



Sinfo 10

ISSN 1854-0805

October 2013

The latest from Slovenia

ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA: **The Government has launched a campaign against the shadow economy**
IN FOCUS INTERVIEW: **Dejan Židan, MSc** CULTURE INTERVIEW: **Rok Biček**

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ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA 7

Slovenian government

The Government has launched a campaign against the shadow economy

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IN FOCUS INTERVIEW 10

Dejan Židan, MSc

Our Ministry is particularly the ministry of natural resources

Photo: MAE



CULTURE INTERVIEW 35

Rok Biček

A film is like an onion. Each layer brings a new tear.

Photo: Fabio Stoll

**SINFO – SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**

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Printed by: Littera picta d.o.o., Slovenia. Number of copies: 3630

Photo on the front page: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Government Communication Office: www.slovenia.siGovernment Communication Office: www.ukom.gov.siGovernment of the Republic of Slovenia: www.vlada.siSPIRIT: www.slovenia.infoSlovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry: www.gzs.siSlovenian Chamber of Craft: www.ozs.siJapti: www.japti.siLjubljana Stock Exchange: www.ljse.siStatistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia: www.stat.siState Portal of the Republic of Slovenia: <http://e-uprava.gov.si>

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Tanja Glogovčan, editor

Autumn smiles

Autumn is the time of harvest and celebration. At this time of year, we are looking forward to the gifts that nature brings us, which is why it is all the more important that we treat nature with respect. This October issue of the magazine will therefore focus on agricultural and environmental issues: it features an interview with the Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Dejan Židan, and places a special emphasis on the Government campaign entitled “Use your head: demand a receipt!”.

When the crops have been carefully harvested and stored, a period of culinary festivals begins. One such is the Taste Festival, which takes place from September to the beginning of October. There is also the innovative Simbioza project, which aims to promote e-literacy among the older population, with an emphasis on intergenerational solidarity, and is therefore related to the autumn of life. It is said that one of the reasons behind the project’s story is an inquisitive grandmother. Well, you’ll see! Solidarity is unfortunately not something that is appreciated enough in modern society. This issue is also explored in the debut feature film by Rok Biček *Class Enemy*, which raises the issues of hypocritical solidarity and the inability of individuals to communicate in society.

Slovenia is a country with beautiful, unspoilt nature: we should aim to preserve this and promote Slovenia as a country of sustainable tourism. Fortunately, it is still a country where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are primary attractions. Unspoilt nature and natural features give Slovenia a key competitive edge and are a common thread running through the cover story and core areas of Slovenian tourism.

In Slovenia, it is still possible to breathe freely, something that is also demonstrated by the success stories of innovative Slovenian companies. At the end of September, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia presented the most innovative Slovenian companies with different categories of awards for the best innovation. Here the main focus will be on the companies Vivapen, BSH Hišni aparati, Krka and Domel.

Since autumn has only just started, we invite you to visit one of the seasonal festivals or an organic farm, take part in a grape harvest, or simply make a toast with a glass of new wine. And, naturally, “buy local”, with a receipt, of course! This is a time of celebration. So let’s seize this opportunity to socialise.



Photo: GCO

Slovenia adamantly against the shadow economy

The Slovenian Government has submitted draft budgets for 2014 and 2015 to the National Assembly. The figures are merciless and clearly paint a very grave economic and financial picture of Slovenia, which is trying to balance public finances and at the same time ensure economic growth that would provide all-too-necessary jobs. The foreseen budget deficit will be reduced from this year's 1.5 billion euros to a little over 1 billion euros in 2014 and to 860 million euros in 2015. In terms of the share of gross domestic product (GDP), this means 2.9% in 2014 and 2.4% in 2015. In addition to the main goal of ensuring the stabilisation of public finances through the budget, characteristic of the proposed documents is an effort to maintain the level of the welfare state. As Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek noted at the presentation of the draft budgets in the National Assembly, with the reduction of the budget deficit to under 3%, one of the fundamental requirements for Slovenia's credibility in the EU would be fulfilled, while the Government was still allocating as much as is possible under the current circumstances to investments in knowledge and research. The growth of investments has also not been slowed down; under the new budget investments are combined with EU funds and are considerably more focused. The Prime Minister's announcement that she will link the adoption of the budgets to the vote of confidence in the Government also shows how important the draft budgets are for Slovenia's development.

The Prime Minister stated that political stability and the ability to realistically assess economic conditions are the key conditions to ensure the implementation of the proposed budget documents: "The question before us is: is the situation really so bad? The answer to this question and a real assessment of the situation are essential for making correct decisions, and decision-taking on the budget is one of the most significant of these at present." Pessimism is one of the greatest problems of Slovenian society today, so certain accomplishments that make the

picture more promising need to be pointed out – this Government has managed to reduce the number of unemployed and exports this year have increased by 2.3%. Furthermore, the budget, which as recently as six months ago showed a considerable deficit (800 million euros), is now, after the adoption of the revised budget, showing a surplus at the monthly level. As the Prime Minister said: "If we, in a state of general pessimism, overlook these two emphases, enthusiasm in two areas which are of key importance for future Slovenian development would be completely dampened for no reason at all. Only citizens with quality employment and high-quality export products or services can provide Slovenia with urgently needed human and financial resources to live and develop at the level of our expectations."

One of the possible budget sources that have not been adequately taken into account is the shadow economy. Tax avoidance is one of the more serious problems of modern countries, and one that exceeds national boundaries, and Slovenia is no exception here. According to Eurostat, EU Member States lose almost 20% of GDP because of the shadow economy; Slovenia loses even more – 23%. Estimates on the scope of the shadow economy differ considerably, which is understandable, as this is an area that is difficult to monitor, but there is no doubt that it is a serious problem. The Slovenian Government has therefore adopted a programme of measures against the shadow economy, including stricter supervision by the Tax Administration, market inspectors and other authorities and high taxes on assets the origin of which the owner cannot explain. Simultaneously with the implementation of these measures, a public campaign against the shadow economy will be launched to inform the public of the consequences of tax avoidance and to raise awareness on the importance and function of the state and on what is financed with the taxpayers' money. The campaign's slogan will be "Use your head: demand a receipt!".

Budget for the next two years

“Slovenia’s present situation and compliance with the commitments made to our European partners left us with little room to manoeuvre and presented us with difficult dilemmas.” With these words, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek began her presentation of starting points for the adoption of the budgetary amendments, for 2014 and 2015 before Deputies in the National Assembly.

She also provided three fundamental achievements essential to the Government’s efforts and in calculating the budget. The first is that the Government managed to reduce the budget deficit below three per cent; the second was that development would not halt due to debt, and the third was that investments will not be slowed down, since they will be combined with European funds and earmarked more precisely. Furthermore, the budget was more harmonised, without major cuts in social rights and pensions and without unilateral interventions into salaries, and above all, it is sufficient and, according to Prime Minister, it enables Slovenia to resolve its problems without foreign aid.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

In the Prime Minister’s concluding words, “the budget is the written plan of our joint future, which does not conclude our work, but only begins it. Our joint tomorrow will be a European, sovereign and social Slovenia.”

Visit to Serbia

Belgrade was the host city for a Serbian–Slovenian business conference attended by Slovenian Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek and Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić. Prime Minister Bratušek informed the participating businesspeople that 15 state companies were currently being privatised in Slovenia and invited Serbian investors to apply to calls for tenders.

At the event, which was held at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, Prime Minister Bratušek highlighted that the sale of Fructal, from Ajdovščina, to the Serbian company Nektar was a beneficial experience for both countries. She added that, with the benefit of its experience, Slovenia will be happy to aid Serbia in its process of integration into the EU. The Serbian Prime Minister said that the focus of talks with the Slovenian economic delegation will be increasing opportunities for Serbian investments in Slovenian companies. According to Prime Minister Dačić, there are great possibilities for cooperation, particularly in the areas of energy, traffic, information technology, tourism and agriculture.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA



There are more than 1,300 Slovenian companies registered in Serbia, employing approximately 35,000 people. According to data from the Statistical Office, trade in goods last year exceeded one billion euros.

Support for Slovenian structural reforms

Prior to the meeting of EU ministers responsible for equal opportunities in Brussels, the Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Anja Kopač Mrak, met with the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor.

During the discussion with the Slovenian Minister, Commissioner Andor emphasised that the European Commission supports Slovenia’s efforts for structural reforms needed in particular due to demographic changes and in particular population ageing. Minister Kopač Mrak and the Commissioner Andor agreed that the key problem in Slovenia was the banking system, rather than the reforms in the areas of competence of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Minister Kopač Mrak and Commissioner Andor also discussed other topical issues that concern Slovenia and the European Union, inter alia the political situation in the European Union, the youth guarantee scheme and the social dimension of the EMU.

Syria and the Western Balkans

The Slovenian President, Borut Pahor, has met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, in New York. Their talks focused on the developments concerning Syria and the Western Balkans. President Pahor also met with Slovenians living in New York, before attending the general debate at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly.

After the meeting of the President and the UN Secretary-General, the Office of the Secretary-General released a readout, stating that during the meeting they exchanged views on the situation in Syria and the Western Balkans, including the ongoing Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and the useful role of the Brdo informal forum. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed appreciation for Slovenia's role in the area of the responsibility to protect, the prevention of atrocities, and the promotion of accountability for international crimes.



Photo: Robi Poredoš/STA

The Slovenian President said that the world is aware of the important role of Slovenia, particularly in solving the issues concerning the Balkans. In the photograph: President Borut Pahor and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



On behalf of the Republic of Slovenia, the Protocol was signed by Ambassador Damjan Bergant, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the Council of Europe.

Convention on human rights

Slovenia was among the first seven countries to sign Protocol No. 16 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The main purpose of the Protocol is to unburden the European Court of Human Rights.

The signed protocol will extend the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights to the submission of advisory opinions to the national courts of the Member States of the Council of Europe. The national courts in the Member States will now have the option of submitting preliminary questions arising from the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In addition to Slovenia, the following countries signed the Protocol: Armenia, Finland, France, Italy, San Marino and Slovakia.

Young visionaries

At the innovation platform for the global activation of young people, Challenge: Future Summit 2013, young people from 35 countries co-developed ideas for the breakthrough of the Slovenian economy. They presented the ideas to Slovenian business people and political leaders at the conclusion of the challenge.

The question 'How to achieve a breakthrough of Slovenian economy with one billion euros?' was at the core of this year's forum. The most feasible ideas were presented to the commission of Slovenian business people and the Minister of Economy, Stanko Stepišnik. The minister pointed out, among other things, that the key problems of today's youth are the lack of interest in entrepreneurship, inadequate marketing of knowledge and unwillingness to take risks. All the participants agreed that changing the mentality of people in Slovenia is essential.



Photo: Nebojša Tejfel/STA

The thesis of this year's forum was that Eastern Europe is trapped between the more productive Western Europe and the cheaper Far East. A survey conducted by A.T. Kearney showed that young people are optimistic and believe that the solution for progress in Eastern Europe lies, above all, in knowledge and development.

Use your head: demand a receipt!

The Government has launched a campaign against the shadow economy

“Who is taking away my dignity, health, future, safety and secure old age?” is the question the new government campaign against the shadow economy is posing to all of us. In the fight against the shadow economy, Slovenia is not only amending legislation and carrying out inspection campaigns, but also

raising awareness and attempting to change people’s way of thinking in this regard. This is the objective of the government campaign “Use your head: demand a receipt!”. With the campaign the Government aims to halve the shadow economy in the medium term, i.e. within three years.

**VKLOPI RAZUM,
ZAHTEVAJ RAČUN!**



Use your head: demand a receipt!

The Government has set up a special website, <http://www.protisiviekonomiji.si/>, where all the information on the shadow economy can be found. In addition to regular communication activities, the Government will ensure the visibility of the website and other campaign activities by advertising on billboards, TV programmes and social networks. It will design profiles on social networks to enable an active response by citizens and also hopes that social partners and non-governmental organisations will actively participate in the campaign.

On 11 October 2013, the Government launched a campaign against the shadow economy: “Use your head: demand a receipt!”. It allocated 120,000 euros to the campaign this year and plans to allocate 240,000 euros next year. At the government level, the activities in the fight against the shadow economy are being coordinated by the Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Dejan Židan. It is a fact that in Europe more than one-fifth of all public funds are lost because of tax evasion. In Slovenia, the shadow economy amounts to between eight and ten billion euros, and public treasuries lose some 100 million euros for every “shadow” billion euros. However, the shadow economy is not only an economic problem – it is also a moral problem. With its active fight against this phenomenon, Slovenia hopes to become one of the countries where it is considered morally wrong not to pay taxes.

Tax evasion increases further in times when the economic and social situation is deteriorating. Indeed we often encourage the shadow economy ourselves, simply by considering it normal and tolerating it. Therefore it must be dealt with comprehensively, with incentives and the elimination of its main causes on the one hand and supervision and sanctions on the other.

The end goal will only be achieved when the measures stimulate a long-term change in our behaviour and in the awareness of all of us – consumers and companies alike – that owing to the shadow economy there is less money for schools, kindergartens, scholarship grants, healthcare, social security, investments in infrastructure and a clean environment, and other public goods provided by the state.

The document “The control of the shadow economy in the Republic

of Slovenia” determines sectoral policies and horizontal measures focused on the detection of the shadow economy, the tightening of punitive policy and prevention, particularly in terms of raising awareness that shadow economy actions (e.g. undeclared employment and work, tax evasion, non-payment of contributions, and non-invoicing) are socially unacceptable.

“If the whole country comes together to fight it, there is a real possibility that the level of the shadow economy can at least be halved in a reasonable period,” said Minister Židan. “It is my hope that every person in Slovenia will see the fight against the shadow economy as a joint project, because the shadow economy eats away at a secure old age and youth, and at a safe and functional healthcare system. The fight against the shadow economy means a better life in this country,” he declared.

“If the whole country comes together to fight it, there is a real possibility that the level of the shadow economy can at least be halved in a reasonable period,” said Minister Židan.

Local, seasonal, high-quality food

From farm to fork

Consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of local food and its quality. In addition to knowing exactly where the food on their plate comes from, consumers who buy local and seasonal food support, first and foremost, sustainable development and

care for the environment. To promote the quality of locally produced food, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of the Republic of Slovenia has recently launched a project which has received a good response from consumers.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

The EU integrated approach to food safety aims to assure a high level of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health within the European Union through coherent farm-to-table measures and adequate monitoring, while ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market.

By adopting the “from farm to fork” approach, the Ministry wants to encourage consumers to buy locally produced and processed food with a view to reducing food dependency and promoting greater local self-sufficiency.

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Following the initiative, consumers are considerably more informed about the benefits of locally grown food, as many of them did not know what a decision to eat local food entailed or where they could get relevant information to help them decide what products to buy. On the other hand, this also provided an opportunity for food producers to promote their activity and products at the open days.

The open days are organised on a regular basis as part of the project to enable consumers to get the most relevant information directly from the producers. They are held at a time when produce is fully grown and ready to be picked and harvested. Local food producers, namely food-processing companies and co-ops, are also opening their doors.

WHY IS LOCAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY IMPORTANT?

The project initiators are convinced that sufficient local food production, processing and consumption are particularly important for guaranteeing national security during economic

crises. This reduces dependency on foreign trade, which is particularly important in the event of constrained global supply. Self-sufficiency also encourages the cultivation of rural areas, preserves jobs in these areas and in the food-processing industry, and helps reduce poverty and social inequality.

Furthermore, self-sufficiency in food significantly contributes to the protection of the environment. Long transport of food-stuffs increases the use of fossil fuels, noise and air pollution, the use of packaging, and the use of artificial colourings and preservatives.

IMPORTANT SHORTER DISTANCES

Because of the shorter distances between producers and consumers, locally produced food is of better quality, has a higher nutritional value and higher vitamin content, and is healthier. According to experts, Slovenians are more and more aware of the importance of Slove-

nian agricultural production and locally produced food, and all the more so in the current times of austerity, when food is highly valued and appreciated. The Ministry, however, also encourages consumers to buy local food because this has a wider social significance. In these difficult times, buying locally produced food also sup-

ports the Slovenian economy. By increasing the consumption of local produce, we will create new jobs, thereby enabling the survival of all those in the food supply chain. Moreover, a sustainable local supply chain significantly contributes to the preservation and development of rural areas and to harmonious regional development.

Slovenia is currently not self-sufficient, as it does not satisfy its domestic demand for agricultural produce and foodstuffs through domestic production. That is why it is vital to provide food to local people through sustainable domestic production. However, the level of self-sufficiency in Slovenia is much higher when it comes to animal products than it is for plant products. The statistics show that, from 2001 to 2010, the level of self-sufficiency was especially low in vegetables (31% in 2010) and cereals (56% in 2010). In 2010, Slovenians consumed on average 121 kg of cereals (of which 100 kg was wheat), 94 kg of meat (of which 42 kg was pork and 20 kg beef), 70 kg of potatoes and 90 kg of vegetables per capita. In a year, Slovenian citizens consumed on average 36 kg of sugar and 10 kg of eggs and drank nearly 38 litres of wine per capita.

In these difficult times, buying locally produced food also supports the Slovenian economy. By increasing the consumption of local produce, we will create new jobs, thereby enabling the survival of all those in the food supply chain.

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



Main Ljubljana market offers a wide selection of vegetables and fruit, but also dairy products, bread, meat, sausages, that are brought it every morning directly from the farms nearby. There is also a special section with eco products.

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



Farm-to-table (or farm-to-fork) refers to the stages of the production of food: harvesting, storage, processing, packaging, sales, and consumption.

Dejan Židan, MSc

Minister of Agriculture and the Environment

Our Ministry is particularly the ministry of natural resources

Dejan Židan, MSc, was born on 16 October 1967 in Maribor. Before starting his political career, he acquired his professional experience mainly in the field of veterinary medicine. He also has business experience; he was the chairman of the management board of Panvita Group and KG Rakičan d. d. He cooperated in the development of the Slovenian agricultural and food processing chain comprising various activities including arable farming, feeding stuff production, pig and poultry breeding as well as slaughter and food processing and 'green' energy production. At the end of 2003 he was, as an external associate of the Veterinary Faculty in Ljubljana, elected and appointed as a professional adviser for porcine health and reproduction. In June 2007, the Senate of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Maribor awarded him the title of visiting expert of the Faculty. He started his first term as the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food on 5 May 2010 and led the Ministry until the appointment of a new Minister on 10 February 2012. At the National Assembly elections in 2011, he was elected a Deputy in the National Assembly in the electoral district of Murska Sobota. Until the formation of the Government led by Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek and his re-appointment as the Minister, he chaired the Committee for Agriculture, Forestry, Food and the Environment.



Photo: MAE

Photo: Tinkara Zupari/STA



The Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment is aware that the level of self-sufficiency in Slovenia is too low. Thus the objective of the Ministry is to improve self-sufficiency by 2020. In order to attain this objective, the Ministry is striving to ensure a stable environment for all farmers.

The conclusion of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy at the EU level also defines the new financial perspective for the period 2014–2020. In what way will the stability of the food sector be ensured and what does that mean for Slovenia?

The objective of the Common Agricultural Policy is to ensure enough qualitative, safe and affordable food for the people of the European Union. It also includes additional objectives, such as the care for the countryside and natural resources. 2014 will be a hybrid year from the perspective of agricultural policy because the negotiations ended with a delay of at least one year. Many newly approved measures will not be in force yet because Member States do not have time to implement them. Furthermore, all four fundamental regulations will be adopted by the European Parliament only in November and thus some old and some new measures will be implemented in 2014. Slovenia will receive enough funds for agriculture, forestry and food during the period 2014–2020. About 950 million euros will be earmarked for direct payments and 1.1 billion euros for the rural development programme. The EU financing for this period is one hundred per cent guaranteed. Our objective for 2020 is particularly to

ensure enough food for tomorrow.

Does Slovenia have enough agricultural land to ensure self-sufficiency?

Our objective is not self-sufficiency, our objective is food security. Slovenia does not have enough agricultural land and thus will never be self-sufficient. On the other hand, there are many forests and with 60 per cent of wooded areas, Slovenia is almost at the top of the EU. However, when speaking about agricultural land, the ratios are incorrect from the European perspective. There are two-thirds of grassland and only one-third of fields and gardens. Currently, the percentage of self-sufficiency in vegetables is between 30 and 40 per cent, somewhere around 38 per cent. We wish to achieve 70 per cent of self-sufficiency by 2020. And in other segments, such as for example milk production, we wish to stabilise the production.

An imbalance between the stakeholders in the food supply chain has been obvious for a while now. What measures have or do you still plan to introduce to adjust these imbalances?

The main role in this chain play the consumers who with their purchasing decisions determine what will happen to the chain.

As consumers, we are not sufficiently aware of this. The fact is that imbalances appear in the chain which show that one link is stronger than the other and that is a typical problem in the EU, which has already established in 2008 that imbalances exist and that the commercial sector is significantly stronger if compared to the production. And that is not fair market economics. Since this is also the case in Slovenia, we adopted a code which defined the relationships within the chain in 2011, and we are currently preparing a new version of the Agriculture Act. We are actively interfering with payment deadlines within the food chain. We also have a clear position on unacceptable business practices.

Many informative and promotional activities are implemented by the Ministry. Are you successful?

We are, but we want to do more. We particularly strive for the consumers to understand that it is in their interest to buy and consume locally produced food. Not only because this allows local farmers, craftsmen or industrial workers to have work, or because this method also contributes to the state budget which we all wish for, but because local food is important for us and our children, since one of the goals is for our children

The objective of the Common Agricultural Policy is to ensure enough qualitative, safe and affordable food for the people of the European Union. It also includes additional objectives, such as the care for the countryside and natural resources.



The Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment has been intensely involved in the promotion of locally produced food for some time. By purchasing such food, we can greatly contribute to the revival of the Slovenian economy.

to have better quality food in schools and kindergartens. We promote this with the Slovenian Breakfast, but there are many such activities. We have also noticed that people's attitudes towards food have changed in recent years and we are becoming more aware of its significance.

You have already mentioned that Slovenia is rich in forests. A general public estimate is that the utilisation of this wealth is not sufficient. How are you tackling this challenge?

It is true, Slovenia is rich in forests. I think that not enough forests are under state control i.e. public property; the number amounts to less than 20 per cent. On the other hand, private forests are too fragmented, which seriously affects forest management. We have prepared a multi-year wood plan which among other things dictates limitation of entire clearings. The effect of climate changes is also great on Slovenian forests. We are aware of the importance of the timber industry and we try very hard to improve the utilisation of the wood wealth. In the past, the timber indus-

try employed between 30,000 and 40,000 people. The current number is 10,000, which means that many companies simply closed down. The reasons vary: the loss of markets, unsuccessful takeovers of companies, etc. A part of the strategy, with which we want to change the situation in this field, is 'Wood is Beautiful'. This project is a strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology in which we have different responsibilities. On the basis of this strategy, we also want to offer new jobs. It is estimated that at least 20,000 jobs could be made available. The strategy includes measures at the level of legislation and the co-financing of investments. In the future, the wood industry will have greater strategic importance.

What is your position on the relationship of agriculture towards the environment?

Our Ministry is particularly the ministry of natural resources. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment is a typical European ministry, which ob-

serves natural resources. The farmers are frequently the target of unjustified complaints that they are the ones polluting nature. However, the fact that the agricultural practice has significantly changed in the last decade is frequently overlooked. Particularly in Slovenia which generally speaking does not enable intensive agriculture. It is true that not enough organic agriculture is present. A substantial section of agriculture in Slovenia can be recognised as integrated agriculture, which does not equal organic, but is nevertheless above standard if compared to classic agriculture. The new agricultural policy, whose implementation will begin in 2014, has a guidance called 'greening of agriculture'.

Organically produced food is not cheap. How will you persuade people to choose Slovenian organic produce and products?

It is essential to support organic agriculture and encourage consumers' awareness that this food is worth more money because it is the healthiest. About four per cent of farms in Slovenia

We particularly strive for the consumers to understand that it is in their interest to buy and consume locally produced food.

follow the principles of organic agriculture. The measure being implemented is the transitional period of three years, and simultaneously, the amount of direct payments a farm receives while being redeployed has also been doubled. We want to prevent business difficulties of organic farms in the first three years of their activities. The number of organic farms is growing. At the moment, we particularly observe market paths, because if there is a market then the farms may also see a business opportunity and redeploy quicker. As far as sales at home are concerned, I have noticed that farmers are reporting that sales at home are growing. The new Agriculture Act will also ensure that the farmer will only be a farmer, which means that they will only be able to sell their own products and not someone else's as well. As a result, the consumers will be less distrustful because they will know what they are buying. And finally, the state will have better control of this field.

Is Slovenia sufficiently successful in protecting its products?

The Ministry always supports an initiative from producers to protect their products. We support

them professionally and also officially according to bureaucratic procedures at the level of the EU. Protected food products reflect the beauty of the EU. Europe is diverse and thus also attractive and beautiful. From the viewpoint of producers, it is also a business opportunity. I personally wish that producers recognise this field as a business opportunity. And I also wish that Slovenian producers and farmers acquire great profit in the future. If they are successful and strive for profit, then Slovenia will also have jobs for the young.

What about linking of farmers?

Of course, we want more integration. Not only between organic farms, but also other farmers. There is a lot of reserve. In the neighbouring countries, e.g. Austria, Switzerland and Germany, co-operations have a long tradition. These countries know that it is beneficial to have a uniform supply and sale. Such manner of organisation started in Slovenia 150 years ago, and was interrupted after the Second World War. Great moves are planned in this field.

How successful is the drawing of funds from the Cohesion Fund?

The Ministry is responsible for the environmental section of the cohesion policy which is of strategic significance for Slovenia. It helps resolving certain challenges which are in the explicit interest of citizens. The cohesion policy in the field of the environment helps resolve drinking water supplies which are very important in the periods of drought. It is vital that water systems are constructed in a manner to function as a kind of absorber. The cohesion policy also helps us in the treatment of wastewater, in protecting ourselves from flooding and to process waste that is produced during our lifetimes. Unlike the rural development, the cohesion policy was not linear. There was concern that we do not have enough projects to draw from the European funds. Due to good policy, we have prepared more projects than there are cohesion funds. The supply of drinking water was recognised as the priority task. Our position is that water must remain a public asset. The fact that we have extremely accelerated activities in this field, i.e. cohesion funds, is also displayed in the growth of investments in construction in Slovenia.

The cohesion policy in the field of the environment helps resolve drinking water supplies which are very important in the periods of drought.

In 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment dedicated 800 thousand euros for generic promotion, of which more than 500 thousand will be allocated for a promotional campaign for locally produced food.

Photo: Tarmino Petelinšek/STA





Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

Dejan Židan, the Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, supports the values, which he as a Minister strategically realises in his Ministry, with his personal example. He is active in sports; he particularly enjoys Nordic walking and hiking and he also appreciates locally produced food.

We must be more aware of the fact that the non-payment of taxes is a morally contentious act harmful to everyone. The frequent question is what is the reserve in this field. I personally estimate that the reserve amounts to at least an inflow of 200 million to the state budget.

The Slovenian Government is also striving to reduce the grey economy. You are the president of the governmental committee for economy and the coordinator of the project for grey economy control in Slovenia. Which measures does the Government plan and which will be implemented by your Ministry?

Agriculture does not exceed three per cent within the problem area of the grey economy. The grey economy is too abundant in Slovenia and elsewhere in the EU. The current calculations in the EU show that 20 per cent of cash disappears due to the non-payment of taxes. According to some experts, this percentage is even higher in Slovenia and can exceed eight billion or more, even if the statistical data is 50 per cent lower. And that may denote two things that we do not want. Those who duly pay taxes are excessively overburdened and the state budget

is still empty. Whereas those who do not pay taxes compete unfairly against those who pay taxes and that is unfair competition. The governmental measures have two starting points: all sectors of the Government had to establish if there were any legislative holes in their fields which additionally enable the grey economy. Our Ministry discovered certain deficiencies in the fields of wine production, dairy and bakeries and some other industries, which are being resolved at a Ministry level. Then, there are also the so-called horizontal measures, whose holders are the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The implementation of one of the important measures began on 1 July, i.e. tax-certified cash registers in the form as seen in Canada. In September, the Government also adopted an additional

measure – a tax gap in the Tax Procedure Act. The Act requires that large assets and all taxes thereof must be proven. That is very positive news, which I was especially glad to hear. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has also already made some significant steps. The Prevention of Undeclared Work and Employment Act was harmonised with social partners, and so was the Labour Inspection Act. With these measures and the informing of citizens, the results will undoubtedly follow. We wish that the social awareness in Slovenia changes. We must be more aware of the fact that the non-payment of taxes is a morally contentious act harmful to everyone. The frequent question is what is the reserve in this field. I personally estimate that the reserve amounts to at least an inflow of 200 million to the state budget.

Despite all the difficulties, I still love farming!



Photo: Personal Archives

I have been earning money from farming for over a decade. The land called to me again after my plans to earn a living as a car mechanic didn't work out. I was faced with an opportunity that was too good to pass up – the farm taken over from my parents, good land in Istria, a sunny location, good-quality soil, great demand for Refošk (Refosco)... But it isn't easy. Farming demands the whole person. In fact more than one person: it's best if the whole family is dedicated to it. In 1998, we started to plant vineyards on my farm. My first vineyard had a thousand vines yielding 8,000 litres of Refošk a year; today I have 60,000 vines producing 480,000 litres of wine a year and my own, well-established trademark, Rodica. In the meantime, the Association of Winegrowers of Slovenian Istria was established and I was elected its president. Winegrowers have also started to educate themselves, which is a good thing in my opinion. In 2006, greater awareness and, of course, market requirements led me to organic winegrowing, where only copper preparations and sulphur may be used for spraying the vines. There's no use of standard pesticides or nitrogen, in fact the use of chemical

agents is altogether very restricted. I am proud to say that my method of tending vines has not changed much from my parents' time. They also did not use chemicals. However, they had a little less knowledge and they let themselves be led by the chemical companies. I am glad that we have such a favourable climate here in Istria. I am also pleased to have brought the farm from its modest beginnings to the level at which it is today and created my own exhibition room. The advantage of the exhibition room is that buyers can now come to us and we do not have to go around the world and present our wine at various fairs. We used to have a winegrowers' consortium to improve sales and facilitate joint presentation on the market, but it did not work out. Unfortunately, there is no umbrella body at the state level to deal with winegrowing effectively. We have to manage on our own. The financing of development is also a problem. So there are many unsolved issues demanding answers and prompt solutions. Nevertheless, farmers in Slovenia love farming despite the problems we face.

Slovenia green

Slovenia green is a story of green and unspoilt nature



Photo: Dunja Wedem/SPIRIT

Green is the country's dominant colour, thanks to its extensive forests and other areas of greenery. Because there are few countries in the world that are so green, and because Slovenia wants to conserve its nature for future generations, green tourism is being developed.

Slovenia is a country with beautiful, unspoilt nature; its unique natural features offer excellent conditions for the development of green tourism:

- With about 65% of forest cover, Slovenia is the third most forested country in Europe.
- As much as 36% of the area of Slovenia is included in the Natura 2000 network.
- One-fifth of the Slovenian coast falls under the protected area.
- By the quantity of river water per capita, Slovenia is among the richest countries in Europe.
- Altogether, Slovenia has approximately 28,000 kilometres of waterways, about 1,300 lakes with a surface area of more than one hectare and 46.6 kilometres of coast.
- Its more than 22,000 animal and plant species place Slovenia among the countries with the richest flora and fauna in Europe.
- In our country, a primeval forest exists only 60 kilometres from the capital city of Ljubljana.

The story of the green (of pristine green nature and a responsible attitude towards the environment, residents, tourists and employees alike) makes the very core of the identity of the national brand "I FEEL SLOVENIA".

Natura 2000 is a European network of special protected areas, established by the EU Member States, which are regarded as priority and ecologically important areas of Europe. Its main objectives are to preserve biodiversity in general, and animal and plant species and habitats that are rare or already endangered in Europe in particular, and to maintain the system of natural values for future generations.

I FEEL SLOVENIA BRAND

The story of the green (of pristine green nature and a responsible attitude towards the environment, residents, tourists and employees alike) makes the very core of the identity of the national brand "I FEEL SLOVENIA". Unspoilt nature and natural features are the competitive edge Slovenia has, providing the basis for Slovenia's cover story and core areas of the Slovenian tourism offer.

The "green" Slovenian experience lingers on in one's memory. Its calmness symbolises the harmonious coupling of both individualism and the development of society. And emanating out of the incessant Slovenian pursuit of their desires, there is an infectious energy. Slovenia motivates you to set about doing what you have always wanted to do with a sense of excitement. It encourages you to do something for yourself. After you experience the essence of Slovenia, your senses are heightened, giving you an energy not felt before, yet at the same time soothing you. A holiday in Slovenia restores your balance. Not least because in Slovenia you are always in touch

with the elements, whether it is water, the scent of a forest or the authentic taste of the food.

The main target groups of visitors to Slovenia as a tourist destination include hikers, cyclists, and lovers of various water sports and other active leisure pursuits in close contact with nature.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable (synonyms: green, ecological) tourism is a broad concept; Slovenia has adopted it as a fundamental policy of its tourism development in the future. Sustainable tourism means eco-friendly travels to destinations where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the main attractions and where climate impacts are minimised. Choosing green travel destinations means supporting local restaurants and hotels, buying handicraft products, and using local services with the aim of helping the economy and minimising negative impacts on the environment and the community.

Originally, the term "GREEN" referred only to environmental

issues, but nowadays it encompasses all aspects of sustainable development, based on the four fundamental principles of UN-WTO: environmental, social, economic and climatic (the so-called "quadruple bottom line" of sustainable tourism). Green tourism minimises the impacts of tourism on the environment and maximises its adaptation to climate change. Slovenia supports the promotion of green tourism with the positioning innovative slogan "SLOVENIA GREEN".

In essence, green tourism is a form of responsible tourism in natural, sensitive, intact, remote and generally protected areas, which tries to minimise its impacts on the environment. Self-evidently, this applies to a more limited range of travels, i.e. to individual tourism.

TOURISM AND PERMACULTURE

Today, an ever-increasing number of people are discovering the benefits and joys of permaculture as a way of life. Permaculture can be described as an ethical system of planning, suitable for food production, land use and house building alike, and mutual coop-

Sustainable tourism means eco-friendly travels to destinations where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the main attractions and where climate impacts are minimised.

In terms of relative forest cover Slovenia is third in the European Union, after Finland and Sweden.

Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik/SPIRIT



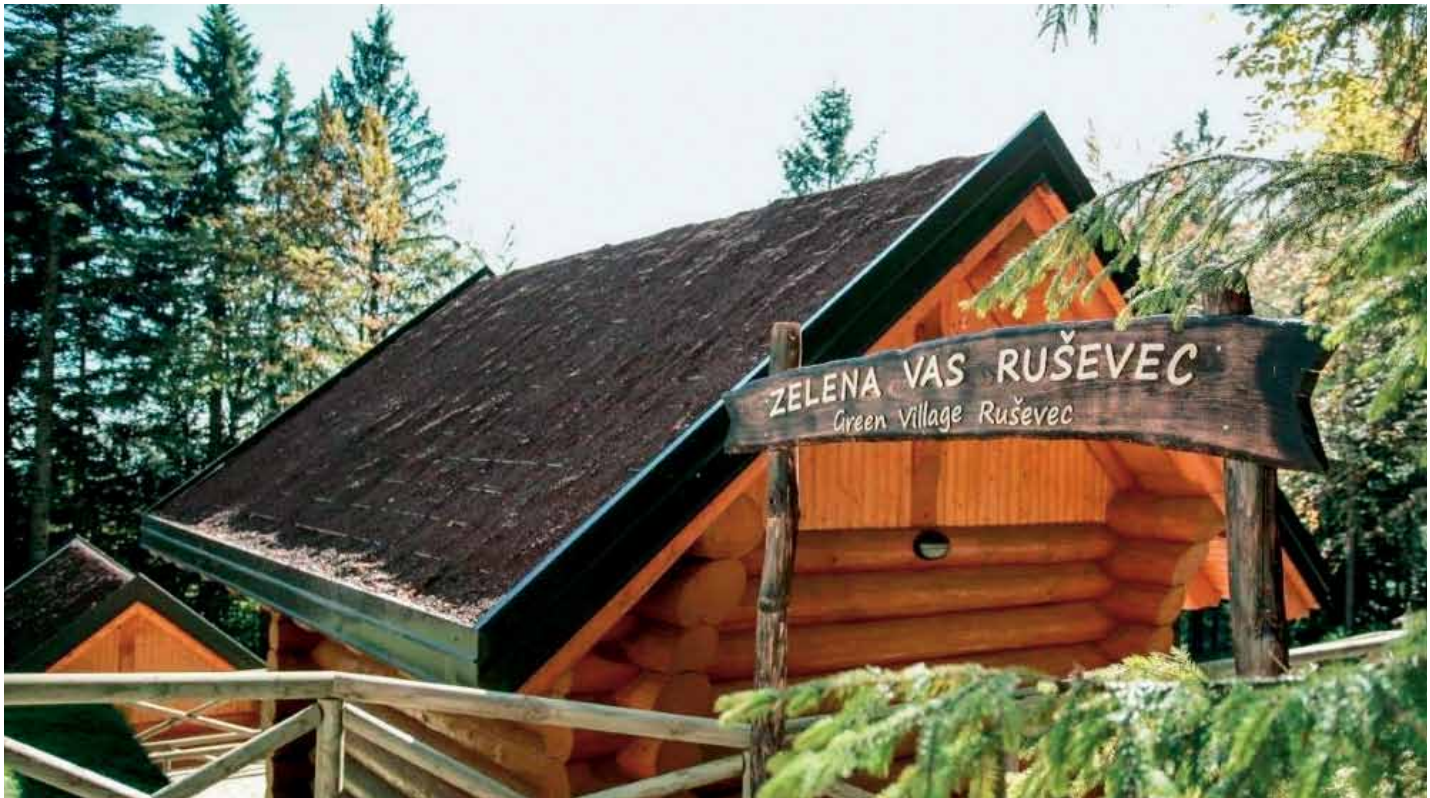


Photo: Archives of Zelena vas Ruševac

In March 2013, the investor received a confirmation of the patent for his technological inventions in the construction of the herb garden and beehive and for the Green Village of Ruševac with its permacultural circle as a whole.

It represents a linkage of ecology, landscaping, organic agriculture, architecture and agroforestry.

Collage of eco-villages - much more than just buildings

eration of people in all these processes. It represents a linkage of ecology, landscaping, organic agriculture, architecture and agroforestry.

In the region of Pohorje, in the north-east of Slovenia, an eco village within the framework of the Natura 2000, where it is possible to experience the natural, organic and authentic way of life, was created this year. Usually, the term eco village refers to sustainable settlements in general: such settlements may be located in urban areas as well as in unspoilt na-

ture. The green village of Ruševac, which was officially opened on 4 October, is intended mainly for tourists. This is a fabulously beautiful "boutique" village, which is also interesting because of its innovative permacultural circle with ten stations: herb garden, beehive, recycling centre and compost, heat pump, biological wetland, eco cottages, green roof, water tank, natural organic swimming pond, and permaculture garden with raised beds.

The idea of building a permacultural circle was to acquaint

visitors with the laws of nature, to make them understand the importance of its preservation and raise their awareness of the impact that nature and its beauty has on them. The permacultural circle is also intended for educational purposes: for all those who wish to understand nature in full sense of the word.

Sources:
www.slovenia.info
www.ekovas.si
www.rusevec.com



Photo: www.ekovas.si

Slovenian innovations

On the wings of success

People come face-to-face with innovations every day, although they may not realise their importance with their normal use. What was yesterday's innovation or novelty today is a useful product with a new added-value, which we took up and made our own. Innovations are designed with the aim of increasing the applicability. They are often developed out of people's needs when

looking for new functionality which is required in the new circumstances which humanity faces every day. By developing new technologies, new products and services, we are improving our quality of life and business efficiency. Therefore we often say that innovations are the driving force of any national economy.

Photo: SPIRIT



The Panthera, made by Pipistrel, was designed by applying the most modern design and construction techniques, on top of 25 years of knowledge, experience and excellence in building aircraft. Pipistrel was awarded for its innovation Aircraft Panthera on 6th Slovenian Innovation Forum with Gold Award for Excellence of usage in creative industries.

Slovenians are proud to be innovative. The history of the Slovenian nation reflects the spirit of the great inventors from the end of the 19th century through important innovations, for example in the automotive and aerospace industries, which are important branches in Slovenia even today. During the modern era, we have also proved ourselves in innovations from the fields of electronics and ICT. And our top innovative products have achieved excellent breakthroughs on a global scale in other economic sectors too.

Innovations are important. Championing their importance every year, with pride and enthusiasm, the public agency

SPIRIT Slovenia presents the best innovations at the national level. They are gathered and put on display at a national exhibition, this year the 8th Slovenian Innovation Forum. The two-day business event, which will be held this year on 12th and 13th November in Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana, will highlight the 45 best Slovenian innovations of the year. All the innovations are presented by their authors in person. Free admission to the event allows all interested stakeholders to take a closer look at Slovenian innovations and examine the possibilities for business cooperation face-to-face.

The Slovenian Innovation Forum

is not only the top exhibition of innovations: it gives much more. At the strategic level, it is an important link between the professional public and the general public – consumers with businesses for whom the intelligent solutions presented are meant. At the same time, the Forum opens possibilities for various kinds of business cooperation with potential investors, business partners and other stakeholders not only from Slovenia, but also from abroad. So welcome to the 8th Slovenian Innovation Forum to try and take advantage of Slovenian innovations' potential for the common good. Detailed information about the event is available at sfi@spiritslovenia.si.

By developing new technologies, new products and services, we are improving our quality of life and business efficiency. Therefore we often say that innovations are the driving force of any national economy.

PRME Summit 2013

Un initiative for responsible management education

From 25 to 27 September 2013, Bled was the venue for debate on the responsibility of business leaders and responsible management education, as IEDC-Bled School of Management hosted three important international events: the 2013 PRME Summit – the 5th Annual Assembly of the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative; the announcement

of the winners of the Challenge:Future youth competition; and the 21st CEEMAN Annual Conference and CEEMAN's 20th anniversary celebrations. Some 60 top-level speakers and 300 participants from all over the world discussed the role of business schools in the development of responsible leaders.

Summit business school leaders, faculty, researchers, and students, along with representatives from business, government, and civil society shared recent learnings from the global landscape of responsible management education.



Photo: IEDC-Bled School of Management

This year's PRME Summit (the Principles for Responsible Management Education initiative, backed by the United Nations), jointly organised by CEEMAN, an international management development association, focused on "New Ways of Developing Leaders for the Future We Want". Sessions were organized around the "4 I's", a concept that covers the four major facets of PRME: inspiration, innovation, implementation and impact.

INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION

The opening address was delivered by Dr Danica Purg, Founder and President of CEEMAN, Director and Dean of IEDC-Bled School of Management, and PRME Steering Committee Chair for 2013: "Innovations without implementation and impact, they are like an axe on a bald

mountain top: useless," stressed Dr Purg.

Georg Kell, the Executive Director of the UN Global Compact, who addressed the audience via video link, said: "Social and corporate responsibility is the best foundation for a better tomorrow. An economy can only be responsible and successful if it is respectful to human rights, working standards and the environment, and committed to transparency and anti-corruption."

The themed plenary on inspiration was given by Prof. Nancy J. Adler, the S. Bronfman Chair in Management at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and Australian pianist Diana Baker. Prof. Adler, accompanied by Ms Baker, highlighted the importance of a sense of art and beau-

ty as a characteristic of good modern leaders, stating that art enriches the spirit and makes us better people.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Eleanor Roosevelt

The second themed plenary was on innovation and was moderated by Jonathan Gosling, an English expert on responsible leadership. On the panel were Iztok Seljak from Hidria, Prof. Thierry Grange, President of the Strategic Board of the Grenoble Ecole de Management in France, and President of the AACSB in the USA, and two representatives of Challenge:Future: Maris Šleziņš, Head of the Latvian Society of Street Workout and World Street Workout Federation, and Hasiini Chourouk, a student from Morocco. The young panel-

This year's PRME Summit focused on "New Ways of Developing Leaders for the Future We Want".



Dr Ichak Adizes at the Challenge: Future forum: "The world is changing and, as such, it does not allow for dogmatism. The main traits of good leaders are flexibility, modesty and the ability to acknowledge that they do not know everything. Leaders of the future must also not be afraid to have by their side people who are different from them. Business education has always been a step ahead of the exacting mission of bringing up emphatic, diligent, responsible, open, and knowledgeable leaders.

lists presented their experience and hopes for the future. Ms Chourouk was concerned about educational methods in her country, which she described as outdated as they did not include modern approaches that might focus students' attention on the required learning. She illustrated this with an example: "Our IT teacher logged on to Facebook in the class for the very first time at the initiative of us, the students." Māris Šlēziņš continued: "The young generation of today lacks hope, has no dreams, only lots of negative energy. It is important to channel this energy into something good. I see sport as a way to do that since, for me, sport was an escape route from delinquency." The fact that schools must constantly learn and improve was a common thread of the panel discussion that followed.

The PRME Summit programme continued with the announcement of the winners of the Challenge:Future international youth competition. Challenge:Future is a global youth think-tank which this year has brought to Slovenia 80 young people from all over the world for the third time. In Bled, the young people were

addressed by the guest lecturer at IEDC-Bled School of Management, Dr Ichak Adizes, one of the world's leading experts on improving the performance of business and government through fundamental change, who Leadership Excellence magazine, which ranks the top thought leaders in management and leadership, named in its "Excellence 100" list in 2008, and Dr Jernej Pikalo, the Slovenian Minister of Education, Science and Sport.

Minister Pikalo noted to the young participants that, in addition to formal education, which was certainly important, there was other knowledge, experience and skills that also mattered, acquired through other forms of learning, work, leisure activities and so on. He encouraged young people to find their true potential, urging them not to be afraid to be creative and innovative in helping create their own employment, something that many of the young people present here today, in particular those from other countries, have already done successfully.

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

The second day of the PRME

Summit focused on implementation and impact. The panellists were Prof. Antonio Freitas from Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil, Liesbeth van der Kruit, Director of CSR Achmea, Netherlands, and Dr Irina Sennikova, Rector of the Riga International School of Economics and Business, Latvia. Other speakers were Nikos Koumettis, President of the Central and Southern Europe Business Unit of the Coca-Cola Company, Greece, Prof. Anthony F. Buono from the Bentley University, USA, Prof. Nick Binedell, Dean at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Jonas Haertle, Head of the PRME Secretariat in the USA.

This day was marked by an interesting concept: organisers envisaged not only keynote speakers, but also keynote listeners. One of these keynote listeners was Janez Stanovnik, former President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia and former Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. After two days, the PRME Summit closed only to be followed by the 21st CEEMAN Annual Conference and CEEMAN's 20th anniversary celebrations.

Social and corporate responsibility is the best foundation for a better tomorrow. An economy can only be responsible and successful if it is respectful to human rights, working standards and the environment, and committed to transparency and anti-corruption.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Dr Jernej Pikalo, Minister of Education, Science and Sport

The world is changing and, as such, it does not allow for dogmatism. The main traits of good leaders are flexibility, modesty and the ability to acknowledge that they do not know everything. Leaders of the future must also not be afraid to have by their side people who are different from them.

CHALLENGE:FUTURE

The Challenge:Future Summit 2013 was held from 20 to 26 September in Maribor, Ljubljana and Bled. This unique event is the pinnacle of almost year-long activities for youth around the world, who, together with lecturers and business and political leaders, worked on creating and implementing solutions on how to fight youth unemployment, envision new education and increase global competitiveness in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Challenge:Future Youth Forum 2013 offered the following intellectual challenge: What could the Slovenian economy do with 1 billion euros? At the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana, young hopefuls from 35 countries worked as a team and came up with several proposals: changing the education system and learning entrepreneurship from kindergarten onwards; various innovative organic solutions and the development of leading knowledge in this field; investing in small and medium-

sized enterprises; and the development of spa tourism and wellness centres and similar.

Andreja Kodrin, Founder of Challenge:Future, said that young people attend the forum both to boost their personal development and to socialise. These are young people from all over the world who wish to find their place in the sun and help shape the future.



Photo: IEDC-Bled School of Management

Participants at the CEEMAN's 20th anniversary celebrations.

Innovation Day 2013

Awards for Innovation in the Economy

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) on 17 September awarded Slovenian companies with two diplomas and 11 gold, 20 silver and 9 bronze awards for the best innovations developed last year.

The CCIS award for the best innovation of the year, selected by the general public, went to the Vivapen company for its mould for injection of a double-sided writing instrument and

the modernisation of the injection-moulding production process. The highest recognition, the gold awards for innovation achievement, were conferred on BSH Home Appliances,

Domel, Gorenje, Kovis, Ledinek Engineering, Krka, Letrika, Lek, RC eNeM New Materials and Svetila.

INNOVATIONS ARE RESULTS OF TEAM APPROACH AND EXPERIENCE

Photo: Krka



Photo: Krka



Dr Aleš Rotar, Member of the Management Board and Director of Research and Development of Krka, d.d., Novo Mesto

Where do you draw your inspiration for innovations from?

Innovations in the area of generic pharmaceuticals are a response to the demands imposed by the market, which is highly competitive and continually requires new products. They are the result of a team approach to the development of products, which is based on the experience obtained while implementing previous projects, a continuous improvement, and the pursuit of new achievements

in scientific and patent literature. While implementing a project, the key focus must be both on results and on the technical and scientific excellence of the many co-workers in the development team.

What does the award for highest innovative achievement mean to you?

On the one hand, the award affirms that the efforts and achievements of our development team members have been directed to the right goals, while on the other it is a great encour-

agement for our further development of new pharmaceutical products.

What innovations from your company can we expect in the future?

Krka will continue to focus on the development of new, market-attractive products and technologies that will be implemented on time and on the basis of innovative solutions; this will contribute to the competitiveness of the company in the future.

While implementing a project, the key focus must be both on results and on the technical and scientific excellence of the many co-workers in the development team.

INNOVATION IS TO CREATE A DIFFERENT PRODUCT

Photo: Vivapen



Petra Melanšek, Managing Director of Vivapen d.o.o.

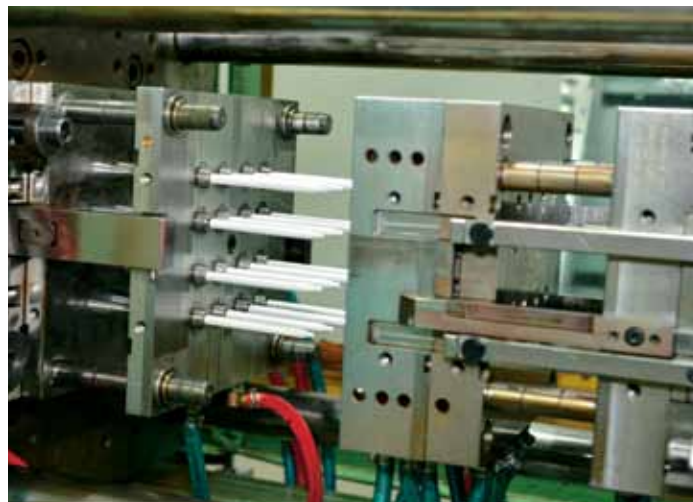


Photo: Vivapen

Where do you draw your inspiration for innovations from?

Innovation has always been a driving force behind the product development of our production. The existing products on the market have also posed an even greater challenge to us for the creation of a “different” product. We do not want to copy, since the market on which our company focuses does not encourage plagiarism. At annual fairs, our customers are eager to see innovative products and, since they are already familiar with the existing programmes, these cannot be presented as novelties. Innovations in the production itself are linked with individual orders. There is always a challenge to find ways to streamline the production process, make it faster and more efficient, minimise the risk of complaints. This, of course, is also related to costs. The old Slovenian saying has it that it is best “first to sweep your own doorstep”, which is why we always look to internal reserves first. And the improvements of the processes and products lead to innovations.

What does the award for highest innovative achievement mean to you?

Every award is recognition for a job well done. If you have earned a first place or gold award, then this means that you are the best in your society. There’s competitiveness also in the economic sector. Staying ahead of the competition is a goal that can only be achieved through the development of innovations in all areas of business: work preparation, design, technology, production, packaging, transport – in short, wherever we see and believe that we can be better if we do things in a different way. This award is an acknowledgment for all our innovative co-workers, the entire team, and it also proves that good work gets noticed.

What innovations from your company can we expect in the future?

The development of new technologies has enabled writing on mobile phones, tablet computers and other devices featuring touch screens. Basically, these media are designed for writing with the finger. Since the keyboards are

small, the market invented various pens made of metal with a silicone cap, allowing more accurate writing on the screen. We are aware that we need to adapt to developments, despite the assertions that letter-writing and calligraphy can only be learnt by writing with a fountain pen on paper. We have developed injection moulding of parts made out of ABS, to which the graphite was added in order to achieve an exact ratio of materials for appropriate capacitance to write on the touch screen. We have also developed a pen – the Pupil – intended for beginners, which will be marketed on the German market next year. Most probably, we will focus on the development of an improved ink feeder for fountain pens, rolerball or fineliner, which we aim to insert in the pens that are mainly produced as “Einweggerät” – disposable pens intended for use until they run out of ink and are then just thrown away. Our ink-feeder system allows the use of ink through ink cartridges, which can extend a pen’s lifespan by a few times; such a pen is also much more environmentally friendly.

Staying ahead of the competition is a goal that can only be achieved through the development of innovations in all areas of business: work preparation, design, technology, production, packaging, transport – in short, wherever we see and believe that we can be better if we do things in a different way.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND TEAM WORK GIVE THE BEST RESULTS

Photo: Domel



Photo: Domel



Štefan Bertoncej, Chairman of the Management Board of Domel Holding, d.d.

Where do you draw your inspiration for innovations from?

In the strategic definitions of our mission and vision, we have stated that Domel is a socially responsible company operating in a manner to create conditions for sustainable development and provide quality jobs. With a view to fulfilling these tasks, we have created conditions for continuous growth and progress by incorporating the knowledge which is materialised in our own technologies and innovative products. Domel is a developer and supplier to numerous global corporations of household appliances. And given the values to which Domel is dedicated, we never run out of challenges and opportunities for improvements, inventions and innovations. Integration of knowledge and team-work gives the best results. We have set ourselves the objective that each of our employees contributes at least one in-

novation per year.

What does the award for highest innovative achievement mean to you?

We are, of course, very happy to have won the gold award for innovation conferred by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for an innovation that, even in world terms, sets a new milestone in the rotational speed of universal motors, indeed a new global standard. The award is motivation for us to continue to work well in the area of innovation in the future, while it also enhances our responsibility to meet new challenges.

What innovations from your company can we expect in the future?

The rationale of our approaches to solutions is based on a high level of awareness of environmental issues which alter the habits and needs of consumers. We strive to find solutions to motor drives such as might alleviate

pressure on material and energy resources as much as possible, with a view to reducing the weight of products with respect to their power output and increasing the efficiency of products and their use. To this end, we develop our own technologies, which have a decisive impact on competitiveness and cutting-edge solutions on the global market, while providing a high quality of products. For such achievements, it is necessary to constantly learn and to transfer the latest findings from institutions to production, which would not be possible without good cooperation. Each year, we earmark three per cent of total revenues for R&D activities. In this way, something that we have achieved is that more than a third of our products are less than three years old. And we are planning to continue this trend with innovative products in the future.

For such achievements, it is necessary to constantly learn and to transfer the latest findings from institutions to production, which would not be possible without good cooperation.

INNOVATION IS A SUCCESSFUL INVENTION

Photo: BSH Hišni aparati



Toni Pogačar, Director of Development for Food Production, BSH Home Appliances

Photo: BSH Hišni aparati



Where do you draw your inspiration for innovations from?

First, we have to distinguish between the innovation and the invention. The invention is a novelty, a creation of something new which, however, is not necessarily successful. If it is, then we can talk about an innovation. There are always several factors required that target the same direction. In our case, this is to be successful in the market, which we have been (for some time) and, of course, we would like to keep it that way in the future. Thus we have set a firm goal to make new products which will facilitate daily work in food preparation and will

also serve as decoration in the kitchen. To achieve the goals, it is necessary to have well-trained and motivated staff. Not only with the development that is responsible for the project, everything starts with marketing and design; from conception, a project necessitates cooperation with the quality-assurance section, industrial engineering, purchase, until its final stage successfully moves to production, which must ensure the same product quality throughout the complete life-cycle.

What does the award for highest innovative achievement mean to you?

Awards are always wel-

come, since they acknowledge that our efforts have been in the right direction. Of course, the award is an additional inspiration for future projects.

What innovations from your company can we expect in the future?

We cannot reveal our roadmap to you yet, I'm afraid! What I can tell you is that our plans are more ambitious than in the past; in terms of development, we are also considering a spatial expansion. The trend is to continue to develop and manufacture products with even higher added value, i.e. focusing on quality and appealing design.

To achieve the goals, it is necessary to have well-trained and motivated staff.

Simbioza

A Slovenian innovation to connect the world

Žiga Vavpotič is the President of the Council and the programme director of the Ypsilon Institute, a businessman and the initiator of the Simbioza project. The primary mission of Simbioza is cooperation and transfer of knowledge between generations and encouraging lifelong learning.

Its objective is to raise computer literacy and awaken interest in e-skills among older people. On the other hand, the project promotes the values of youth volunteering and responsibility, strengthening a proactive attitude towards society and our future.

Photo: Miha Rekar



Žiga Vavpotič, the Simbioza project initiator, with his grandmother Magdalena Leban, who encouraged him to think about the project.

“Žiga, what does WWW mean?” This question posed by Žiga’s grandmother planted a seed for intergenerational cooperation, eventually giving birth to Simbioza, a project which is to connect Slovenia for the third year in a row. Žiga Vavpotič, project initiator and programme director of the Ypsilon Institute, as well as a representative of Generation Y, who in the spirit of cooperation works on a number of social innovations for our common future, emphasises that this is a project contributed by many. Without all the volunteers, the many young people, a number of partners, venues and the business sector, the project would not have seen the light of day – Žiga insisted that this be mentioned at the beginning of the interview.

The project’s having been awarded the European Citizen’s Prize by the European Parliament and the workshop that was organised in Shanghai, China, go to show that Slovenia has gained a new export product, and one which can present our country in an interesting light. Simbioza does not only aim to raise the computer literacy of older people, but also stands for sincere intergenerational cooperation connecting the whole country. It has developed into a long-term project with clear ambitions to spread abroad. Take a look around: it is during these days, between 21 and 25 October, that the campaign will be ongoing throughout Slovenia. And Simbioza will go on connecting the young and the wise also in the future.

Simbioza was born with a simple question. What can you tell us about the beginnings of this project?

A person has to observe and listen. The Ypsilon Institute, which aims to connect proactive young people and bring together individuals aged between 20 and 30, has chosen intergenerational cooperation to be our common thread. My grandmother's question planted a seed; the project was developed in the Karst and today Simbioza has become a foundation for intergenerational cooperation and one of the biggest projects ever initiated by the Ypsilon Institute. The project was initially designed as a one-off venture for a period of one week, during which young people could show older people that they cared about their common future. A week to demonstrate that young and older people respect each other. At 240 locations throughout Slovenia, more than 2,000 young people were instructing over 500 of their elders. It was a real success story and gave rise to a desire among the older people to see the project repeated in the future. And the following year, the project was an even bigger success and brought even more satisfaction. This required some strategic thinking and decision-making. And now, Simbioza is likely to become a long-term project.

What are this year's content-related highlights and the message of the Simbioza project? What new features is Simbioza introducing in 2013?

As in previous years, the cam-

paign will be running for one week, every day between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 and 6:00 p.m., when volunteers and participants will share knowledge in various areas of computing. Apparently, this will be a record year, with the highest number of locations and registered participants to date. Every year, the team is led by a different leader; this year, it is Ana Pleško's turn, ably assisted by a great team. A key new feature is definitely a module dealing with tablet computers. It is also important that this year we have convinced the ICT sector to offer less expensive devices for the older participants. Simbioza will again connect Slovenia, its key message undoubtedly being that young people care about their elders. Simply put, we have to create an intergenerational society. Trying to encourage disagreement between the young and the older generations is the biggest mistake often made by politics. We are allies. And Simbioza substantiates this with action.

Following the campaign, Simbioza has become a long-term project. Simbioza mojster (Simbioza Master), the Intergenerational Centre and Simbioza šola (Simbioza School): What do these programmes bring?

This is our story of a three-pillar ongoing project. We are developing a story to ensure that through Simbioza generations are connected on a daily basis and not only for one week a year.

We insist that the first contact of the older people with computers is free of charge. For that reason, we would like to establish a network of schools, Simbioza School, where students teach older people in their local environment. We will also add a sincere intergenerational component – Why wouldn't every class in school have an older friend? The second pillar consists of Simbioza Masters; here, the story is turned around, as the whole of Europe is talking about the employment of the young. Older people need help with ICT technology. So why not hire young experts to help them with this? In this way, we are developing an occupation of professional carer of the elderly, and I believe this is going to play an important role in youth employment. And then there are also our intergenerational centres. The first such centre has already opened in Ljubljana. This is a place where the young and older people can meet. It is an ICT demo centre, pursuing the objective of becoming a role model. Slovenia needs 30 such intergenerational centres. The main question is not whether pensions are to be cut, you know. The question we must ask is what we can do so that, through solidarity and cooperation, everyone, including older people, will have a better life. What we often miss in politics are innovative approaches. Only one question gave birth to all of this. We need to listen and hear.

How many participants are you expecting and what is the num

Simbioza does not only aim to raise the computer literacy of older people, but also stands for sincere intergenerational cooperation connecting the whole country.

Photo: Publicis



Photo: Publicis



Photo: Maša Gala



ber of volunteers involved in the project this year?

The numbers surprise us each year. This year, more than 340 locations have been envisaged. I truly believe that the figures will confirm that this is a heart-felt story of cooperation in Slovenia. The final figure will be available at the beginning of the campaign; however, in this project, people are not numbers. What we count are smiles, new friendships, those who realise that older people are “cool” and that young people are our future, a future worth betting on. We also count those who remain in contact.

Which prominent names in politics and business have offered the project special support this year?

Let me point out once again that Simbioza was predominantly enabled by young people. In the first year, young people invested as many as 20,000 hours of volunteer work. But the action was

also supported by numerous business people. Microsoft, Simobil, SKB, Generali, Vzajemna and Mercator are only a few of the big names involved. This is one of those projects where the state has gained much more than it invested. And in terms of moral support, we are backed by countless more. It is said that in the future the state may be expected to provide financial support for such projects. And it is true that the support provided by politics is increasing. We are happy and honoured that a visit to Simbioza has been confirmed by the current President of the Republic of Slovenia and by the Slovenian Prime Minister and many ministers. Our Foreign Minister will even be accompanied by his Bosnian counterpart, who will get to observe the project at first hand. And there are numerous ambassadors. A big thank you also goes to the media – they have realised that Slovenia needs positive stories too.

You are also expanding internationally. Where and when is the Simbioza project expected to be up and running abroad?

I hope that one day we as a society will understand that we must look for new stories which will make Slovenia visible worldwide. This year, when we held a workshop in China, in Shanghai, Chinese seniors first surfed the internet to find out where Slovenia is located. Everyone was saying that this must be an exceptional country, as their young people respect the older generation and help them. We are also having talks with countries in the Balkans and with Germany, Israel, and Denmark. We are open to all. Active young people who want to do something good are an excellent starting point. We are happy to offer knowledge and partnerships. In short, our doors are open. We simply believe that if Simbioza connected Slovenia, it may, in the future, undoubtedly connect the world.

Simbioza is an all-Slovenian volunteer project which is connecting different generations already for the third year in a row by conducting free workshops presenting the basics of computer and mobile telephone use. A new feature of Simbioza 2013 is a module dealing with tablet computers.

We are happy and honoured that a visit to Simbioza has been confirmed by the current President of the Republic of Slovenia and by the Slovenian Prime Minister and many ministers.

Photo: Milian Lazarevič



Older people need help with ICT technology. So why not hire young experts to help them with this? In this way, we are developing an occupation of professional carer of the elderly, and I believe this is going to play an important role in youth employment.

SmartPA: a world innovation!

Mobile technology undoubtedly wins the markets and determines working conditions

Start-ups are no longer considered an exotic trend: indeed many talented individuals started to understand them as an alternative path

towards a career. This has also been proved by the new company SmartPA d.o.o., which develops software for hotel housekeeping optimisation.



If prior to the introduction of the solution offered by SmartPA a hotel used 70 sheets of paper on its daily activities, which were then put into a folder, and spent several hours making arrangements by phone, now the time and material consumption are history.

If prior to the introduction of the solution offered by SmartPA a hotel used 70 sheets of paper on its daily activities, which were then put into a folder, and spent several hours making arrangements by phone, now the time and material consumption are history. A hotel with 200 rooms, for example, makes 200 days of phone calls per year, which represents a huge time loss in its business operations. The introduction of the new technology offered by SmartPA can reduce the number of phone calls and unnecessary communication between departments by around 90%. It enables everyone to know everything without the need to make a single phone call or note; in this way problems can be resolved easier, comments reach the director immediately, which means that the new technology significantly reduces response time. It helps control the business developments between various actors, has an impact on the course of business and on the

resolution of dilemmas and reduces the communication stress of hotel employees. It provides a detailed framework for the organisation of work of chambermaids reporting on their work to the head housekeeper and to the director, who thus sees every process taking place among the employees. "The key issue is to facilitate communication," explains Igor Panjan, the company's director. "In a big hotel there are many employees who must communicate, usually by calling each other by phone. Communication mainly takes place at the following levels: reception, housekeeping, maintenance. This requires several phone calls. So we can offer them a program which enables them to carry out their work via a web application. The chambermaids and the maintenance staff thus have a mobile application installed in their phones, by way of which they report – by pressing a button – on current events, on work done, on problems that occur and so on.

In this way they can avoid communication by phone, which is more time-consuming and expensive."

SMARTPA INTENDS TO INTRODUCE INTO INDUSTRY MOBILE PHONE APPLICATIONS BEING A WORLDWIDE NOVELTY

"Some show mistrust towards this idea; however, there is no doubt that mobile technology is winning the world markets and will determine future working conditions. This is a world innovation!" SmartPA believes that the hotel industry has been resting on its laurels for the past 30 years. As time has passed, the internet caught them by surprise, because prices suddenly became transparent, which caused the prices of their services to fall drastically. This changed the situation. Competition has contributed its share too. And also the fact that a five-star hotel today sells its rooms at the price of three-star hotel rooms. In the past, hotel man-

agers only looked at the sales aspect of the business, whereas in the recession period they started to ask themselves what they could change in the organisational structure of their hotels to improve their business. When making business deals, SmartPA first researches the market by observing all working processes in the hotel in detail. "During the market research we even helped clean the hotel in order to exactly identify the problems a chambermaid might be faced with." They also measure all processes taking place in the hotel. They have established that a hotel can save as much as 20% to 30% in its business if it hires an external cleaning contractor. On the basis of the equipment used by a chambermaid, data can be delivered on the time the room was cleaned, which prevents new guests from waiting. This is even more important in the event of time pressure. In their market research, they look for problems or bottlenecks at every working level with the housekeeper head and the director of the hotel.

The company carried out its first pilot projects in hotels in Slovenia, but it soon realised that

Croatia was a bigger market potential. The reason for this was simple: the hotel industry in Croatia is stronger and bigger. Croatia has distinguished international hotel chains, such as Sheraton, Hilton and Esplanade. There are outstanding luxury hotels belonging to internationally recognised hotel brands. "We started by offering a restaurant menu mobile application, which was a mobile application prototype. Via this application, the waiter served the guest and sent orders to the kitchen or the bar. This started at the peak of the crisis. However, when we entered into in-depth discussions with the hotels on their business operations, we discovered that there were problems elsewhere. This was the reason for developing our Smarthousekeeping product. This is a new version of applications designed for top luxury hotel chains and covers the entire business process." The company has been working on it for a good year. Before they started with the development, they carried out various pilot projects.

Where do they see themselves in five years? They wish to become part of a major supplier of

hotel systems. Global players already exist, but they lag behind in the field of mobile technology. "We can proudly say that we are showing them the way." Do they not face any competition? "Very little. One company is developing similar programmes in Australia, similar programmes are also being gradually introduced in Asia, and there is one representative office of Smarthousekeeping products in Europe and one in the United States."

The Slovenian hotel industry is at a major turning point. Foreign hotel chains are increasingly penetrating our country, introducing their own standards, culture and knowledge. We lack knowledge in the hotel business and the desire to be innovative. Only innovations and the constant provision of new services and products will assure us a competitive advantage over others in the market. Due to its small size, Slovenia has a unique opportunity to become a world innovator achieving technological progress through smaller projects. And the Slovenes have a unique opportunity to develop through these technologies into the creators and leaders of this trend.

They wish to become part of a major supplier of hotel systems. Global players already exist, but they lag behind in the field of mobile technology. "We can proudly say that we are showing them the way."



Photo: SmartPA



Smarthousekeeping is a web application running on a computer or tablet via which a head housekeeper can ask chambermaids to carry out their working tasks; it includes the creation of daily work schedules and the monitoring of work in real time. Chambermaids use the mobile application, via which they receive their work schedules for the current day, send messages on the rooms that have been cleaned or are being cleaned, and report damages in rooms and the items consumed from the mini-bar, all in real time.

Aromas and flavours of Slovenia

The Taste Festival and the harmony of flavours – a holiday of Slovenian culinary identity

A legend says that, after one hundred years, the gods remember where a good kitchen is and claim it as their own. If they truly make it theirs, it will gradually be discovered during the Festival by the many visitors to the good kitchens who will have awakened the hedonist within.



Photo: Taste Festival

Flavour is what is important, say top chefs; it should be straightforward, distinctive and simple. And it is the supreme flavour of dishes that is the central focus of the Festival.

Flavour is what is important, say top chefs; it should be straightforward, distinctive and simple. And it is the supreme flavour of dishes that is the central focus of the Festival. The Taste Festival has undoubtedly proven that Slovenia is a land of gourmets, with a highly developed food culture. The Festival took place in Slovenia between 24 September and 8 October, and two weeks earlier in Croatia. Supreme chefs and oenologists in over 300 restaurants and other catering establishments in Slovenia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Austrian Carinthia and Croatia prepared cookery shows, extravagant dinners, tastings of wines and cocktails at various degustation events. The programme was very open, and

included more than 160 restaurants, which offered special discounts and culinary masterpieces in order to enable the widest circle of gourmets to experience new flavours, restaurants, their chefs and other creators in the culinary arts.

GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE SLOVENIA

The Taste Festival was a great opportunity to promote Slovenia beyond its borders, which was one of the main objectives of the organisers. With discounts of up to fifty per cent, they attracted people to catering establishments who do not usually go to restaurants due to financial or other limitations. The Festival was organised by the

Restaurant Club, which includes over 250 restaurants, inns, wineries and hotels. All the participants tried to excite their visitors with their typical culinary offer, with two or more menus which visitors could enjoy by producing their Festival cards. More than 300 menus were available, with prices ranging between 20 to 70 euros. The organisers believe that the event exceeded the boundaries of mere culinary offers and tourism, as it is also important for the regional economy. More than 300,000 visitors are estimated to have taken part. We also visited several restaurants participating in the Taste Festival 2013. The general impression was that all, without exception, were excellent representatives of their profession.

DIVINE DISHES ON EARTH

A pleasant ambience and peaceful atmosphere hide behind the gold and copper walls of the Culinary House of Manna in Trnovo. The restaurant offers traditional Slovenian dishes prepared with modern methods and the abundant creativity of top chefs. Their cuisine could be described as Slovenian-Mediterranean, with authentic flavours featuring a wide range of seafood dishes. They use only the best ingredients and healthy organically produced food. The menus include fresh fish and the highest quality meats cured in-house for at least 30 days. The restaurant uses the best Slovenian olive and pumpkin seed oils, seasonal fruit, vegetables, herbs and other ingredients from the best Slovenian and world-renowned producers.

EXTRAVAGANT DINNER AT THE KRPAN INN WITH DARKO SIMONČIČ

Menu: Mionetto welcome drink, limitless tasting of seafood, octopus Dalmatian style, salmon tartare, sea bass tartare, swordfish tartare, lobster Sardinian style, cuttlefish Sicilian style, house pâtés, tomato with Buffalo mozzarella, beef tartare, anchovies in marinade, shrimps in devil's buzara sauce, scampi in marinade, house gnocchi with porcini mushrooms and shrimps, barley with fresh sea bass, anchovies Krpan style, octopus baked in a coal-covered pot, fish broth, fresh sea fish baked on a wood and vine grill, meat tagliata, grilled and fried zucchini, chard with potatoes, roast tomatoes, and house desserts.

HOTEL EVROPA IN CELJE - A HOTEL WITH TRADITION

They skilfully prepared two menus:

The first menu: homemade foie-gras pâté on a slice of onion bread, fresh pears, truffle honey and cress bouquet, crunchy Panko porcini mushrooms with gorgonzola cream, fillet of John Dory prepared on a cherrywood plank, sautéed vegetables, warm lemon and almond croquant tart with fresh strawberries and passion fruit foam. The second menu: smoked swordfish carpaccio with a herbal bouquet, Parmesan cheese and Yuzu caviar, smooth ragout of porcini mushrooms on creamy polenta with truffles and foie-gras mousse, lamb chop, spicy ragout of white beans with bacon, chilli and cherry tomatoes, chocolate millefoglie with fresh

The Taste Festival was a great opportunity to promote Slovenia beyond its borders, which was one of the main objectives of the organisers. With discounts of up to fifty per cent, they attracted people to catering establishments who do not usually go to restaurants due to financial or other limitations.

Photo: Taste Festival





Photo: Taste Festival

rasberries and ganache. The main dishes were prepared on a special grill with charcoal imported from Canada, giving them a special flavour.

GREEN TOURISM

We also visited the idyllic Logar Valley, more precisely, Luče, where Martina Breznik and her family create in the House Raduha. Breznik is also one of the pioneers of slow food in Slovenia. She learned a lot from her mother and grandmother. The dishes based on local ingredients are given a completely new life by Breznik, with her special touch and the use of modern culinary trends. After a buckwheat greeting from the kitchen, pâté of cottage cheese and smoked trout is served as a cold starter, followed by pumpkin soup with poached egg. Žlinkrofi (dumplings) prepared to mother Emika's recipe are served as a warm starter at House Raduha. The main dish is fillet of beef with forest and home garden vegetable accompaniment. Breznik prepares a delicious chocolate cake with vanilla cream and chocolate mousse for dessert. All dishes are accompanied by supreme, carefully selected wines for each individual dish. *Bon appétit!*

The organisers believe that the event exceeded the boundaries of mere culinary offers and tourism, as it is also important for the regional economy. More than 300,000 visitors are estimated to have taken part.

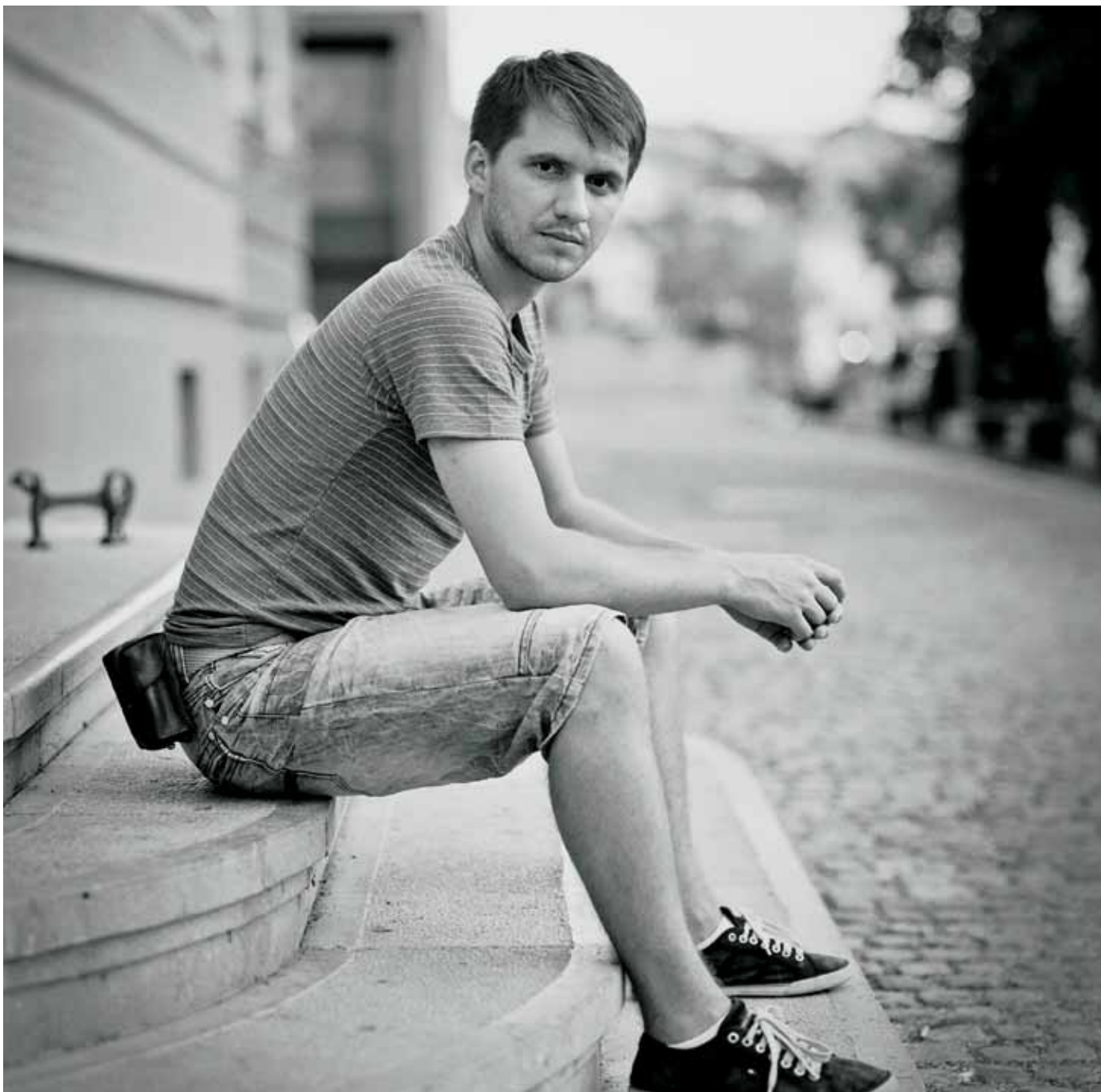


Photo: East News/STA

Class enemy
Rok Biček

A film is like an onion. Each layer brings a new tear.

Photo: Borut Peterlin



Rok Biček was born in 1985 in Novo Mesto. He graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Film, Radio and Television in Ljubljana and entered the world of film as a promising participant in Lapajne's PoE-tika, an occasional academy for researching the art of film direction under the auspices of the Triglav Film studio. He received several awards for his student films. *Razredni sovražnik* (Class Enemy) is his debut feature film. Like Michael Haneke, Cristian Mungiu and Andrej Zvjagincev, the film directors who have most inspired him, Biček also plays with the concept of potential danger lurking in small, everyday details. A gesture, a look or a single wrong word that can start a fire.

All this media circus takes up time and energy which I would rather devote to my next project, but I am aware that promotion is an important part of the “life” of any film, so I gladly accept the rules of the game.

How are you coping with all this sudden attention?

I’m not used to such media attention, it’s true. I graduated three years ago and my student films were known only by a restricted circle of film enthusiasts. Partly because they deal with serious topics, and partly because in Slovenia short films do not have much of an audience. This does not mean that feature films find audiences particularly easily, but *Class Enemy* was lucky to be presented by the Venice Festival press engine both to the international audiences and to the public in Slovenia. All this media circus takes up time and energy which I would rather devote to my next project, but I am aware that promotion is an important part of the “life” of any film, so I gladly accept the rules of the game.

There seems to be no end to the awards. Which one is, for you, the most important?

Awards. It is nice to get them, of course, but their greatest value is the fact that they make possible the realisation of your next project. In this sense, the participation in the Venice Festival and the FEDEORA award from film critics is the ticket to the future for the whole team. The future will tell where this will take each of us. Unfortunately, the Vesnas, the national set of film awards, do not carry enough weight to assure their recipients a new project. They are, however, a very much appreciated

recognition of authors in the home environment. I hope that the audience award will be a good starting point for the distribution of the film not only in Slovenia, but also in Austria and in Switzerland, where distribution contracts have already been signed.

You are also the Slovenian candidate for a best foreign language film Oscar nomination?

Yes, and this is a great honour. We will compete with the best in the category of foreign language films. But for us the Oscars are like flying to the Moon. Or beyond. Although, given that we succeeded in selling our (Yugoslav) space programme to the USA, perhaps the Moon is not so inaccessible after all! It is essential, however, that the film is viewed by as many of the AMPAS members who will select the final five nominees as possible. Those who see it will have some difficulty in describing it, though. We had a similar experience at the Venice Festival, where after the premiere the good opinion of the film spread among the public and the critics, who in the following days referred to it as “that” Slovenian film which “one must see”. One day nobody knew us, and the day after, the second showing was sold out, with several hundred people remaining outside the theatre. I am glad that the film touched the hearts not only of festival audiences, but also of the film critics of *Variety*, *The*

Hollywood Reporter, *The Huffington Post*, *La Repubblica*...

Where did you get the idea from?

Well, I was chatting to director Janez Lapajne over a glass of beer about the topic of his fourth feature. He wanted to do a story about the younger generation, and in the discussion we also touched upon the issue of suicide. It made me instantly think of an event that occurred at my high school: when a student killed herself, her peers spontaneously revolted against the whole of academia and the school system. They occupied the school broadcasting station and used it to tell their “truth”. Those are strong pictures impressed on my memory. After more than ten years, I discussed the events of that year and the relations between them in the class with the rebels. This was the basis for the story that later became the script. When I spoke about these conversations to Janez, he said that the story should be told by me, as I was closer to that generation than he was. This was an act of true generosity, for which I am grateful. But at that instant I had the impression of standing at the foot of Everest. This really is a powerful story, and the fear of not being up to it was constantly present. I knew I had good material, though, and a year later, when Slovenia’s Film Centre published a call for applications for financing debut features, I invited

“Class enemy” is the counter-character to the teacher on maternity leave for whom he is a substitute. She is democracy; he is the fuehrer. Why did Sabina commit suicide? Nobody knows and nobody discovers. And something else nobody knows is why nobody else did.



Photo: Triglav film

ed Nejc Gazvoda to join the project. Nejc is an excellent writer and screenwriter, someone who knows how to say a lot with a minimum of words. In a single month, we finished the screenplay and dialogues for *Class Enemy*, while at the same time Nejc and Janez were writing the screenplay for Nejc's film *Dvojina* (Dual), while Janez and me were editing Janez's short *Kdo se boji črnega moža?* (Who's Afraid of the Black Man?) The pace was hell, but we made it!

How did you select your cast?

I looked for students at Ljubljana's high schools. I simply went from school to school, from classroom to classroom, and looked for students who corresponded most to the characters from the script. This was, of course, a laborious and long process, but I was aware that finding the right cast was one of the key factors that could make the film succeed or fail. I do not regret this decision. What was also key was that I went to the schools by myself, as I knew that the girl that would match the character of the girl who kills herself would never respond to any casting call or invitation to audition. I had to spot her among those who were not in the least interested in acting in a film. And I did. At first she was reluctant to come to the audition. I had to talk with her several times to persuade her to come. But that is just what I wanted – a person reluctant to

come forward, who is shy and quiet, but who carries inside a whole world hidden to others. The character in the film is just like that. We had several rounds of auditions, where I slowly came to know these young actors. I actually wanted to find young people who would live their characters in front of the camera, and act as little as possible. To achieve this, I had to get to know them very well. Of the utmost importance was also the mutual trust we established later, during rehearsals. This was a very powerful basis which could not be shattered even by the most trying experiences during shooting.

How were they accepted by the professional actors?

The professional actors understood that they should help create a suitable environment for the young actors. We achieved this by keeping a kind of distance. Before the shooting, I purposely did not introduce Igor Samobor, the actor who plays the lead role, to the young actors during rehearsals. I wanted him to be a total stranger for them at the moment when he enters the classroom on the first day of shooting. And that happened. The atmosphere was fantastic. Simply sparkling. Also later, there was an agreement with Igor that he would keep his distance and not mix with the youngsters. The intention was, of course, to prevent the creation of friendly ties among

them that could affect the young people's acting.

Were Igor Samobor and the other professional actors your first choice?

We actually wrote the screenplay with Igor Samobor in mind. When creating such a huge role with him in mind, it would have almost been a sin not to take into consideration the actor and his characteristics when writing the script. This is like a tailor-made suit. This was a script tailor-made for a particular actor.

In the film, the German language is used to create the right atmosphere. The use of a foreign language seems to be a kind of general characteristic of Slovenian films. Was this the reason for it?

The German language was chosen for two reasons. First, so that the students could easily accuse the professor of German of being a Nazi, because he was speaking to them in German from his position of power. In fact, this combination triggers an atavistic memory in any nation that was under German rule during the Second World War. The second reason was the writing of Thomas Mann, through which the much-maligned professor tries to help his students overcome the sorrow they experience after their peer takes her life. The relationships in Mann's short story "Tonio Kröger" are, in fact, very similar to those in *Class Enemy*. However, (not

The suicide is only the triggering moment and is actually not the topic of the film. This is a film about the impossibility of communication between two generations.

"Your fellow student Sabina is gone. She committed suicide." The news is delivered to the students at the Novo Mesto gymnasium by the German teacher Robert Zupan. He is a reserved, impenetrable and unreadable man; the students label him "Nazi". He only speaks German with them, which makes them see him as aloof. And because he makes them uneasy, he becomes the class' enemy. In the photo: Igor Samobor

Photo: Triglav film



The whole film, with the exception of one scene that was filmed in the Northern Adriatic (somewhere between Piran and Venice), was shot at the Novo Mesto gymnasium, which kindly allowed Triglav Film to use the school premises during the 2012 summer holidays. It also helped that Rok Biček and Nejc Gazvoda were once students at the school. In the photo: Igor Samobor and Tjaša Železnik



Photo: Triglav film

The fact that after the film the audience remains in silence is for me the greatest compliment. But it is true also that there are certain scenes where, when I am in the theatre, I sink a little more into my chair and try to be invisible.

The film was cast with amateur as well as professional actors. The main roles drew fine performances from the academy-trained actor Igor Samobor (the German teacher) and the amateur actress Daša Cupevski (the student who commits suicide). In the photo: Nataša Barbara Gračner

knowing the contents of the short story in no way affects the audience's enjoying the narrative. After viewing the film at the Venice festival, a film critic wrote that the film was like an onion. Each layer brought a new tear.

Which are the key moments?

The suicide is only the triggering moment and is actually not the topic of the film. This is a film about the impossibility of communication between two generations. To the very end of the film, we do not know anything about this girl; we do not know the reason for her taking her life for the simple reason that we do not know each other. This is a film on our society. But also a film on rebellion. Each generation needs a reason to rebel. My generation was lucky not to experience such a tragedy. We lived out our rebels' dreams, when Slovenia integrated into NATO, by sounding the fire-alarm and strewing the school corridors with flyers bearing a quote from Cankar: "Born to be farmhands, brought up to be

farmhands."

Which side did you take – the students' or the professor's?

Before the shooting I changed sides a lot of times. It mostly depended on whether I had spent the day with the students or with the professional actors. Everyone supported his or her character and was devoted to it. For actors, this is absolutely necessary. I can't imagine anyone playing a character in whom he or she did not believe absolutely. But for the director such a position can be fatal. The evaluation of a character must be left to the actor, not the director. My task was to make each of the characters achieve his or her goal. I feel, in general, that there is a tendency in our lives to judge or evaluate too quickly. Life is not that simple and black-or-white.

What do you want to do in the future? Have you had any offers?

In Venice I met a few people with whom I might work in the future. But it is too soon to talk about this now. Presently I

am shooting an observational documentary feature entitled Družina (The Family) about a rather special family with parents who are mentally impaired and have two sons. The older has Down syndrome, while the younger is a perfectly normal teenager.

The public liked the film. What about you, the creators – did it meet your expectations?

It did. I told a story I wanted to tell, and I did it in my own way. The fact that after the film the audience remains in silence is for me the greatest compliment. But it is true also that there are certain scenes where, when I am in the theatre, I sink a little more into my chair and try to be invisible. Those are scenes that, if I were doing them now, I would make somewhat differently. But this is a feeling I have had since my student days and is perfectly normal for all directors. At least I think it is! For the future, my only wish is to sink into chairs less and less.



Photo: Triglav film

Doors

Spatial and symbolic passageways of life

Do we ever think about doors? Do we know them and perceive them as loyal companions through our lives? Or are they simply there, and when they open or close on us, we become aware of their significance? Perhaps we sometimes linger before them and wonder how to enter, or who is hidden behind them and what awaits us on the other side. Do we more frequently open them wide or close them tight?

Photo: SEM



Mosaic – images of Slovenian doors. The exhibition showcases the production of doors, keys, locks and stonecutting tools. Numerous exhibits are supplemented with audio-visual recordings about the making of doors and locks, and presentations of customs and traditions related to doors.

The door is connected with the natural need to arrange and define space. The word door (Slovenian: vrata) derives from the Indo-European root *uer-*, which means to close or to cover. In some languages, the word is a plural; perhaps initially it was a dual, as doors are frequently double-leaved. As an architectural feature, the door developed from a framed opening with a threshold into a door with hinges.

THROUGH THE DOOR INTO PEOPLE'S LIFE STORIES

The oldest doors in Slovenia were wickerwork or solid wood, not painted or carved. They had wooden frames and door leaves made of panels connected with tongue-and-groove joints. Examples of these oldest doors may still be found in some commercial and residential buildings. In the 19th century, most houses had single-entry doors that opened

inwards, whereas courtyard doors were double already in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th century, door design gradually evolved and incorporated carving, and rarely, painting and wrought iron.

The exhibition in Slovene ethnographic museum includes the oldest known doors, keys and locks preserved in museums and private collections and the most modern examples, which take

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the visitors to different parts of Slovenia, to families with different professional backgrounds and social status. They tell numerous stories about the people who made them, those who lived behind them, the ups and downs of families, the development of homes, the concept of privacy, ideas of openness and closure etc. festive and everyday stories about doors. Entrance doors of various designs, wooden and stone portals, interior residential doors, doors of commercial buildings and prison doors present their protective, communicative and symbolic roles.

SYMBOLIC PASSAGEWAYS

Doors are also presented as symbolic passageways between spaces, worlds, states, life and death, the known and the unknown, light and dark, wealth and pov-

erty, the everyday and the mysterious or sacred, between us and others, ours and theirs, in connection with important milestones in life and transitions between the seasons. The symbolism of doors appears in various beliefs, customs, traditions, proverbs, sayings, and also in customary law, as doors are connected with wisdom. In addition to the exhibits, the exhibition also features songs, poems, written texts, and the work of several painters and sculptures who were inspired by doors. Like doors, keys and thresholds have a similar symbolic meaning. The exhibition reveals numerous aspects of doors as points of transition and symbolic passageways.

DOORS ARE PART OF LIFE

Doors are part of our lives. We encounter them daily, observe them,

touch them countless times, open them with respect, expectation, reserve, curiosity; we hide or reveal ourselves behind them, etc. To have a door means to have a home, safety, a place to belong. Doors invite us to enter; they are paths, passageways from birth to death. We encounter them at birth and symbolically depart through them when passing to the other side. When open, they denote opportunity, hope, and if closed, privacy, peace or disappointment and claustrophobia. Perhaps the doors at the exhibition and their stories will lead you to a realisation about the doors in your life. Through the labyrinth of doors, you may walk the path of your life from the door into life to the door into the future. Meet the (un)known companions of life and let your steps take you to the door of future. Who knows what waits behind them?

Source: summarised from Polona Sketelj, MSc, exhibition curator.

Photo: Marko Habič/SEM



Doors from the 19th century, Gradenc near Žužemberk.

Photo: Marko Habič/SEM



Doors in Zide from the 19th century.

Organic farming at Country Estate Trnulja

Almost a decade ago, when Urša Kunz and Miha Pupis started farming, their pens housed ten goats. But they followed their goals and dreams. Their Country Estate Trnulja is located

in Črna vas, in the heart of the Ljubljansko barje Landscape Park, and only ten minutes from Ljubljana.

Photo: Country Estate Trnulja



The Country Estate Trnulja is more than a farm. Unique cookery workshops specialising in the preparation of organic dishes, and especially dishes made from hemp, are held in cooperation with renowned chef Slavko Adamlje.

In 2004, they were among the first in Slovenia to begin growing hemp, initially about a hectare. Hemp and hemp seed oil remain the main promoters of Trnulja. Over the years, they added other produce and products, and Trnulja with its green holiday apartments is soon to become an official member of the association of BIO Hotels.

The farm is strictly organic; in fact it would be difficult to make it more organic than it already is. The farm focuses particularly on the production of oilseeds and grains and processing them into organic oils, spreads and regular and wholemeal flour. The farm is home to numerous animals; horses, goats, donkeys, one mule, ducks, chicken, cats and Riki the dog, who accompanied us throughout our conversation, like the real master of the property.

Urša and Miha are not conventional farmers. They were looking for cultivable land where

they could also keep horses for a long time. "If you're only starting to farm, it's not easy to acquire agricultural land," explains Miha. They had to wait several years for the land over which Trnulja now extends. Because it was overgrown with thorn bushes, they first had to clear these away and re-cultivate. They also put up buildings for the animals, machinery and feed. Two years ago, they began building holiday apartments.

They acquired knowledge of organic farming through experience. Urša has an M.A. in economics, but has many years of practical experience in farming. Over the years, she also improved her practical knowledge with theory and obtained a professional education as a farmer and stock breeder. Horses are her greatest joy, and she also likes transforming home-grown produce into delicious home-made dishes. The Estate also holds cookery workshops, particularly for the preparation of

hemp dishes. I tasted Urša's biscuits made with pumpkin seeds and found them delicious. Miha has a degree in traffic technology and is an active member of the Association of Organic Farmers of Central Slovenia. He acquired his knowledge of organic farming over the years by working on a farm. Today, they are among the most noticeable organic producers in their district and recently held an open-door day under the Local Quality project.

"We started with hemp; we were pioneers in this field in Slovenia, and it is for hemp products that we are most known," explains Miha. "We grow all our grains ourselves. We have our own combine harvester, but unfortunately, we don't have our own mill, so others mill for us. But we do press our own oils." They are committed to the principles of sustainable development and process only what they produce.

The Country Estate Trnulja is an example of best practice of how to start organic farming. The Estate functions on the principles of high-quality products and services and a comprehensive offer, but it also remains loyal to the tradition and cultural identity of the environment in which it is located.

The interior design and equipment also follow organic and local principles. The interior equipment is made of alder and pine. The bedding, towels and curtains are made of hemp, while the mattresses are also filled with it.

PRINCIPLES OF TRNULJA

The Country Estate Trnulja is an example of best practice of how to start organic farming. The Estate functions on the principles of high-quality products and services and a comprehensive offer, but it also remains loyal to the tradition and cultural identity of the environment in which it is located.

The vision of the Estate is clear: to follow the principles of sustainable development. In its region, the Country Estate Trnulja wishes to additionally strengthen its position as a recognised organic farm and to convince with its distinctive tourist offer, which is both classic and also innovative. In the last year, the farm has been involved in tourist activities by offering holiday apartments, with which Trnulja joined the association of BIO Hotels, which has extremely high and strict ecological standards.

When Miha and I walk around the facilities, he explains how they selected the construction

materials. The facilities for both daily visitors and those who stay longer are constructed according to the principles of organic architecture, with an emphasis on the use of building and insulating materials. The insulation is from hemp grown in their own fields. They also used reeds and clay, which are abundant in the Marshes. The old house which stood on the property was used as building material for the new one. Bricks were recycled or cut and now serve as paving blocks for new surfaces; the walls feature wooden frameworks, hemp insulation and clay plaster. The timber piles that supported houses on the Ljubljana Marshes were used for decorative purposes. Tomaževa hiša (Tomaž House), the oldest house in Črna vas, which is a monument of national interest only a stone's throw from the Estate, served as a stylistic inspiration for the construction.

The interior design and equipment also follow organic and local principles. The interior equipment is made of alder and pine. The bedding, towels

and curtains are made of hemp, while the mattresses are also filled with it. The photographs of motifs from the surrounding area add an additional aesthetic touch. What peace and tranquillity one feels upon entering these premises! I believe it is a truly exceptional project.

Urša and Miha have many plans. During our pleasant chat, they revealed that they wish to have a special wellness centre at the farm incorporating the tradition and history of the Ljubljana Marshes. They think that the Marshes are not developed enough for tourism, although from the historical point of view it is one of the most important places, as the oldest wooden wheel with an axle in the world was found here. And when I ask them about their experience of organic farming, Urša replies, "Very pioneering. Because we do not have a long and generally present tradition of organic farming, it was necessary to break fresh ground in certain fields. Especially, if one chooses such a strict organic direction."

“When looking around the Country Estate Trnulja, and being moved by the size and beauty of the Marshes surrounding it, it is easy to forget everyday problems. Peace and tranquillity take over. When walking around the Estate, past the blooming fields and meadows on which horses and other animals graze in the sun, one is certain to find inner peace. The Country Estate Trnulja is our way of life and coexistence with nature, which we deeply respect. It reflects our life philosophy, which we are happy to share with our visitors.”
 Urša and Miha

More information at www.trnulja.si

Left: The interior design
 Right: The farm is home to numerous animals.



Photo: Country Estate Trnulja

Photo: Country Estate Trnulja

Vulkanija

Volcano awakens in Goričko region

The Vulkanija adventure park has recently opened near Goričko Castle. The municipality's largest tourist project is also one of the largest geologic adventure parks in Slovenia. Its construction took five years and has required an

investment of EUR 3 million, 85% of which was financed by the EU. The adventure park consists of two parts, the first intended for education and the second the adventure park, including the experience of the underground world.

Photo: Vulkanija



Vulkanija is the first adventure park in Slovenia and is situated in the village of Grad.

Oli the Mole

It is not by accident that the Vulkanija project was set up in this area, since three million years ago the last volcano in the area of the present-day Slovenia erupted near Grad. Under the project, the municipality reconstructed the Lednar tannery, where a visitor can experience the first part of Vulkanija. Visitors can get familiar with different rocks and their origin and occurrence in the Goričko region. In the second, adventure part of the park, the visitor can investigate the underground, virtually descend six kilometres beneath the surface and experience the history of our planet from the Big Bang to the present day. Under the leadership of the scenarist and project manager Dr Dragan Mrdaković, 35 people created a 3D film. The explanations are adapted to the youngest visitors – primary school children and secondary school youths.

AN INTERESTING STORY OF PLANET FORMATION

Vulkanija is the first adventure park in Slovenia and is situated in the village of Grad. The park is dedicated mostly to geology. A visitor can listen to explanations on the formation of the Earth and the Goričko region and volcanic activity. Volcanic rocks thrown out by explosive eruptions from volcanoes three million years ago are preserved in the Goričko region. Geological forces significantly transformed the former landscape of the Pannonian Sea, active volcanoes and other geological surroundings into the present day landscape of the Goričko region. Many experts on geology, biology and palaeontology and architects, computer and machine operators participated in the project. Together, they have shown that it is possible to create an interesting story even about a



Photo: Vulkanija

Goričko was named after "gorice", the Slovenian word for small hills.

The park is dedicated mostly to geology. A visitor can listen to explanations on the formation of the Earth and the Goričko region and volcanic activity.

very distant event. In this connection, the creators of the park should also be praised for their success in obtaining EU funds. The project, which was carried out in two phases, totals almost three million euros, out of which the municipality contributed a mere EUR 300,000.

OLIVINE – A TYPICAL MINERAL

The records in the rocks give evidence of the geological history of the territory. In the Goričko area, the most typical and recognisable mineral of the volcanic rock is olivine. It is of an attractive green colour and in the form of volcanic bombs cannot be found anywhere outside Slovenia. This is

also a mineral which has a special place in development of human culture. Cleopatra, for example, valued olivine more than precious emeralds.

A PARK FOR ALL GENERATIONS

The park is intended for all age groups, but it is specially adapted to the youngest visitors. The more educational part of the park in the Lednar tannery and in the new “adventure” part includes showcases and computer touchscreens and a multimedia three-dimensional projection room presenting in a clear, easily understandable manner the development of the Earth from the Big Bang onwards and, within this,

events that took place in different periods on such a small piece of the Earth as is the Goričko region. Inside two artificial volcanic tubes, which are connected with a virtual elevator, the visitors can experience what it’s like in a volcano underground and see geodes, the wonderful crystal formations which are formed in volcanic eruptions and can still be found in the Grad quarry. Mr Danijel Kalamar, the mayor of Grad municipality, said he hoped this the largest tourist project in the municipality will attract visitors from near and far. Along with the project, the Institute for Cultural Heritage Management, which also manages the Vulkanija adventure park, was revived.



Photo: Vulkanija

Visitors can visit a basalt tuff quarry in the immediate vicinity of the village, where, during a long period of time, construction stones for buildings and other needs were cut. As an example of basalt stone construction, the former Lednar tannery was reconstructed in the courtyard of the facility.

Guinness World Records

Ferarič successfully ended the season in paragliding accuracy

In addition to the record holder Tina Maze who in the 2012-2013 season collected the highest amount of points in the Alpine Ski World Cup for Women, Matjaž Ferarič will also be featured among Slovenian record breakers in this year's edition of the Guinness World Records with the highest number of world championship titles in paragliding accuracy.

Matjaž Ferarič from the Čuk – Yagababa Dravograd Club has been the winner of the world paragliding accuracy championships for the last three years. A total of 135 competitors from 22 countries participated at the world championship last year. The Yagababa team was also one of the best among 36 teams. This year's greatest success is the gold medal at the World Games (a substitute for the Olympic Games for non-Olympic sports) in Cali, Colombia. Ferarič is also in the lead before the sixth and final competition of this season which will be held in Malaysia.

To the question, what sport means to him, he replied that sport was his way of life. He simply could not live without it.

The 51-year old Matjaž Ferarič is a veteran in paragliding accuracy. He has been competing since the beginning of organised competitions in 1993. He is a two-time individual world champion winning his first gold medal in Slovenia in 2003 and again in 2007 in Lithuania; he is also a five-time team champion (2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011). He says he has been married to this sport which excited him when he was young and has remained faithful to it ever since. To reach that yellow dot representing the target is a constant challenge. Ferarič is one of the main promoters of the sport in Slovenia and abroad with over 10,000 flights under his belt.

He is upset that media sometimes focus on the wrong topics and blow up things that are not worthy of attention, whereas in his opinion paragliding does not

receive enough attention. This is a comparatively young sport and other sports receive more public and professional support. He has been involved in paragliding for 25 years; before he fully dedicated himself to it, he trained athletics and basketball, which gave him a good basis for a further career in sports. What does it take to make a good paraglider? "In addition to technical knowledge which is certainly the foundation, the feeling and experience upgrade competence over the years. General fitness must also be at a satisfactory level. The psyche affects the result of the competition, particularly in the final flight when hundredths of a second make a difference and it is so easy to make a mistake. The concentration during the flight is psychologically strenuous and demanding. It is extremely important for me not to be burdened with results." Slovenia has more than 2,000 paragliders which places us at the top of the world. Indonesia is one of the most powerful countries in this sport and with 200 million inhabitants, it has the same number of paragliders.

Has his life ever been in danger? In spite of flying in the Himalayas and many competitions, he has never been in a life-threatening situation, but there were occasions when he was very happy to be back on solid ground. What were the feelings in the air like in the beginning? "As if you are head over heels in love. Paragliding enraptures you, addicts you. When I began flying, it was all I could talk about. The feeling somewhat cools down over the years, but the enthusiasm still lasts. I am not so much trying to achieve a good



Photo: Tone Turšič

The world recorder Matjaž Ferarič

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When I began flying, it was all I could talk about. The feeling somewhat cools down over the years, but the enthusiasm still lasts. I am not so much trying to achieve a good sports result; I am above all interested in the aesthetic enjoyment.

sports result; I am above all interested in the aesthetic enjoyment. You see, I have experienced marvellous morning flights which are always something special, and also unforgettable evening glides. I still dream about flying but I do not have a parachute in my dreams. The sport is so firmly anchored in me.”

Ferarič is working as a PE teacher at the Special Education, Work and Care Centre in Črna na Koroškem. In the beginning, he found it somewhat difficult to accept people with special needs,

but deeper relations and ties have been formed between them over the years. “These people are more open and honest than completely healthy people and there is also not the classic teacher-student relationship. I practically live with them and the work still gives me pleasure.”

How long does he plan to compete and attend world championships? “I will be doing this for as long as I will be happy to train and remain competitive. The next competition is in Borneo, Malaysia, which will be this year’s last

competition for the world cup. Through the sport, you discover the world and other people with whom you make friends; you see new places, traditions, values, etc. You simply return different. I cannot predict when I will stop competing. I used to think that I will certainly not be doing this after the age of 50, but now I think differently. But I hope that I will be able to fly for a very long time.” The new season of the world cup will begin next February. We wish Matjaž Ferarič many more paragliding successes.

“I want to see more top pilots try this sport,” Ferarič said.



Photo: Tone Turšič



Photo: Tone Turšič

Matjaž Ferarič - simply the best.

Photo: Taminio Petelinšek/STA



An array of new achievements in natural sciences

In the last year, Slovenian scientists accomplished many new achievements in natural and mathematical sciences, which were also noted by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Jernej Pikalo.

Among the achievements which contributed significantly to the development of Slovenian science are the discovery of a new particle with the properties of a Higgs boson, a new methodology for calculating Bogomolov multipliers and new compounds for detecting changes in the brains of Alzheimer's sufferers. For more information on scientific accomplishments, visit <http://www.arrs.gov.si/>.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA



Slovenian School Museum marks its 115th anniversary

On 27 September 1898, the Slovenian teacher societies founded the first specialised museum in Slovenia. "This is an important event for us, consolidating our efforts and supporting the fulfilment of our mission to document knowledge on the history of schooling in Slovenia," said its Director Stane Okoliš on the occasion of its anniversary.

At the ceremony, the museum's long history in preserving school heritage and its role in researching the history of Slovenian education were presented. The museum features a permanent exhibition entitled "The education system in Slovenia through the centuries until 1991". Every year several topical exhibitions from educational and schooling history are set up, accompanied by detailed exhibition catalogues. A specially arranged classroom from the end of the 19th century is also open to visitors.

Photo: Archive of MAS



The manager of the year is Igor Hafnar

The Executive Board of the Managers' Association of Slovenia has named the Director of Savatech, Igor Hafnar, who has been committed to the rubber industry since the beginning of his career, Manager of the Year 2013. The award was presented to him at the Management Congress in Portorož.

Currently, Savatech is achieving excellent business results, developing strong relations with its employees, quickly improving the added value; it ranks among the best in the selected niches of the global market. For this reason, the Executive Board of the Managers' Association granted the Manager of the Year 2013 award to Mr Hafnar, who manages Savatech with the goal of placing the company among the first three producers in Europe in the selected market niches by 2020. Last year, the Manager of the Year award was granted to the President of the Board of Management of Lek, Vojmir Urlep.

Photo: Taminio Petelinšek/STA



Slovenian Post issues salty stamp series

Post operator Pošta Slovenije has presented a new series of four special stamps that are expected to raise strong interest among collectors. The new salty stamps, which Pošta Slovenije says are the first of their kind in the world, depict four aquatic animals typically found in the Slovenian sea.

The stamps are made using thermography, a special technique to deposit salt onto the paper. The salt comes from the Piran salt pans. The four salty stamps have nominal values of 60, 64, 92 and 97 cents.

Photo: Stanko Gruden/STA



Simply the best

The best basketball player of the 38th European Basketball Championships, held in Slovenia, was Tony Parker, a member of the French Golden Section.

In addition to Parker, the best Slovenian player, Goran Dragić, Croat Bojan Bogdanović, Linas Kleizis from Lithuania and Spanish star Marc Gasol were ranked as the best five championship players by accredited journalists. France defeated Lithuania by 80:66 in the final EuroBasket game in Slovenia, while the host nation earned a commendable fifth place.

Photo: Rosana Rijavec/STA



The Maks Fabiani award

The Town and Spatial Planning Association of Slovenia, the Maks Fabiani Institute and Komen municipality have presented the award for special achievements in the area of urbanism.

This year the award for special achievement in the area of spatial planning was won by the designers of the Municipal Spatial Plan of the Municipality of Ljubljana, i.e. the Municipality of Ljubljana for the management, financing and coordination of preparation of the urban development plan and the Ljubljana Urban Institute, the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and Oikos Bureau, which is engaged mostly in environmental protection, for carrying it out.

Maks Fabiani, one of the best-known Slovenian architects and urbanists, was born in the village of Kobdilj. The Fabiani family vault is located in the cemetery of St Gregor's Church in that village. Fabiani also has a special place in the square tower of Štanjel castle, which hosts a permanent exhibition dedicated to this great man from the Karst region.

Photo: Tomo Jesenčnik

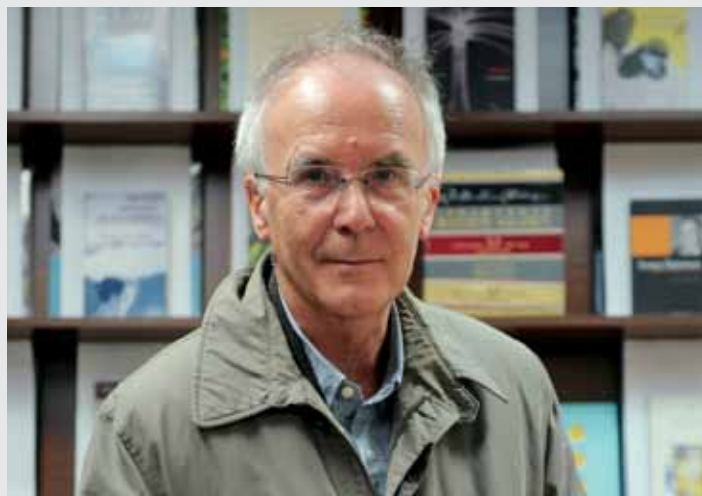


60 years of Bled Cream cake

The lakeside town of Bled marked 60 years since a pastry chef at one of the local hotels invented the Bled cream cake. Since 1953 the Park Hotel produced 12 million original Bled cakes or »kremšnitas« as they are known in Slovenian.

The kremšnitas are served in nearly every restaurant or pastry shop in Slovenia. The cream cake was invented by Ištvan Lukačević, who moved to Bled in the 1940s from Serbia to become the pastry chef at Park Hotel. On any given day between 1,000 and 1,500 cream cakes are made, but on sunny spring and autumn weekends between 2,500 and 3,500 are made. The record was however broken in the 1970s, when the lake frequently froze over attracting many ice skaters and up to 6,000 cakes were made on a single weekend.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA



Njegoševa award won by poet Tomaž Šalamun

The poet Tomaž Šalamun is the winner of the Njegoševa award, a top literary award in Montenegro. The Montenegro Ministry of Culture highlighted that Šalamun is one of the most important Slovenian and European poets and a leader of the East European avant-garde.

Montenegro's President, Filip Vujanović, will present the award to the poet in Cetinje on 12 November. Šalamun, born in Zagreb in 1941, grew up in Ljubljana, Mostar and Koper; he is considered one of the most internationally recognised Slovenian men of letters. He made his literary debut with his poetry collection Poker in 1966. During his almost half-century-long creative career, he has issued around forty poetry collections.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



Environmental UN award

Slovenian member of the European Commission Janez Potočnik is to receive the top United Nations environmental award for his efforts to promote efficient use of resources and reduce food waste in the EU

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has chosen Mr Potočnik, the European commissioner for the environment, as the recipient of the United Nations' 2013 Champion of the Earth award in the category of policy leadership, according to an announcement made in Brussels on Tuesday.

The accolade is presented to leaders from government, civil society and the private sector for activities that help achieve substantial benefits for the environment. Under Mr Potočnik's leadership, the EU has "set targets to halve food waste and practically eliminate landfill by 2020", the UNEP said in explanation of the choice, adding that his role in tackling resource inefficiencies across the food chain had also made a substantial contribution to the ongoing UNEP and Food and Agricultural Organization campaign to reduce food waste.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



Discipline, consistency and brilliance

Ballet dancer and years-long Ljubljana Ballet School headmaster Gorazd Vospernik received the lifetime achievement award given out by the Association of Ballet Artists.

"Discipline, consistency and brilliance marked the path of Gorazd Vospernik," the jury said before the award ceremony of Vospernik, who was a dancer, soloist, choreographer and ballet teacher. The 2012 Lydia Wisiak Award for special achievements will go to the Ljubljana SNG Ballet theatre for their production of "Giselle" and to the SNG Maribor Ballet ensemble for the production on "Romeo and Juliet".



Photo: Municipality of Podčetrtek

Most beautiful village

Podčetrtek in SE Slovenia is one of five villages in Europe that have received a gold Entente Florale Europe award this year. Also among the winners is the lakeside town of Bled (in NW Slovenia), which has won the silver award for towns.

The award for Podčetrtek was collected by deputy mayor Peter Misja in Nieuw Poort, Belgium, at an event hosted by the European Association for Flowers and Landscape, an international non-profit association. The award for Podčetrtek came four years after a gold award was won by the neighbouring village of Olimje. Tourism in the Podčetrtek municipality revolves mainly around the Olimia health spa. The municipality has some 2,000 beds for visitors and last year some 360,000 overnight stays were recorded, 40% of which were accounted for by foreign guests.



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

Boris Pahor's library opened

A library featuring more than 5,000 books from the private collection of the acclaimed minority writer Boris Pahor was opened in the Italian village of Prosecco near Trieste.

In addition to various issues of Pahor's novels and other works, the library features books collected by the 100-year-old author and given to the Prosek-Kontovel cooperative. Exhibited along books are also other items, such as photographs and awards. Also on display is one of Pahor's writing desks, news portal slomedia. The project has been financially supported by the government Office for Slovenians Abroad.



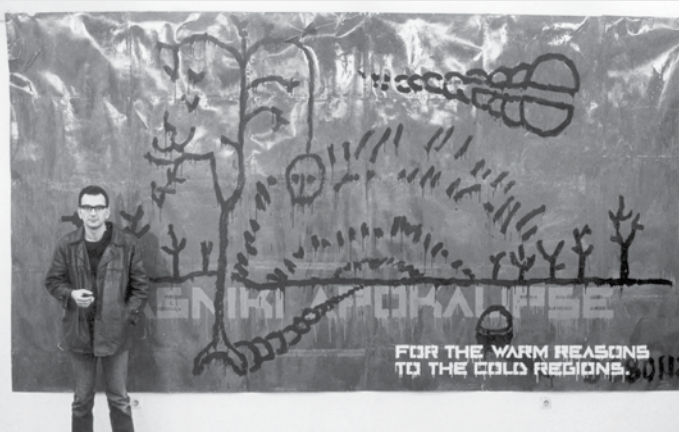
Čokoljana – Chocolate fair

26 October 2013 between 8 am and 7 pm, Ljubljana

A one-day Chocolate Fair will be held in Ljubljana's Central Market. Renowned chocolate producers, small boutique chocolate shops and confectioners will be offering their products. Over thirty participants will be showcased by the stalls. Chocolates made from different ingredients, pralines, hot chocolates, chocolate beer and wine, cosmetics, products made by students at secondary schools for gastronomy and other products related to chocolate will be on offer.

More information available at: www.cokoljana.si

Photo: Irwin Archives



Irwin: Back to the USA

15 October – 2 November, Ljubljana

The exhibition was one of the projects which marked Ljubljana's alternative scene in the early 1980s. 'Back to the USA' is based on the emphasis of appropriation that is characteristic of the Irwin group, as the exhibition is a complete reproduction of the travelling group exhibition of the best in American art. With this gesture, the Irwin group introduced new forms of subversive artistic strategies and opened up new possibilities for artistic experimentation.

More information available at: <http://www.skuc.org>



LIFFE

6 November – 17 November, different venues around Slovenia

November is dedicated to film. The festival offers a broad range of art films from around the world. They are presented in various sections: Perspectives, Avant-premiers, Kings and Queens, World Film Panorama, Extravaganza, Theme Retrospective, Focus, Tribute, Kinobalon, Kino-integral.

More information available at: www.liffe.si



Photo: www.kranjska.si

Lavtižar Days

25 October – 27 October, Kranjska gora

The late autumn event commemorates Josip Lavtižar, the writer, composer, travel journalist and priest. Lavtižar Days combine two sections. With the first section, the organisers aim to raise the level of the town's cultural offer; the purpose of the second section is to promote dialogue on current issues in the valley. The event is organised by the local cultural association.

More information available at: www.kranjska-gora.si/Events

Enjoy your Slovenian breakfast!

The purpose of the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast project is to educate, inform and raise awareness of preschool and school children, along with the wider public, on the importance of breakfast in our eating habits, on the importance and advantages of locally produced food, on the importance of agriculture and beekeeping for production, the environment and economic activity, on the proper management of waste generated in everyday life, and on the efficient use of packaging. The content of the project also concerns culture and cultural heritage in relation to breakfast in particular and traditional Slovenian food in general. It is also important to raise public awareness on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including the significance of physical activity for health and quality and creative ways of spending free time, for example by participating in various cultural activities.

The Traditional Slovenian Breakfast project was first carried out in 2011. Normally, local farms, food-processing companies and beekeepers donate foodstuffs (milk, bread, apples, butter and honey) for the breakfast of children and teachers in kindergartens and primary schools. The breakfast is usually organised on the third Friday in November.

The project encompasses all kindergartens and primary schools in Slovenia, thus including the entire population of preschool and school children. The introduction of healthy eating habits is most effective in early childhood, when children best accept family values and are most amenable to food education. A balanced diet in the period of growth is important, as it facilitates optimal health, growth and intellectual development and at the same time prevents the development of health problems and associated illnesses in childhood or adulthood.

The Ministry of Agriculture takes the view that breakfast is also very important from the social point of view. On the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast day, all children and teachers gather around the same table or in the same classroom and take their time to interact and talk while eating breakfast. In today's fast way of living, we do not take enough time to socialise, but informal interactions are still an important part of our coexistence.

In order to make it easier for educational institutions to choose suppliers that will really be local, a list of possible local producers will be drawn up and sent to kindergartens and primary schools as a recommendation. This will also establish a link between educational institutions and local producers, which is important for any further cooperation in terms of everyday procurement of foodstuffs for school meals.

Summarized: Promotional material in campaign "Slovenian breakfast"

SLOVENIAN FOOD DAY

EVERY THIRD FRIDAY
IN NOVEMBER

Choose food which has not
made hundreds of kilometres



WHY EAT LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD?

- Food from a local environment is seasonally more available, fruit and vegetables have more vitamins and thus a higher nutritional value. Due to the proximity of production fewer additives (e.g. preservatives and colourings) are used; such food is also characterized by a rich and traditional taste.
- Locally produced food supports local production and provides local employment.
- Locally produced food preserves settlement, cultivation and orderliness of the Slovenian countryside.
- Locally produced food protects the environment due to the shorter transportation and reduced use of packaging.
- Locally produced food guarantees food self-sufficiency in Slovenia.



Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of the Republic of Slovenia and its partners mark the Slovenian Food Day with a nationwide project entitled "Traditional Slovenian Breakfast" in kindergartens and schools.

For more information see:
www.tradicionalni-zajtrk.si



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
AND THE ENVIRONMENT