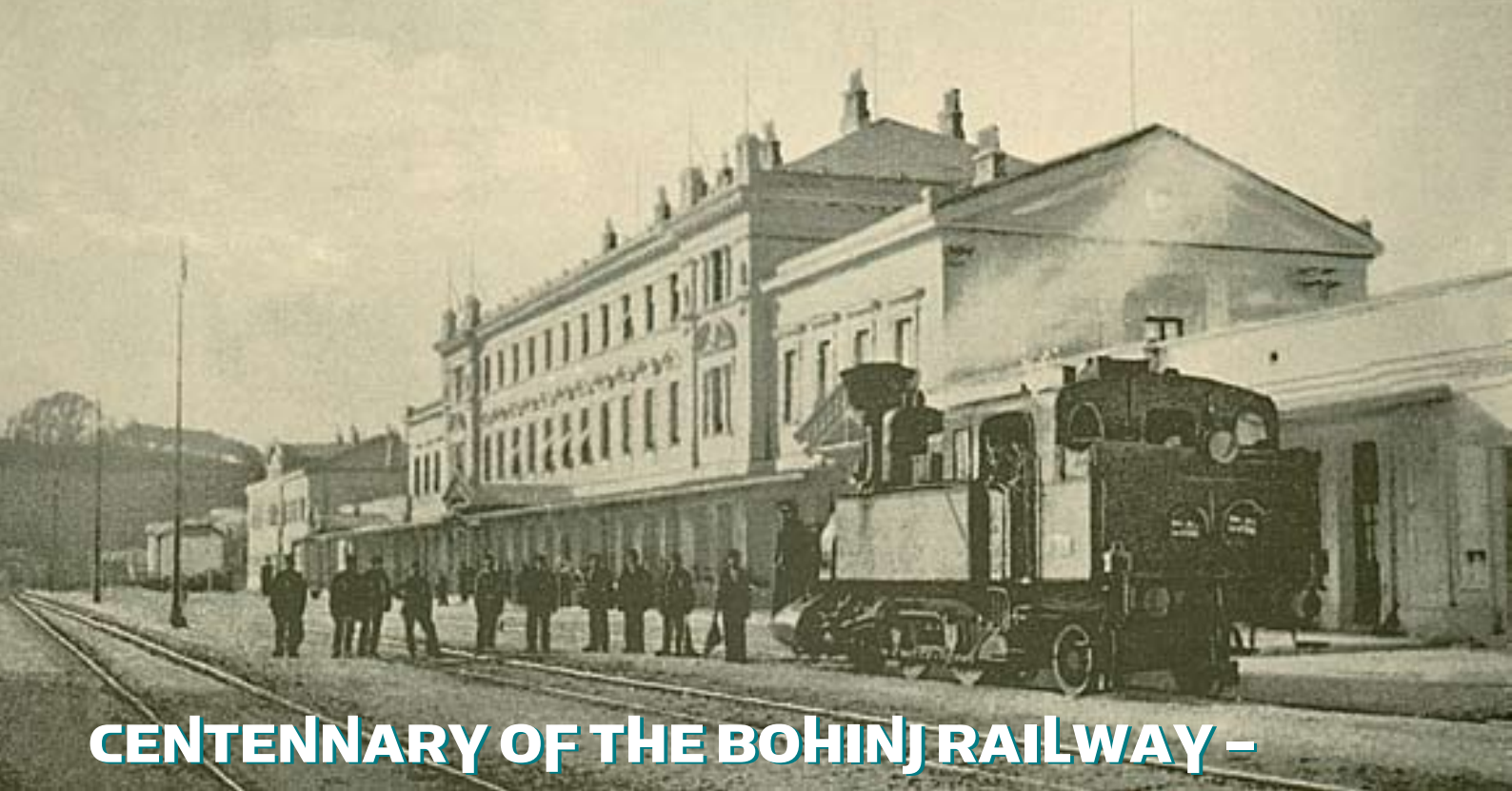
300 g (10 1/2 oz) minced beef  
 300 g (10 1/2 oz) minced pork  
 3 tomatoes  
 3 aubergines  
 parsley  
 garlic  
 pepper  
 salt  
 60 g (2 oz) breadcrumbs  
 60 g (3 1/2 tbsp) oil

Peel and seed aubergines and tomatoes (you can leave the skin on the tomatoes), and slice them into rings approx. 1cm (4/5in) thick. Mix chopped parsley, garlic, seasoning, and breadcrumbs. Place a layer of tomatoes in a baking dish, and sprinkle with the herb and breadcrumb mixture. Repeat the procedure with the aubergines and meat. Add oil and bake until all the water has evaporated and oil has been absorbed.

## Primorska-Style Aubergines



Source: Slovenske narodne jedi ('Slovenian National Dishes')



## CENTENNARY OF THE BOHINJ RAILWAY – RAILS CONNECTING THREE LANDS

Mojca Guzelj, photo: Archives of the Railway Museum of the Slovenian Railways

Built between 1900 and 1906, the Bohinj Railway was the connection between Central Europe and the Adriatic sea. It spans a 158 km (98 miles) section of the railway between the towns of Jesenice, Nova Gorica and Trieste, and is the final segment of the 717 km (445 miles) railway connection between Prague and Trieste, named Transalpina (or “Wocheinerbahn” in German). At the time it was built, the Bohinj Railway was a great improvement for the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire. The inaugural ceremony took place one-hundred years ago on Thursday, 19 July 1906. For its grand opening, the heir to the Austrian throne Franz Ferdinand rode the track in the royal train and opened the Bohinj tunnel, one of the most important railway tunnels along the new train route.

In the middle of the 19th century, the first rail connection between Vienna and Trieste was built and named the Southern Railway. Not long after that, they began thinking about a new connection which would connect Trieste to Central Europe. In 1901 the Vienna parliament passed a law on the Transalpina and its final section connecting Jesenice and Trieste was named the Bohinj Railway. At that time, the construction of the Bohinj Railway meant more than just a stage in the building of the monarchy's rail network. The new train connection with Trieste had a stimulating effect on the economic situation along the railway track, and it opened a new window into the world for the population of Bohinj, as well as new opportunities for development, mainly in tourism.

### Construction of the Railway – a Challenge

It took a solid five years from the passing of the law for the construction of the Bohinj railway to its inaugural ceremony. As many as 14,897 workers were involved in its construction, and the local population were joined by numerous Italians, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins and workers from other Austrian states.

The construction of the Bohinj railway is an impressive piece of civil engineering. Numerous tunnels and bridges made the construction extremely difficult. Water power was exploited for drilling with electric drills which were already being used at the time. They built three power stations for this purpose. Two of the most impressive feats of civil engineering were the Karavanke and Bohinj tunnels. Numerous cold springs, high water pressure and low water temperature of only 6.5 degrees Celsius made working in this tunnel especially difficult.

### The Ups and Downs of the Railway

The golden age of the Bohinj Railway lasted from its opening to the beginning of World War I. The railway carried the majority of cargo traffic from the port of Trieste, whose traffic



nearly tripled in size during this period, as well as being seen as the fastest and most comfortable form of passenger transport. The train ride from Trieste to Jesenice took four hours. In addition, the railway connected Trieste and all the larger towns along the railroad to many large and important European cities: Vienna, Prague, Munich, Stuttgart, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris and London.

With the onset of the Soča Front and the Italian offensive in 1915, the role and character of the Bohinj Railway were transformed. It was used exclusively for military purposes, and all civilian traffic had completely ceased. The railway was interrupted in many places during the conflict, and several bridges were brought down under artillery shells, including the Solkan bridge.

Another hindrance to the former and expected future glory of the Bohinj Railway were the new national borders: the southern section up to the middle of the Bohinj Tunnel fell to Italy, the northern section leading to Jesenice fell to Yugoslavia, and the section from the middle of the Karavanke railway tunnel fell to Austria. The demolished sections of the Bohinj Railway were then rebuilt by the year 1927, yet traffic along it did not resume until after 1930.

World War II was not kind to the railway either, and as if post-war renovations were not difficult enough, the new national border between Yugoslavia and Italy was an additional source of problems. After the signing of the peace treaty with Italy (in 1947), the majority of the railway fell to Yugoslavia, and, since Slovenia's proclamation of independence, the Bohinj Railway has been maintained by the Slovenian Railways (Slovenske železnice).

## Record Holders on the Bohinj Railway

The Bohinj tunnel is the longest tunnel running entirely over Slovenian territory (the Karavanke tunnel is divided between Austria and Slovenia). At its opening it was 6,339 m (6,932 yards) long. Events during World War II shortened it by 12 meters and also robbed it of the mighty portal on its northern end. Another record holder is the magnificent Solkan bridge with its stone arch spanning 85 m (93 yards). It is this technical achievement that ranks the Solkan bridge as the largest railway stone bridge and the second longest stone bridge in the world (after the German road bridge over the valley of Syratal in the town of Plauen). It was rebuilt in 1927 as a replica of its predecessor, blown up during World War I. Today, the Solkan bridge is an important part of local heritage, described as an engineering monument complementing the tourist offer of the town of Nova Gorica and its surrounding area.



## The Attraction of the Railway

The beautiful and diverse landscape of the Bohinj railway made it a truly exceptional alpine railway. It signified a triumph of Austrian knowledge, engineering and daring ambition. It brought the iron road (along with the other trappings of modernity) to places which had not even had a road connection before. The journey leading over high bridges, with mountain rivers foaming at the bottom of the deep gorges below, through numerous tunnels and narrow valleys where the iron road squeezes into the steep incline and cuts across hillsides, leaves few travellers unimpressed.

## The Bohinj Railway Today

On 19 July 2006, exactly 100 years will have passed since train traffic officially began on the Bohinj railway. The centenary of the Bohinj railway will bring together history, tourism and development. On 15 July 2006, the day chosen to celebrate the anniversary, trains will arrive in Nova Gorica from different directions. The train arriving from Jesenice along the entire span of the railway will bring the highest representatives of the state and other esteemed guests. Along its way, the train will make stops in the towns of Bled, Bohinjska Bistrica, Podbrdo, Kanal, and end its journey in Nova Gorica, where the main celebration will take place. At each of the train's stops, there will be a short commemoration prepared by the various municipalities. Thus, the entire Bohinj Railway will stir to life on this day.

From the tourist and commercial point of view, the Bohinj railway still represents an important connection today. Celebrating the centenary of the Bohinj railway is even more important in light of Slovenia's joining the European Union, as it connects countries which have been in conflict many times during the tumultuous 20th century, and spent more than half a century living on two sides of the so-called iron curtain. Today, as a hundred years ago, these countries are again part of the common European territories and are committed to the common goal of well-being and peace. In this respect, the railway carries great symbolic meaning.



## Anette Weber, Switzerland



Photo: Primož Lavre

Although I started to work as Director of Finance in Lek d.d. as of the beginning of 2006, I only really arrived here when I moved to Ljubljana in mid-April. As a small, beautiful and picturesque country in the heart of Europe, Slovenia makes a great tourist destination – but it makes an even greater place for feeling at home.

Having lived for several years in Switzerland and Japan, Slovenia often reminds me of both.

The Slovenes and Swiss share their enthusiasm (with me) for skiing and hiking, they have incredible mountains and picture-perfect landscapes, both have multi-lingual inhabitants, and are seeking consensus over confrontation. Both have relatively small domestic markets, hence have to be open to foreign investments and simultaneously enlarge their export quota to be successful in our ever globalising world. Switzerland realised this early on, and Slovenia's joining of the EU in 2004 and the introduction of the euro in January 2007 are definitely steps in the right direction.

In Japan and in Slovenia I experienced the peoples' love for books and literature – you will find nearly every person in Tokyo's subways lost in a book. I was equally impressed by the density of bookshops in Ljubljana, and to see that close to all bestsellers are translated into the Slovenian language. There is also a vibrant market for local Slovenian literature, and even one major National Holiday commemorates the

death of a poet. Book enthusiasts will not be disappointed by the second-hand book stalls at Ljubljana's antique market. I myself discovered an old (German) fairy tale book and a Grammar book for Slovenian learners...

In both countries, Japan and Slovenia, people always told me in a very reassuring and decisive tone, how difficult it would be for me to learn, not to mention to master, their languages. I managed to a certain degree in Japan, and started Slovene lessons with enthusiasm one month ago.

Right from the beginning, I was told with a certain amount of pride that the "dual form" is unique to Slovene among modern Slavonic languages, a form lost in all the others. Although this was mentioned to me as an example of the complexity of the language, I was rather intrigued by the concept and try to comprehend the cultural roots behind it. The dual form sounds to me like a unique attempt to show individualism and intimacy in the community or group – "we two" are more than one single individual, but can be immediately distinguished from the crowd. Most likely there is a more profound explanation for the roots and reasons of the dual, but for me it reflects part of the Slovenian soul: never wanting to be in the immediate centre of attention, but showing pride in being different from others: probably not the worst attitude.

On a more personal note, I am looking forward to the coming summer months and to exploring the coast line and country side of Slovenia. One of my goals is to climb Mount Triglav in August or September, but I am still pondering the best approach. Slovene colleagues have recommended the longer route, via the Valley of the Triglav Lakes, apparently one of the most beautiful tours in the Julian Alps and less crowded than the route starting from the Pokljuka Plateau.

Equally exciting will probably be to enter the mysterious Underworld of Slovenia, the endless caves and the inner lakes and waterfalls.

The only really "tourist places" I have seen so far are Piran and Bled – both stunning, and in their special way surprising. Bled looks almost like the perfect theme park for non- Europeans who want to experience Europe: a beautiful, clear lake, a little island with a small church in the middle, a castle on a hill, and snow-capped mountains in the background. Disney World imported Neu Schwanstein to Orlando – I wonder when Lake Bled will follow. And Piran was just wonderful: a little "Italian treasure" on Slovenian ground. It is a perfect place to end your weekend – leisurely sitting on a deck chair in a bistro, drinking an excellent glass of Slovene Malvazija or Chardonnay, gazing on the horizon and forgetting that you were originally posted here to work, but arrived to live!

## Nina Bostič Bishop, Melbourne



Photo: Personal Archive

My Australian story began five years ago when I met Chris whilst on holiday in Turkey. Before that, this vast and diverse continent rarely crossed my mind and, like the majority of Slovenes, the only time I would ever hear about it was if it made the evening news due to yet another shark attack, on New Year's Eve when, watching the merry bathers of Bondi Beach in Sydney, I wanted to escape the European winter, or when reading about giant spiders and dangerous crocodiles in one of the many travel diaries.

My first close encounter with the notorious spiders of Down Under happened two years ago when I visited Australia for five weeks. Due to my hysterical fear of reptiles and insects, Chris allegedly protected the area around our tent very well by emptying almost an entire bottle of barrier spray. It is not difficult to imagine how shocked I was when I discovered the visitor in the tent the following morning. I cried out and ran out of the tent. That particular spider was apparently all size and was not poisonous, but considering that Chris had never seen it before and could not identify the species, I remain sceptical to this day. As for Chris, being a typical Australian that he is, he only scared it out of the tent and then studied it for hours on the nearby stump. In this part of the world, nature has always been much stronger than man, which is why Australians have an almost inborn respect for it. There is no litter on Australian beaches and there are no cigarette butts or chewing gums on the streets. When I discovered another huge spider sitting on the inside of the lamp on my bedside table, my friend picked up the lamp, took it outside and released the spider. Despite her telling me over and over

that it was only a huntsman, which is harmless to humans, I will probably never get used to spiders. All of this provides great amusement to the Australians, who always find all the fuss that the Europeans make tremendously funny.

In the courtyard, possums keep me company. They strike me as half squirrels, half rats because they would eat anything as long as it is vegetarian. Currently, there are three in our backyard including a baby possum whose mother still carries him around in her pouch. I used to like them but now they annoy me because they defecate all over my freshly washed sheets. As possums are protected animals, there is only one way to get rid of them and that is by calling professional possum collectors who move them to one of the many Melbourne parks.

I have been living in Melbourne for almost a year now. Chris and I got married at the end of November last year at his parents' property, only two hours out of the city. I really enjoyed having a garden wedding, something I probably could not have back home. The sheep, another of Australia's icons, wore white ribbons around their necks and the cake was decorated with fresh roses in champagne colour. However, by six o'clock in the afternoon, the celebration came to an end for the Australian part of the family. There were only us two and my Slovenian family left, but ready to party into the wee hours. At first glance, weddings are a more important event than in Slovenia, at least as far as picking out the dress, food and decoration are concerned. Judging from the great variety of wedding magazines, ranging from wedding flowers, cakes, jewellery and dresses, weddings are, above all, big business in Australia. The aggressive media propaganda and a must-have attitude manipulate people to spend an average of \$20,000 on their wedding. Despite the high cost, they still fail to be as much fun as Slovenian weddings can be and the guests are not expected to stay and party with the newlyweds very long after the reception has ended, as is usually the case in Slovenia.

I have been teaching English as a foreign language at a language centre at the University of Melbourne for quite some time. It is something that I enjoy very much especially because I get to meet young people with very different cultural backgrounds. There are a lot of Koreans, Japanese and Chinese students, French, Turks; currently one of my students comes from Mozambique and one from Sudan. There are quite a few from South America and the UAE. They all share a common goal which is to pass an exam in the English language called IELTS, which is a condition for any foreigner who wants to study at any of the Australian universities. Recently, the topic of one of the lessons was stereotypes and all my students agreed that Australians are friendly, talkative sport enthusiasts who love drinking beer. This is not just a stereotype, but actual truth. On Sundays they all, including women, watch Australian footy, either as spectators or on TV in one of the pubs that are most crowded on Sunday afternoons. I will never stop wondering how in the world they begin a new working week with clear heads.

# PEOPLE

“I wish to be the best I can.”

Anja Hreščak, photo: Nebojša Tejić

“We simultaneously leave and remain. We remain in the memories of those who stay behind; we remain in our works; we remain and live in the traces we leave behind, whatever they may be. Requiem can be experienced as an ode to life and our legacy as well as to the traces that we leave behind in this time and space for those who remain and for those who are yet to come.”

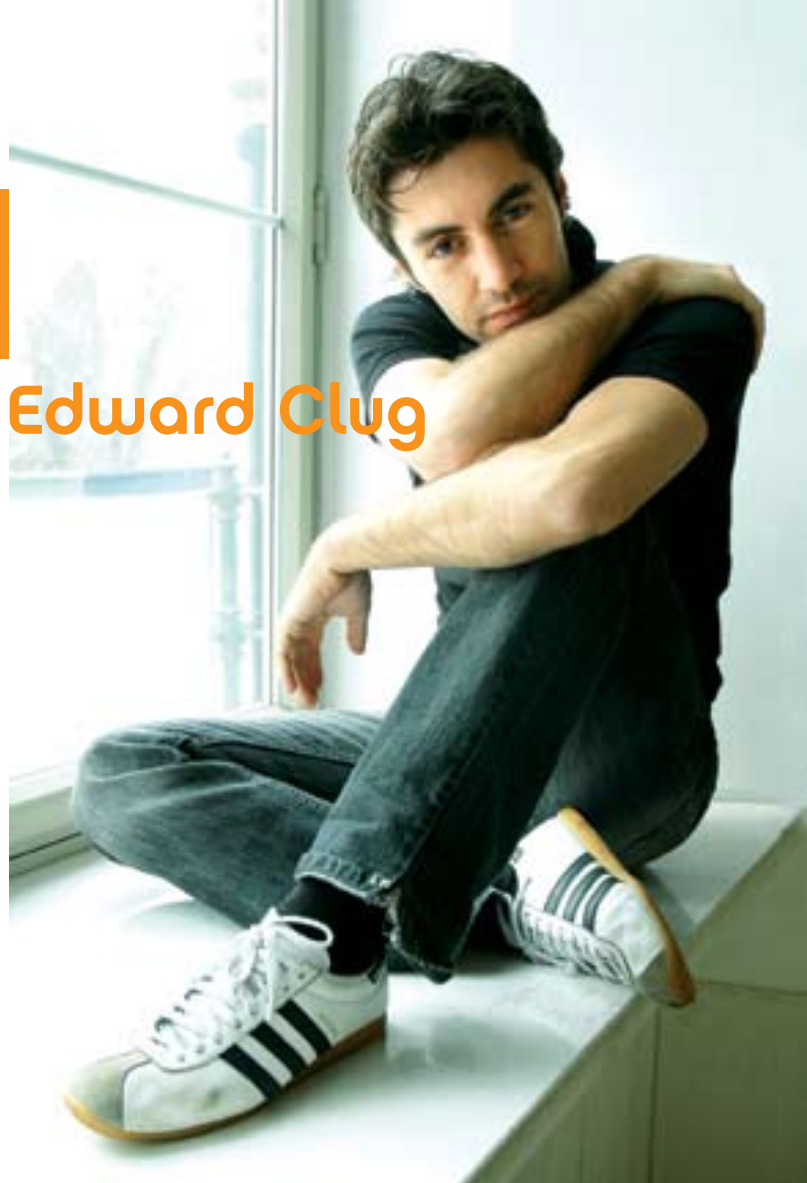
These are the words that ballet dancer, choreographer and director Edward Clug used to describe his latest dance project *The Architecture of Silence*, which opens on 25 June at the Križanke open-air theatre in Ljubljana. Combining two musical works, *Requiem* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and *Requiem for a Friend* by contemporary Polish composer and personal friend Zbigniew Preisner, Clug brings together the traditional and the modern, making this performance quite unique. The performance is also a product of the artistic cooperation between the two Slovene National Theatres – the Opera and Ballet Ljubljana and the Opera and Ballet Maribor. As many times before, Clug explores the traditional theme of the relationship between a man and a woman, their coming together and breaking up.

This performance is, however, just one of the many successful projects by Edward Clug, who was born in Romania and went on to study ballet at the state ballet school in Cluj-Napoca. Clug's career at the SNG Opera and Ballet Maribor started when his mentor Vasile Solomon was invited to work there in 1991 and Clug accompanied him. He was offered a one-year contract as a ballet soloist, but was given his first big chance by Tomaž Pandur who wanted Clug to be the choreographer of his performance *Babylon* in 1996. Now, Clug has been the ballet manager of the SNG Maribor for three years, and is currently a world famous dancer, choreographer and director. Clug describes his profession as tiresome on the one hand but the best source of energy on the other.

His feature debut was the performance of *Tango*, for which he was the sole choreographer and director, and in which he also had the lead role as a ballet soloist. Since its opening performance, *Tango* has won awards all around the world. It was awarded the title World's Best Choreography between the years 1993-1998. The Association of Ballet Artists of Slovenia awarded it the title of The Best Dance Act of the year 1999. At the 18th International Ballet Competition in Varna in 1998, Clug won the First Class Distinction for the best choreography of the last five years. A year later, he won a special award for choreography at the 3rd International Ballet and Modern Dance Competition in Nagoya, Japan. Due to its enormous success, *Tango* was included in the permanent repertory of the SNG Maribor. In 2002, Clug created *Lacrimas* ('Tears') as an upgrade of *Tango*.

*Tango* is a unique performance in that it does not have a single plot but is composed of a series of scenes with the stories of three couples at the centre of attention. With only a street in sight, the stage set is minimal. The hot-blooded Argentinean dance called tango is not a part of the

## Edward Clug



performance in the traditional sense since only the concept of tango as an energetic and passionate dance is used. The performance is given a special touch by two lead dancers 'speaking' sign language. "Tango was born in the streets and I wish to transfer it back to the streets of our childhood, our hearts and wishes. It is a story about all of us who have made tango a part of ourselves," Edward said of his creation.

Edward Clug's success, however, does not end there. His dance performances have also won awards all around the world. Besides the above-mentioned awards, he also received an award for the best choreographic miniature *One* in 1997, which he choreographed for the 3rd National Ballet Competition organised by the Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana (SNTOB Ljubljana). In 2000 he received the Povodni mož award for the choreography of *Bachelorette* in SNTOB Ljubljana's production. In 2001 he came third at the 9th international competition in Moscow for his performance *Solo for Two Chairs*. In 2003, he won third place and the audience award at the 17th International Choreographer Competition in Hannover. He also received the DBUS Award from the Association of Ballet Artists of Slovenia for the best ballet performance of the year 2003 and finally, in 2005, he received the Prešeren Foundation Award the most prestigious national award for artistic achievements.

Edward Clug said that he once wanted to be the best in the world, but today he wants to be the best that he can be, a motto in his artistic and personal life, in which he tries to seize every moment of the day.

## The World Lives and Breathes the World Cup



The coach Brane Oblak. Photo: Arsen Perić



The Slovenian national football team. Photo: Grega Wernig

### Luka Šefic

This month, Germany is hosting the 18th Football World Cup. There are thirty-two teams competing for the title of the World Champion. Brazil, who are five-time winners of the championship, and Germany, who are this year's hosts, have so far received the most media coverage. Brazil, the current holders of the title, once again boast a team of superstar players. Most Brazilian football players represent the best clubs and excite crowds around the world with their imaginative moves. Germany, led by former star striker Jürgen Klinsmann, have received a lot of criticism over the past few months. After the new coach introduced young players to the team, it performed badly in the run-up to the World Cup. With the World Cup returning to Germany after thirty-two years, the German public want to see their team at least reach the final. The best two teams will play on 9 July in Berlin. Constant comparison with the great German team of 1974, which beat the Netherlands in the final to become champions, puts a great burden on the current German side.

Brane Oblak, now aged 59, who is the coach of the Slovenian national team, is regarded as having been the best Slovenian football player and was indispensable player for clubs such as Schalke from Gelsenkirchen and Bayern from Munich, experienced the golden age of German football first hand. Oblak is one the former Yugoslavia's most famous football players. As a player in the Yugoslav team, he scored six goals in forty-six matches, including the World Cup in Germany in 1974. He started his football career with Svoboda, then played for Olimpija and Hajduk, before transferring to the famous German 'Bundesliga'. For his move from Split Hajduk to Gelsenkirchen, he earned a million German marks. After impressing for the team from the Ruhrgebiet-Ruhrpott Valley, he moved to the south and started playing for the great Bayern Munich. While playing for Bayern, he won a league title and left a permanent mark in Munich.

It might be said that Jürgen Klinsmann and Brane Oblak share a similar destiny. Like Klinsmann, Oblak is the coach of his national team, which has undergone a complete makeover. Excellent performances in the run-up for the 2000 European Championship and the 2002 World Cup have raised public expectations of success.

The first big championship Slovenia qualified for was the 2000 European Championship in Belgium and the Netherlands. The team's performance pleasantly surprised many football experts and football euphoria reached its peak, or so it seemed until the Slovenian team reached the World Cup four years ago. It was Srečko Katanec, a former Yugoslav international and player for the Italian team Sampdoria from Genoa, who took the team to the European Championship. Katanec, who played for the Yugoslav team thirty-one times and scored five goals, also took Slovenia to the Football World Cup in Korea and Japan in 2002.

The Slovenian national football team had good chances to qualify, but in the end their tactics proved insufficient to earn them a place in Germany. In the qualifying matches with Italy, Norway, Belarus, Scotland and Moldova they played aggressively and fought for the two top places until the very end but lost out to Italy and Norway. Italy qualified directly for the World Cup whereas Norway had to playoff with the Czech Republic for a place in the finals. The Czechs played better in both matches and became one of the last teams to secure a place in Germany.

Brane Oblak, who has coached Naklo, Rudar Velenje, Koper, Olimpija and FC Ljubljana, will continue to lead the young Slovenian national team. His invaluable experience as a player and coach will be vital in qualification for the 2008 European Championship, which will be held in Austria and Switzerland.



Judoist Lucija Polavder (left) won a bronze medal at the European championship in Finland. Photo: Grega Wernig

## BRONZE IN JUDO AND TAEKWONDO

Luka Šefic

The Slovenian martial arts teams continue to win medals at European and world championships. Recently, representatives of the Slovenian judo and taekwondo teams, both competing under Olympic rules, thrilled us with excellent performances at the European championship. Twenty-one-year-old Lucija Polavder from the Sankaku judo club won a bronze medal in Tampere, Finland. After Raša Sraka, Urška Žolnir and Petra Nareks had to retire from the championship due to injuries, Slovenian honour was saved by the former junior European champion in the absolute category, Lucija Polavder. Her excellent performances throughout this season are further proof that the coach of the Slovenian national team, Marjan Fabjan, has been directing the girls very well. Therefore, it is expected that the Slovenian team will only grow stronger in the future.

Like the female judo athletes, the taekwondo team also did well. Out of forty-two competing nations, the Slovenian team came in twelfth at the European championship in Bonn, Germany. Twenty-seven year old Tomaž Zakrajšek was the best of the all the Slovenes, coming third in the up to eighty-four kg category, and winning a medal for Slovenia again after eight years. Zakrajšek, a member of the Kang club, was born in Berlin and moved to Slovenia only a few years ago. His greatest achievements have been with the Slovenian team. After a severe injury, his career came to a standstill for a while, but now he is ready to face new challenges. Next, he will attend the world championship in Beijing next year, which is also a qualifying competition for the Olympic Games. Judging from his zeal and persistence, good news from the taekwondo team can be expected.

## NEXT MONTH

Selected by Anja Otavnik

### Cultural events:

- ▶ **19 June – 31 August, Ljubljana:** Festival Ljubljana 2006.
- ▶ **20 June – 15 July, Kranj:** Carniola Festival; international multicultural festival bringing together opera, pop concerts, classical music, folklore, events for children, and street theatre.
- ▶ **23 June – 8 July, Maribor:** 14th International Lent Festival.
- ▶ **27 June – 1 July, Maribor:** 18th Folkart International Folklore Festival.
- ▶ **28 June – 1 July, Cankarjev dom, Križanke, Ljubljana:** 47th Jazz Festival Ljubljana.
- ▶ **28 June – 2 July, Ljubljana:** Ana Desetnica; 9th International Street Theatre Festival.
- ▶ **June, July, August, Izola:** International Street Theatre Festival.
- ▶ **June – September, Postojna:** Postojna 2006; 8th International Youth Music Festival.
- ▶ **30 June – 14 July, Bled:** Bled 2006; 11th International Music Festival.
- ▶ **5 – 9 July, Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana:** 14th World Saxophone Congress 2006.
- ▶ **7 – 9 July, Otočec:** Rock Otočec 2006.
- ▶ **13 and 15 July, Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana, Ljubljana:** Les Fées du Rhin; opera in four acts by Jacques Offenbach.
- ▶ **19 July, Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana, Ljubljana:** Romeo and Juliet; ballet by Sergei Prokofiev.
- ▶ **21 – 23 July, Tolmin:** Metal Camp Festival 2006.
- ▶ **22 and 24 July, Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana, Ljubljana:** Love for Three Oranges; opera in four acts by Sergei Prokofiev.
- ▶ **29 June – 1 July, Ivarčko jezero lake, Koroška:** Reggae Lakesplash 2006.

### Sport events:

- ▶ **28 June – 2 July, Izola:** ISAF Nations Cup; World Cup sailing race.
- ▶ **29 June – 1 July, Škofja Loka:** 5th European Youth Orienteering Championships 2006.
- ▶ **6 – 9 July, Solkan:** Canoe/Kayak; ICF Slalom Racing World Championships Juniors.
- ▶ **7 – 9 July, Lipica:** International equestrian event.
- ▶ **15 July, Maribor:** Four nations athletics meeting.

## CULTURAL TRAILS

# The Savica Waterfall – a Touch of History and Romance



David Dolinar, Polona Prešeren, photo: STO

You would be hard-pressed to find a Slovene who is not familiar with the famous Romantic epic poem 'Krst pri Savici' (Baptism on the Savica), written by the greatest Slovenian poet, France Prešeren. The poet published this epic poem in book form in 1836, with a dedication to his friend Matija Čop who drowned in the Sava River a year before that. Of course, France Prešeren had visited the Savica waterfall on many occasions before, and he even mentions it in some of his shorter humorous poems. The epic poem takes place in the 8th century AD, the historical era of the christianisation of the Slovenes, as recorded by historians. The backdrop of the play is the breathtakingly beautiful countryside surrounding the town of Bohinj, including the Savica waterfall falling over the steep mountainside. Today, the 'Krst pri Savici' is characterised as a lyric-epic poem featuring romantic, historical and religious themes, and is considered one of the most profound Slovenian national epic poems. An interesting fact is that every period of Slovenian history is represented in this poem through symbols and hidden meanings.

The Savica waterfall is considered one of the most beautiful of Slovenia's two hundred and sixty waterfalls, most of which are located in the Alpine region. All of these waterfalls are highly popular hiking destinations and while most hold a cultural and historical significance, none of them surpass the Savica waterfall. The source of the Savica river is under the cliff of Komarče, rising almost vertically above the source, i.e. the waterfall. The Savica waterfall is seventy-eight meters high, and after abundant rainfall, it can reach as high as 600 meters for a short while. The waterfall's elevation above sea-level is 894 meters. The visible part of Savica gets its water from the Črno jezero (Black Lake) located 500 meters above it. A defining characteristic of this waterfall, even on a global scale, is that the underground current is split into two streams; the lower, right, one runs along an explored subterranean tunnel from the lake above, before leaping from



the cliff at a height of twenty-five meters. The left stream, seventy-eight meters in height, actually comes from a neighbouring lake fed by water from the lake above, which in turn feeds the right stream. So the Savica waterfall is made of a large and a small waterfall, which gush forth from their underground tunnels, each at its own height, only to meet in the pool below. Early visitors to the Savica waterfall who set out at daybreak are especially fortunate – as the first rays of sunlight catch the falling water, a spectacular rainbow forms over the waterfall. It is almost impossible to imagine a visitor to Bohinj not feasting his eyes on this waterfall, as it represents a touch of romance, especially for Slovenes, and unwillingly links it to history.

How do you reach the waterfall? There is a well-marked hiking trail leading to the waterfall, which begins at the Zlatorog Hotel by Lake Bohinj, taking you to this destination after a relaxing hour's hike. If on a day-trip by car, set out from the parking area by the Dom Savica guesthouse, following the sign to the road leading to the souvenir cottage, where there is an entrance fee to be paid. From here, the path leads over a stone bridge along a well-tended path with numerous steps. Fifteen minutes later you find yourself at a wooden pavilion, where a breathtaking view of the waterfall opens up.

**CULTURAL TRAILS**

**The Savica Waterfall –  
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