

Sinfo

A professional cyclist in a yellow and black jersey is captured in a moment of intense effort, crossing a finish line. He is surrounded by a dense crowd of spectators, many of whom are holding up their smartphones to capture the moment. In the background, a white motorcycle with a rider in a white helmet is visible, along with several Slovenian flags. The scene is set outdoors on a paved road under bright, sunny conditions.

Outstanding feats are attainable

I FEEL
SLOVENIA



**I FEEL
SLOVENIA**

Sinfo

SINFO - SLOVENIAN INFORMATION
June 2023

www.gov.si

Published by
Government Communication Office

Editor-in-Chief
Tanja Glogovčan Belančič

Executive Editor
Vesna Žarkovič

Editorial Board
Danila Golob, Polona Prešeren, Irena Kogoj,
Špela Vovk, Vesna Žarkovič

Design
Irena Kogoj

Photo Editor
Brane Horvat

Photo on the front page
Anže Malovrh/STA

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

Language editing
Amidas

Print
Collegium Graphicum d.o.o.

Number of copies
2500

ISSN
1854-0805



Photo: Bruno Toič

OUTSTANDING FEATS ARE ATTAINABLE

June is Slovenia's month. It is the month when we remember our determination, our unity and our choice to take charge of our own country.

In this edition of Sinfo, we put all these values in the context of a range of human stories and heroic deeds. Our common thread is solidarity in working together. We write about the several-day rescue of a caver from the Vranjedolska cave and the selfless efforts made by the Civil Protection team during her rescue. You can look at the photographs of Jošt Franko, who uses his camera to bring to life people's hardships so that we may not overlook them.

We present the literary opus and character of the writer Boris Pahor as an outstanding Slovenian figure who wrote great literary works about the difficult times of the Slovenian nation.

The European Youth Olympics Festival in Maribor is also ahead of us. We have no doubt that the Olympic torch will be burning brightly, among other reasons including due to the sparkling spirit of young athletes when the city of Maribor becomes the centre of Europe. When we cheer for these young people, we will be gazing upon the very best in Slovenian athletes. Like the cyclist Primož Roglič.

Success is not a matter of luck, but the result of hard work, perseverance and vision. Accordingly, outstanding feats and results are not unattainable. If we are committed to our goals, we will overcome all obstacles and rise beyond the impossible.

Tanja Glogovčan Belančič, Editor-in-Chief

- 6 STATEHOOD DAY
Happy birthday, Slovenia!
- 10 SANDI CURK, HEAD OF THE REGIONAL CIVIL PROTECTION
HEADQUARTERS FOR THE NOTRANJSKA REGION
Noble values are stronger than what divides us
- 14 MOM, I DON'T WANT WAR!
The stories of all of us
- 18 JOŠT FRANKO
Photographer who records stories forgotten by the media
- 22 ONCE A SCOUT, ALWAYS A SCOUT
To create a better world for everyone
- 26 BORIS PAHOR
Master of literary expression who believed in reconciliation,
unity, respect and lived in accordance with his beliefs
- 30 ON THE WAY TO FRANKFURT
Presentation of Slovenia through the lens of culture and art
- 34 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2025 NOVA GORICA – GORIZIA
Go borderless
- 38 SUMMER FESTIVALS IN SLOVENIA
Don't miss them
- 42 SLOVENIAN SPACE STRATEGY 2030
Slovenia: small on Earth, but large in space
- 46 EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL MARIBOR 2023
Competitors in sports, united in the Olympic spirit
- 50 EUROPEAN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
Refind basketball moves on the Ljubljana floor
- 52 PRIMOŽ ROGLIČ
Roglič Wins the Giro in Front of the Colosseum in Rome



STATEHOOD DAY

Happy birthday, Slovenia!

On 25 June, we are celebrating Statehood Day, the day that honours the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Photo: STA

32 years

For centuries, Slovenians have dreamed of our own identity, independent of foreign rulers. For millennia, we have held our heads high in search of our national identity, which we have today precisely because of the historical efforts and sacrifices of individuals.

On 25 June, we are celebrating Statehood Day, the day that honours the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Slovenia's independence is undoubtedly a unique historical achievement and constitutes the greatest act of state-building ever undertaken by the Slovenian nation. This milestone is a source of pride for all citizens and fellow Slovenians abroad. Statehood Day is our national holiday and a day of special significance that obliges us to reflect on the meaning of democracy, freedom and peace.

Slovenia has been through 32 years of trials and has faced many challenges along the way. Let us therefore come together and remember that 25 June is also a day of unity and celebration, both in our country and among Slovenians in neighbouring states and around the world. Happy birthday, Slovenia!

ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA ROBERT GOLOB

Photo: STA

Dear readers,

More than a year ago, we, the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, announced to the international community that we wanted to live in a free society committed to democratic values. Our commitments remain the same, and our values are being put into practice every day in dialogue with NGOs and wider civil society. We work with dedication, perseverance and with an eye to the future. We are creating a digitally advanced and intergenerationally connected society of solidarity. Being committed to tolerant dialogue, we have announced zero tolerance of hate speech. We have gone a step further and set up a Strategic Council for the Prevention of Hate Speech, which works with experts to develop proposals to prevent hate speech and promote respectful attitudes. Dialogue without hate-mongering is a fundamental commitment of our government to our citizens. We are building a society where there is room for all. An open, peaceful and inclusive society where everyone has a sense of belonging. A society based on universal human rights and mutual respect for individuals and groups.

Slovenia boasts a highly skilled workforce. We are particularly proud of our internationally renowned scientists, whose many achievements place us at the very top of the world's scientific fields. We are investing in the jobs of the future and working towards the knowledge-based society we are already entering through digital transformation and the green transition. Our path to the future is clear. It is the path to freedom and prosperity that our grandfathers paved after the Second World War, and thirty-two years ago we declared in unity that we wanted to continue on it. I look back with pride at the road we have travelled so far, because we have been able to maintain a responsible attitude towards the environment and our rich cultural heritage.

On 25 June, we are celebrating Statehood Day, the day that honours the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Slovenia's independence is undoubtedly a unique historical achievement and constitutes the greatest act of state-building ever undertaken by the Slovenian nation. This milestone is a source of pride for all citizens and fellow Slovenians abroad. Statehood Day is our national holiday and a day of special significance that obliges us to reflect on the meaning of democracy, freedom and peace.

Let us therefore come together and remember that 25 June is also a day of unity and celebration, both in our country and among Slovenians in neighbouring states and around the world. Happy birthday, Slovenia!

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA PIRC MUSAR

Photo: Bor Slana/STA

Slovenia has been through 32 years of trials and has faced many challenges along the way. On the occasion of Statehood Day, I would like to express my deepest respect for everyone whose wise thinking, hard work and sacrifices have contributed to our country's independence.

Our socio-political environment is filled with challenges and opportunities that must be used to our advantage. As President of the Republic of Slovenia, I am aware that this task is one that requires responsibility, vision and cooperation. That is why it is important for all of us to come together in finding ways to build bridges between us and establish a dialogue based on respect for different opinions.

I believe we can achieve a lot together. Therefore, I am calling upon everyone to get involved in public life, to participate in shaping our society and helping build a Slovenia that can be proud of its accomplishments and open to the world. My sincere congratulations on the occasion of Statehood Day.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY URŠKA KLAKOČAR ZUPANČIČ

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Although we share the same planet, we are still divided as human beings. We are divided by race, by belief, by understanding ... And yet, we are still the inhabitants of one world and this unity is worth fighting for, even within a nation or a country, where many politics overlap. Because we are human.

For centuries, Slovenians have dreamed of our own identity, independent of foreign rulers. For millennia, we have held our heads high in search of our national identity, which we have today precisely because of the historical efforts and sacrifices of individuals.

With respect for the past, present and future of our country, I wish the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia all the best on the occasion of Slovenia's Statehood Day.

SANDI CURK, HEAD OF THE REGIONAL CIVIL PROTECTION
HEADQUARTERS FOR THE NOTRANJSKA REGION

Noble values are stronger than what divides us

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



More than 150 rescuers participated in the mission, which was led by Sandi Curk. Photo: Postojna Civil Protection archives

The dedication and sacrifice of volunteers during the recent rescue of an injured caver near Cerknica revealed the immense kind-heartedness of the people who showed exceptional sensitivity to the needs of a fellow human being and a readiness to help people in distress. On 17 April, after 30 hours of effort, rescuers successfully extricated a 33-year-old female caver of the Rakek Caving Society from a cave near Cerknica. More than 150 rescuers participated in the mission, which was led by Sandi Curk, Head of the Regional Civil Protection Headquarters for the Notranjska region, with whom we spoke a day later.

What happened on that dreadful day? How did the accident occur?

The injured caver was in a group of six cavers from the Rakek Caving Society, who were exploring the unknown sections of the newly discovered Vranjedolska Cave. Upon their return, at a depth of about 100 metres, a large rock fell on her head. It smashed her helmet and injured her seriously.

Fortunately, Ana was tied to a rope and because she was no longer standing on the ground, she was more mobile, which softened the impact.

She was a well-experienced caver with more than a decade of experience. After the accident, one of the cavers hurried out of the cave to get help, while the others stayed with her to provide assistance. She was unconscious after the accident and throughout the rescue, but the doctor later determined that she was responding to pain stimuli. The rescue involved 65 cave rescuers and 90 people from civil protection, fire brigades, police and scouts. They were all volunteers.

What was the reaction of everyone present after the rock fell on her?

They were exceptionally composed. They immediately laid her horizontally but had no idea how serious her injury was. If a person is not in the correct position after a brain injury, they can

die within six hours. One of the cavers present was her brother, who kept her warm with his own body, thus maintaining her vital functions, so that she wouldn't develop hypothermia. Another caver then started climbing up to launch a rescue mission.

A regular ascent takes an hour and a half, but he came up in 25 minutes, due to the effects of adrenaline, of course.

Once he reached the surface, he called the Postojna Emergency Notification Centre, which immediately initiated the rescue. As the regional commander, I was called at 20.05 and arrived at the site at 20.45. All rescue mechanisms were then being set up.

You knew who was in the cave, but you didn't have a map of the cave, as it was still being explored. How did this impact the course of the rescue?

The caver who came out of the cave first drew a map of the cave, which was crucial. Without it, the rescue would have been carried out very differently.

Did those trapped in the cave have sufficient food supplies?
Of course not. They didn't think an accident would occur. They had a limited amount of food and water with them.

What happened next?

We established a radio connection with the team in the cave. Prior to the arrival of the doctor, the cavers made a bivouac in the cave

labyrinth into which they moved Ana so her life wasn't at risk from falling rocks. They took small burners with them to heat the space, as well as food and water.

The cavers sketched the route, so we were able to obtain more detailed data about the tunnel.

This was particularly useful for the blasters. Luka Zalokar, head of the blasting team, a caver since the age of eight, living in Rakek, whose life is caves and blasting, assessed where the narrowest sections of the tunnel were, as these could aggravate the rescue, and he also assessed the quantities of explosives required. He immediately called cavers/blasters and began preparing them for the intervention. At 23.00, four teams descended into the tunnel and simultaneously began blasting the tunnel at individual sections. They first drilled eight-centimetre holes and then four blasters and their assistants blasted rocks one metre away from them. They crushed large rocks with hammers, collected smaller rocks and laid them at the side of the tunnel. In ten hours, they blasted twenty cubic metres of rock. For ten hours, blasts were heard every 20 minutes. These were extreme efforts and a unique approach.

It wasn't only the blasting technique that was new; you also began preparing for brain surgery at a depth of 100 metres for the first time in Europe?

We soon found that oxygen, glucose and intravenous infusion would be needed to stabilise the injured caver. All of the above was delivered within an hour. And not only that. We began preparations for surgery at the depth of 100 metres. A neurosurgeon was prepared to arrive at the site and lead the surgery from the surface with the help of a video link. Three doctors in the cave would perform the surgery according to his instructions. This has never been done before anywhere in the world. A mini operating theatre had already been set up on the surface.

The access to the cave must have also been difficult.

Extremely. But the firefighters arranged access to the cave in two hours. They cut down several cubic metres of trees, blasted rocks and removed them, so that we were able to reach the entry to the cave and set up lighting units 100 metres away from the headquarters tent. Three hours after the accident was reported, the civil protection headquarters set up a tent to accommodate 30 cave rescuers in the middle of a forest, in the middle of nowhere. You see, those were huge feats. That couldn't have been done by a

tractor alone, but by people, an axe, a chainsaw and the Primorska and Notranjska heart. And Slovenian patriotism.

I want to highlight that I see patriotism and solidarity as the utmost values in this event.

I think that history has made us this way. My parents, who lived under Italian fascism, weren't allowed to speak Slovenian. And that brought us even closer. You see, these people live for this place. They were all emotionally connected with the injured caver even if they didn't know her in person. Many offered help, their tractors, tow ropes, chainsaws, pulleys, etc. An 80-year-old lady offered to make bread for the rescuers. I think this is extraordinary. The village from which the family of the injured caver originates came immediately when Ana was brought out of the cave. They gathered at the wayside shrine and prayed all night for her health. Incredible unity of the region. At four in the morning, when Ana was brought to the surface, the sun was coming up and the birds began singing. Mystical messages: from eternal silence and darkness, Ana was brought into the sun.

You did this in 30 hours. You said that such a thing has never been done before anywhere in the world.

Once the blasters completed their work, four teams were sent into the cave with the task of bringing Ana out. Each team consisted of six members. But not just men, mind you, there were also young girls among them. It's no coincidence. I believe that a woman can carry three times the burden of a man because she is made to give birth. This is also proven by their longer life expectancy. The feminine approach was exceptionally helpful for calming down the course of events. The teams were set at four sites in the tunnel to carry the injured caver together. At some places, it was impossible to carry the stretcher and they had to move her manually above their bodies. Sometimes there was only a two-millimetre clearance between the ceiling and the injured caver. Not to mention the psychological strain. They couldn't let the body move on the stretcher for one millimetre, let alone her head. The problem was also the oxygen tank, as they didn't know where to put it during the transport. The doctors were unable to anticipate what could have happened to her on the way up. We were faced with an extremely difficult decision on how to get her out of the cave.

She wasn't the only one in danger; there

were also 45 other people who were carrying her.

Rocks could fall during the transport, which was impossible to foresee. It was a terrible risk. Each person had to take their own responsibility for descending into the cave.

Did rocks fall during the rescue?

They did and that was the greatest danger. The rescue took four hours. At the first and fourth stations, half hour breaks had to be taken. The probe in Ana's throat moved, which endangered her life. The probe had to be inserted again and Ana was given oxygen. Then she was stabilised. The doctor only had a space of twelve centimetres between the rescuer and Ana to install the probe and oxygenate her. Truly superhuman efforts.

What happened when they emerged from the cave?

Once they came to the surface, the problem was how to carry her on the steep terrain across the rocks to the ambulance one kilometre away. Some 56 firefighters formed a human chain round the stretcher to make sure Ana remained firmly in place on the stretcher. There were 22 firefighters on each side, they made a shield wall and carried her to the ambulance in this way. The ambulance took her away in little more than an hour. Ana had to be readied for helicopter transport in the ambulance, be given everything they didn't have access to in the cave and be prepared for possible surgery at the hospital. We were worried about road hold-ups, so we asked for a night flight of a helicopter. But the terrain had to be prepared so it could land.

You really deserve congratulations for the exceptional task of the cavers, the Civil Protection of the Republic of Slovenia and all the locals and the country in general.

The Commander of Civil Protection of the Republic of Slovenia called every 15 minutes, the Minister of Health called every two to three hours and offered his assistance. The Minister of Defence was also in constant contact. The ministers were not obliged to keep in contact, but they did it out of human solidarity. As the accident happened during the weekend, the shops were closed. But people were still mobilised in large numbers. The rescuers received food every six hours, snacks every three hours, beverages every hour. When they ran out of drill bits when blasting, these were delivered to the cave in 45 minutes from the Merkur hardware store, which opened in the middle of the night for that purpose. That can only happen in the countryside as such solidarity is unfortunately no longer present in the cities. The residents of Rakek, Unec and Cerknica left lights on during the night to help the rescuers. The

entire country lived and breathed in support of the rescue. The President of the National Assembly, Urška Klakočar Zupančič, and the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar, also kept in touch and offered their assistance. These calls gave the rescuers immense strength and the awareness that they were not alone. Many people came and offered their help.

We can be proud to live in a country that showed up at a time of need. I like to say that they helped us come from eternal darkness into the light.

Slovenia and the people who were willing to help stood behind Ana. And this is a story not many nations can tell. I'm also pleased that the state supports the training and education of rescuers. Finally, a special thank you goes to Dr Tina Bizjak, who was in the cave with two other doctors and rescuers. They showed true heroism and courage as a team. They used new approaches and new methods. Everyone who participated and supported us in any way is a hero in their own right in this story. We are the only country in the EU with five doctors that are trained cavers who can descend to a depth of 1,000 metres, which is equivalent to an 8,000-metre-high mountain. We also have other healthcare professionals who are cavers.

Dr Tina Bizjak – the doctor who watched over the injured caver more than 30 hours, "The rescue demanded superhuman efforts from everyone involved. The cave was barely passable, muddy, wet and treacherous. This has been my most difficult intervention to date. Because of the condition of the injured caver and also because the cave seemed unrelenting. I was scared, but I knew there was no other option, as I was the only available doctor. You have to overcome these feelings, although you'd rather sit down and cry or run away. But no, there's no other way. I'm available, I'm going and I'll do everything I can to ensure that the person comes out of the cave alive." (Delo newspaper, 22 April 2023)

As we write this, the Ljubljana University Medical Centre communicated that the caver was still in a life-threatening condition and that the situation was unpredictable.

MOM, I DON'T WANT WAR!

The stories of all of us

KATARINA JURJAVČIČ, TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ
PHOTO: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY ARCHIVES



The exhibitions show ordinary people, life before and after, moment that the war arrived, the decision to leave, the journey to Slovenia, examples of Slovene aid and positive integration into the Slovene environment.

War always destroys, divides, shames, saddens, brings loss, hatred, sickness... but it also brings out sympathy and humanity in all of us.

Our thoughts have been with Ukraine recently, but wars rage elsewhere as well. They also ravaged Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and still continue around the world. There is never a satisfactory answer as to why. What have we gained from them?

UKRAINE TELLS ITS STORY

The visitors of the exhibition at the National Museum of Contemporary History were able to view the items that the Ukrainian refugees brought from their homeland and symbolise their flight to safety.

The hardship was presented through 26 stories.

Museums in the service of community showcase the current social conditions and the war in Ukraine has also cut deeply into our society.

By featuring the personal stories of refugees, the stories of regular people, the museum attempted to showcase the human side of the war. For the most part, the suffering of individuals is seldom portrayed through the scarce news on the war in the media. The museum practice of collecting personal testimonies is firmly rooted in museum work and represents a key building block of historical projects, as it enables a different perspective and broader contextualisation.

The items included a woolly jumper, slippers and pyjamas, the Bible, a book of recipes, a backpack, two photos of a garden before and after it was hit by a missile, etc.

Those items reflected memories (the woolly jumper that of a grandmother and knitting), a flight in pyjamas, as a boy was woken up and had to run to safety with his family, the Bible referred to an individual and their spiritual life symbolically wanting to believe in a prompt ending to the war and hoping for a better life. The book of recipes suggested that a housewife will be able to prepare a delicious family meal again one day as all her loved ones will gather around the table. The backpack symbolised the flight when a person was forced to pack up their entire world from a few drawers and the rest was left in the past, and a photo of grandparents where time stands still and only the yellow edges testify that once things were different, that a person had their roots somewhere.

The common thread of all of the items at the exhibition was change: a forced new beginning and a memory of the fateful time. Irrespective of how long a war lasts, 10, 30, 300, 1,000 or more days, the feeling of powerlessness and fear is the same.



A music programme at the opening event: Music for the future.

Many Ukrainian children visit Slovenian kindergardens and schools today and learn Slovenian.

The memory of the Yugoslav wars is still very much alive. That was a time when Slovenians also experienced war and hiding in shelters and later helped the refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina who were arriving to Slovenia.

The Ukrainian crisis is no different: many Slovenians actively offered their help. At the exhibition, we were able to read the story of an incredible conductor, Živa Ploj Peršuh, who is still helping Ukrainian musicians in their musical development and integration. Four buses of Ukrainians who are mostly accommodated privately were brought to Slovenia by photographer Tamino Petelinšek through Catholic humanitarian organisations.

A compassionate inner drive and organisational skills are crucial when helping a large group of people. The openness and understanding of society are undoubtedly of the utmost importance for the success of such projects.

CHILDREN ARE THE BIGGEST VICTIMS OF WAR

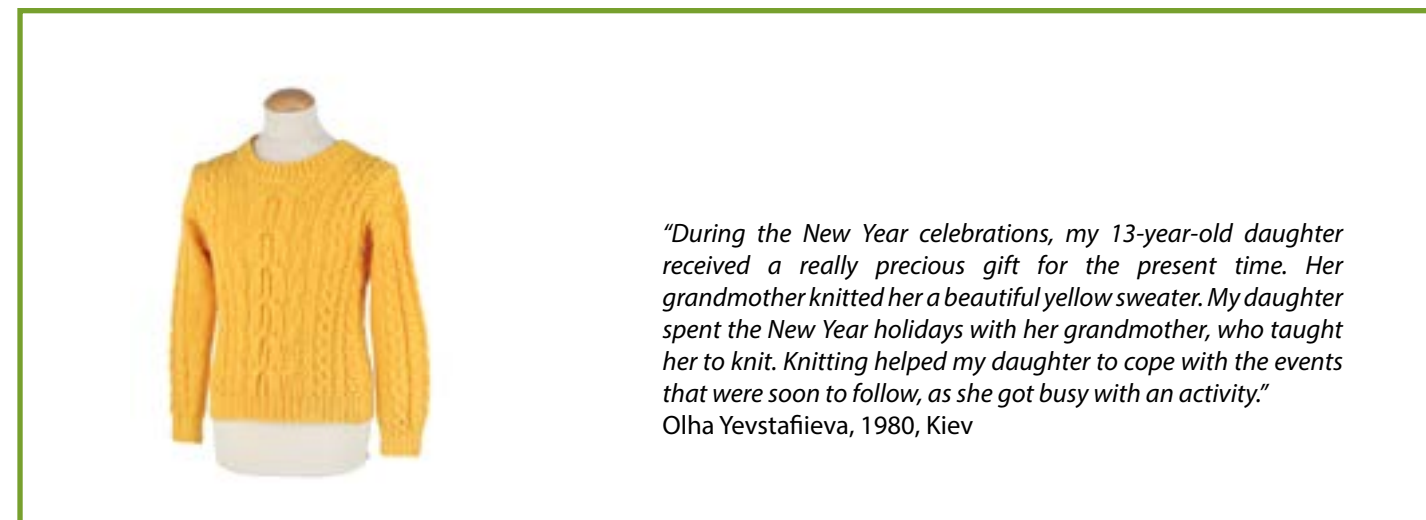
Adults start wars, but children are their biggest victims. The exhibition Mom, I don't want war presents drawings of Polish children created in 1946, who experienced the Nazi German occupation, and drawings of Ukrainian children created during the current armed conflict in Ukraine, in result of Russia's aggression against that country. The exhibition shows a touching picture of the horrors of war seen through the eyes of a child, regardless of time and place. It therefore has a universal and timeless character. It is an anti-war manifesto which confronts the viewer with terror and tragedy of war. The exhibition is part of a joint Polish-Ukrainian undertaking "1939-45 POLAND / 2022 UKRAINE" run by the Polish State Archives and "Mom I see war" and was organized by Embassy of the Republic of Poland.

These drawings are a unique testimony from children who have found themselves in the middle of warfare, in the spell of suffering that cuts deeply into their innocent hearts.

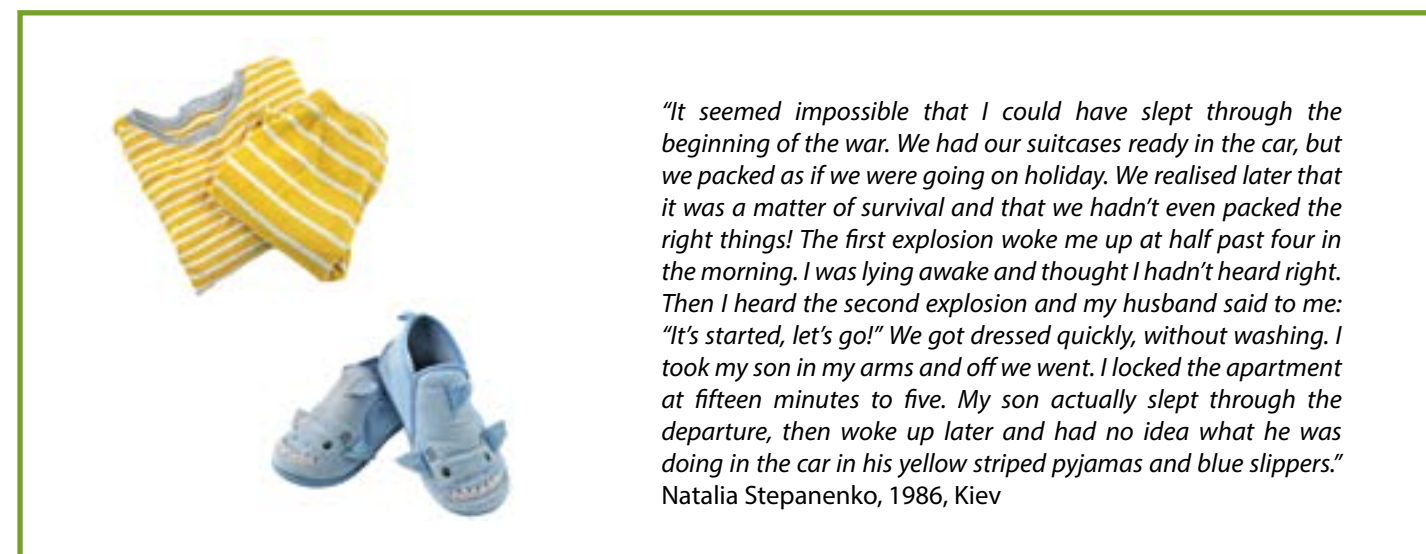
Children cannot understand why these unimaginable horrors happen to them. Their parents and other adults bear the responsibility for their future and the children must be shown that we are striving for co-existence, harmony, peace and prosperity.



A drew from the exhibition Mom, I don't want war. On the one side horror and on the other they draw hope.



"During the New Year celebrations, my 13-year-old daughter received a really precious gift for the present time. Her grandmother knitted her a beautiful yellow sweater. My daughter spent the New Year holidays with her grandmother, who taught her to knit. Knitting helped my daughter to cope with the events that were soon to follow, as she got busy with an activity."
Olha Yevstafieva, 1980, Kiev



"It seemed impossible that I could have slept through the beginning of the war. We had our suitcases ready in the car, but we packed as if we were going on holiday. We realised later that it was a matter of survival and that we hadn't even packed the right things! The first explosion woke me up at half past four in the morning. I was lying awake and thought I hadn't heard right. Then I heard the second explosion and my husband said to me: "It's started, let's go!" We got dressed quickly, without washing. I took my son in my arms and off we went. I locked the apartment at fifteen minutes to five. My son actually slept through the departure, then woke up later and had no idea what he was doing in the car in his yellow striped pyjamas and blue slippers."
Natalia Stepanenko, 1986, Kiev

JOŠT FRANKO

Photographer who records stories forgotten by the media

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ
PHOTO: JOŠT FRANKO ARCHIVES



This year, the prestigious American grant, The Aftermath Project, went to a young Slovenian photographer, Jošt Franko. The talented young man, who has been telling stories through a photographic lens for a number of years, graduated in journalism, obtained his Master's degree in sociology and photography and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna.

Franko has always been interested in the interplay of various approaches and disciplines. He finds the multidisciplinary approach to telling unheard, overlooked and invisible stories more important than the narrative thread of a photograph. "I find it imperative that the communities and people I work with don't become my subjects but are actively involved in the narration of their own history and stories. A text as such has always been a very important part of my artistic practice."

He became involved in photography at 14 and had already then seen the world as it was articulated by The Little Prince's friendly fox that 'it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye'. This is how it seems Franko sees the world.

"From the very beginning, I was determined to try to document the injustices and unheard voices of this world through photography."

I don't believe that I was looking through the lens lightly then, but certainly more naively than today. The approach to my work sharpened while growing up and through my studies. I redefined it frequently, but in the very essence my interest in working with the communities that are often overlooked remained the same."

Although, he started photographing at the age of 14, his first documentary series, 'Widow', was made when he was 16. He spent a year photographing the story of his widowed

grandmother. The story caught the attention of Christopher Morris, once the official White House photographer.

Franko's story from 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, is also interesting. He photographed the shepherds' community in the Velika Planina Plateau.

The story about the shepherds and the disappearing shepherds' settlement spoke about a way of life that is vanishing.



Shepherds from Velika Planina, a high-mountain plateau in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps at the altitude between 1,400 and 1,600 metres.

The ongoing 'Nicht Fallen' project depicts still active refugee centres for people displaced during the war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.



Empty village - as if nobody had ever existed.

The shepherds' life does not denote only the disappearance of the Slovenian cultural heritage, but the mere existence of these people. More than 100 shepherds' families lived there at the beginning of the 20th century and now there are only twenty. Velika Planina is the area of exceptional Alpine shepherd heritage, which nevertheless remains the best-preserved shepherd settlement in Europe.

NICHT FALLEN

This is Franko's documentary project, a portrayal of life in an area after the war and a depiction of the consequences of the war, which are not merely an unresolved reality, but are still ongoing. The documented story is a photographic narrative, but Franko continues to showcase 'Nicht Fallen' on the basis of testimonies involving untold stories and destinies that are frequently forgotten after the war, but remain part of a person's life, too often with tragic consequences. The 'Nicht Fallen' project further depicts the consequences of the war in the former Yugoslavia.

The Aftermath Project holds a yearly grant competition to change the way the media covers the aftermath of conflict. The artists received the grants because the expression of their photographs was so strong that the images raised public awareness.

The price of victory or defeat in a war is high for an individual. People like Franko wish to remind us that war is not a game, but involves death, broken families, orphans, dead children, widows, war invalids, famine, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, despair, grief and devastation.

Too often, it is a wasteland of people's dreams and hopes. It is up to us to determine whether to respond with respect, sympathy and active assistance.

Do we really want to get out of our comfort zone blindfolded?

Franko pulls back the curtain on the stories that were forgotten due to the media's lack of interest. He researched stories in Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Gaza, etc. In the 'Cotton Black, Cotton Blue' photo series, Franko looked into the global chain of cotton production starting in Burkina Faso, through Bangladesh, Romania to the USA. He received the Pulitzer Center grant for this project.

WRITTEN IN THE HEART

Franko frequently forges friendships with the people he meets. "At a day centre in Ljubljana, I recently met Etaf, the mother of my translator in Gaza, whom I met ten years ago. Our chance meeting was certainly one of the nicest encounters in recent years, which testifies to the fact of how small our world is."

With a group of like-minded people, Franko is currently creating a publication in the form of a newspaper.

"The publication will record the lives of individuals in connection with asylum and European migration policies. With the help of the Aftermath Project, I continue the project on refugee settlements in which the second and third generations of refugees from the war in the former Yugoslavia live today. Hopefully, the publication will be out in autumn."

WISH FOR A WORLD OF GREATER SOLIDARITY

Besides being able to make a living from his work and projects, Franko also dreams of more solidarity in the world. He is not a photographer who seeks attention for his own glory and profits but wishes to leave a greater mark in the world: give a ray of hope to the people who have been through a lot. So that their stories are still seen. A photograph captures that for eternity. And this is why Franko is a photographer whose images should be remembered. And contemplated.

Jošt Franko exhibits in Slovenia and at international venues, including the Finnish Museum of Photography (2017), the New York Photo Festival (2010), the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Koroška (2019) and the Carinthian Museum of Modern Art (2020). Franko is a two-time finalist of the Lange-Taylor Prize (Duke University) and the recipient of multiple Pulitzer Center grants. He regularly publishes photo-essays in various national and international media outlets, including TIME Magazine, The New Yorker, The Nation, Le Monde Diplomatique, Newsweek, The New York Times, La Repubblica and The Washington Post.

Photo of a girl and swans from Gaza. This is a story about people caught between two front lines struggling to survive in constant fear of the Israeli snipers.



'The widow' is Jost Franko's grandmother. This is not a story of sadness and loss but an intimate tale of ongoing life and love, one that she passes on to her family.

ONCE A SCOUT, ALWAYS A SCOUT

To create a better world for everyone

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ



The Scout Association of Slovenia has about 8,000 members. Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Scouting is friendship and experience, play, fun, adventure, it is a school for life. A scout is reliable, loyal, kind, ready to help, disciplined, cheerful, brave, noble, respectful, eager to learn, thrifty and lives a healthy life.

The Scout Association of Slovenia has about 8,000 members. This year on 22 April – Scouts' Day – they celebrated the 72nd anniversary of its establishment. Scouting is a movement of young people, open to everyone, irrespective of their origin, race or religion.

Since 1907 and until today, three hundred million young people have worn the uniform of the scouting movement.

In the days leading to, and after, 22 April, a number of events are annually organised all over Slovenia with which the scouts draw attention to the importance of scouting for the development of children and young people.

THEY KNOW HOW TO BUILD A FIRE, SET UP A TENT ...

The scouts can build a fire, set up a tent, find their way in nature and are prepared to help others in need. The work method of the scouting environment, in which they function in small groups, enables them to develop as individuals and live in accordance with the scouting values. Younger scouts called crickets, bears and bees (pre cub and cub scouts) and foresters (scouts) are preschool and primary school children who attend scouting activities prepared for them by older scouts. Through various activities, the young obtain scouting knowledge and skills.

Because they work in small groups, all scouts also learn about themselves, nature and fellow human beings, while exploring and developing.



The Scout Association of Slovenia has about 8,000 members. Photo: Rod Bičkova skala archives

Older scouts called travellers (venture scouts) and explorers (rover scouts) are young people in secondary schools and up to the age of 27. In addition to participation, they are also involved in organising the scouting programme. They are volunteers who assume various roles within the organisation from creating to carrying out activities for younger scouts, obtaining and transferring specialist knowledge to other scouts, to taking on leadership tasks in the scouting troop and the organisation. The scouts strive for a comprehensive development of young people, and they have defined educational fields and content in their joint programme of activities. Their objective is for young people to become actively involved in their development, to have opportunities to make decisions and to thus assume responsibility. To achieve this, objectives have been defined for each scouting age group, which include the activities that promote the development of scouting knowledge and skills, including those that encourage the development of an individual's personality.

WHAT DOES THE SCOUTING APPROACH INCLUDE?

The scouts (co)educate the young. They teach them that, as individuals, they have a duty to themselves, society and their spiritual growth. In doing so, they are guided by values, the most important of which are volunteering, cooperation, respect towards nature and people, and friendship.

The values and principles in combination with the scouting mission to help young people while they are growing up bring them to the realisation of the vision: to create a better world for everyone.

The public associates the scouts particularly with spending leisure time in nature and learning specific scouting skills. But scouting is much more. Education and integral development of young people, and promotion of independence and responsibility are at the core of their activities. Their roots derive from woodcraft and date back more than a century. Nature remains their home and classroom.

But they also focus on the social environment because scouting is open to everyone, irrespective of their origin, gender, race or belief.



The scouts (co)educate the young. Photo: Rod Bičkova skala archives



Nature remains their home and classroom. Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Scouts can work anywhere; they adjust to local needs and also contribute to the creation of a local environment by educating their members. They connect and cooperate with international scouting organisations, which is why scouting is an international youth movement. Scouting provides a safe environment for young people to explore, play and have fun, as scouting is an adventure. Sincere friendships are also forged between scouts that can last a lifetime.

Scouting supplements the formal education system and the family environment because it encourages self-discovery and the desire to discover, explore, and learn.

It thus addresses the needs and wishes that the young find difficult to fulfil elsewhere. The adult scouts support and provide young scouts with a safe environment for creating, exploring and learning from their own mistakes. Whereby they also find unique approaches to working with young people in the environment, which enables their ongoing personal development. Scouting is thus a life-long challenge because scouting is a school for life and a way of life. Once a scout, always a scout.

Scouts' anthem:

*Flame is rising from the fire
in our encampment
peacefully sleeping under a mountain
in the midst of dark woodland.*

*There, where tents glisten,
the flag flutters in their midst,
announcing to surrounding nature
where the scout resides.
Listen, brothers, sisters,*

*the tune of the fir forest,
the song of great outdoors,
its silent mountain echo.*

BORIS PAHOR

Master of literary expression who believed in reconciliation, unity, respect and lived in accordance with his beliefs

ŠPELA VOVK



Photo: Jože Suhadolnik

Boris Pahor, academic and writer from Trieste, is one of the most translated Slovenian authors and thus one whose fame has spread far beyond the borders of his homeland. His works have been translated into a number of languages. In Europe, Pahor became famous for his works describing the horror of the Nazi concentration camps. But in addition to his literary work, Pahor was also known in Slovenia for his social and political engagement.

In addition to his most famous work, *Nekropola* (Pilgrim Among the Shadows/Necropolis) in which he described his experience of the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp, Pahor's other renowned works include the collection of short stories, *Grmada v pristanu* (The Bonfire in the Quay), and the novels, *Nomadi brez oaze* (Nomads without an Oasis) and *Spopad s pomladjo* (A Difficult Spring).

Besides short stories and essays, Pahor published 14 novels, the last of which was *Knjiga o Radi* in 2012, which speaks about his wife of more than 50 years, Rada. Pahor's works have been translated into French, German, Serbian, Croatian, Hungarian, English, Spanish, Italian, Catalan, Finnish and Esperanto.

EXPLORER OF THE WOUNDS OF SLOVENIANNES

Pahor was not only an exceptional writer, but also a great man who left an indelible mark in world literature with his inexhaustible will to live. It is possible to say that Pahor personified the Slovenian national experience of the entire 20th century.

He was one of the first to start researching the most painful wound of the Slovenian nation, the post-war executions.

He interviewed Edvard Kocbek about them, thus bringing to the attention of the Slovenian public the first written testimony about the post-war executions that did not originate with political immigrants and, as a result, he was forbidden from entering Yugoslavia.

Pahor received numerous national and international accolades, including the Prešeren Award, the Silver Order of Freedom of the Republic of Slovenia and the French National Order of the Legion of Honour. In 2013, he received the European Citizen's Prize 2013 conferred by the European Parliament in Brussels to individuals and groups who encourage better mutual understanding and closer connections between Europeans and thus contribute to strengthening the European spirit.

Throughout his life, Pahor warned against the danger of totalitarian regimes of which he himself was also a victim and the necessity of making a confident and upright stand, in the broadest meaning of the word, which can only be based on a good knowledge of history and one's own identity.

The writer, also a sworn fighter for the rights of endangered languages and members of threatened cultures, always emphasised that national consciousness was pivotal for the survival of Slovenians in Italy and that of man and humanity in the world.

In 2019, a high-profile documentary on Pahor was made as a BBC production entitled "The Man Who Saw Too Much". The film, directed by Jill Nicholls and Alan Yentob, gives Pahor's first person testimony about growing up in Fascist Italy, the fight against Nazism, and the brutal experience of internment in the Dachau, Bergen-Belsen and Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camps.

CONNECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS

As a child, Pahor witnessed the fascist arson of the National Hall in Trieste, which was returned to the Slovenian community by Italy upon the 100th anniversary of the arson. Italian and Slovenian presidents, Sergio Mattarella and Borut Pahor, conferred on the doyen of Slovenian writers and an eyewitness of this cruel fascist deed the highest state decorations as part of the celebrations organised upon the anniversary. Slovenian President Pahor presented Boris Pahor with the Order for Exceptional Merit for his lifetime of contributions to the understanding and connecting of European nations and his adamant commitment to the Slovenian spirit and democracy. Italian President Mattarella awarded him the title of Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Merit of the Italian Republic.

On the occasion, the writer responded that he was accepting both decorations on behalf of those who failed to return. The arson of the then largest symbol of Slovenianness was described in *Grmada v pristanu* (The Bonfire in the Quay) and *Trg Oberdan* (Oberdan Square).

30 May 2023 marks the first anniversary of the death of this critical intellectual, as described by President Pahor on the author's 100th birthday.



President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor and his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella confer the highest state orders on Trieste-born Slovenian author Boris Pahor in 2020. Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

“Imagine a critical intellectual who always demanded freedom for himself and freedom to think differently. He also demanded such freedom for others. As a man from the Primorska region, a Slovenian and a democrat, you possess this quality, which manifests itself in your courageous temperament, of being a great and convincing anti-Fascist who has simultaneously and in real time rejected all forms of totalitarianism of the 20th century at a time when you were quite isolated in your efforts. This is an intellectual stance worthy of utmost respect, which should also inspire our democratic society and state today.”

On the occasion of the first anniversary of Pahor's death, an exhibition and a round table with guests were organised in the European Parliament by MEP Matjaž Nemeč and in cooperation with the *Primorski dnevnik* newspaper from Trieste, the Slovenian Library in Prosecco, the Slovenian Cultural and Business Association in Italy, the Council of Slovenian Organisations in Italy and the National Hall in Trieste.

The exhibition showcased editions of Pahor's works, *Necropolis* in all languages into which it has been translated so far, his typewriter, glasses and other personal items, awards and decorations, and a reproduction of a special edition of the *Primorski dnevnik* and *Primorske novice* newspapers issued on the occasion of his death last year.

The guests of the round table moderated by Poljanka Dolhar, journalist of *Primorski dnevnik*, included philosopher and photographer Evgen Bavčar, Italian senator and a member of the Slovenian minority in Italy, Tatjana Rojc, professor of history at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana and researcher Marta Verginella, and Urška Perenič, professor of Slovenian literature and literary historian at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana and the Institute of Cultural History at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.



On the occasion of the first anniversary of Boris Pahor's death, an exhibition was organized in European Parliament. Photo: Matjaž Nemeč Office archives

ON THE WAY TO FRANKFURT

Presentation of Slovenia through the lens of culture and art

KATJA STERGAR, SLOVENIAN BOOK AGENCY



Press Conference at Leipziger Buchmesse 2023 for project Slovenia: Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2023 at Lepziger Buchmesse 2023 Photo: Slovenian Book Agency archives

Slovenia's appearance as Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Buchmesse, from 18 to 22 October 2023 in Frankfurt, is getting closer and closer. Slovenia will be presented through numerous literary events, exhibitions, and concerts. The participation in the largest book fair is an excellent opportunity to showcase not only art but also Slovenia's natural landmarks as part of a broader promotion of Slovenia as a top sustainable tourist destination.

The leadership of Frankfurter Buchmesse personally and closely follows the preparation of the Slovenian program and shows interest in the works of Slovenian authors.

They emphasize the importance of Slovenia's presence in the German-speaking area both months before and after the guest appearance.

Another desire of Frankfurter Buchmesse, which is also involved in shaping German foreign policy, is, of course, to promote German literature abroad.

A SERIES OF EVENTS IN COLLABORATION WITH GERMAN AUTHORS

The Slovenian Book Agency, the Goethe-Institute Ljubljana, Cankarjev dom, Days of Poetry and Wine, and the Vilenica International Literary Festival are therefore organizing a series of events with German authors. In early June, the representatives of the German Academy for Language and Literature from Darmstadt, which, among other things, awards the highest German literary prize, the Büchner Prize, visited Ljubljana for the first time during its spring session. Approximately 50 prominent figures of contemporary German literature came to Ljubljana, and on this occasion, the large Slovenian-German bilingual anthology of Slovenian poetry from the 20th and 21st centuries *Mein Nachbar auf der Wolke* (edited by Matthias Göriz, Amalija Maček, Aleš Šteger, published by Hanser and the German Academy for Language and Literature) was premiered. The anthology includes

poems by 80 notable Slovenian poets and places poetry at the core of the Slovenian presence in Frankfurt. Symbolically, Slovenian poetry embarked on a poetry tour (Lyrik-Tour), taking place from 7 June to 19 June, when poets Miljana Cunta, Jure Jakob, Barbara Korun, Boris A. Novak, Ana Pepelnik, Ifigenija Simonovič, Lucija Stupica, Ana Svetel, Tone Škrjanec, Aleš Šteger, and Uroš Zupan visited important literary institutions from Salzburg and Vienna to Munich and finally Frankfurt.



A premiere of the "Mein Nachbar auf der Wolke" Photo: Slovenian Book Agency archives



Vilenica International Literary Festival. Photo: Slovene Writers' Association archives



Laibach - Alamut, Festival Ljubljana Photo: Valter Leban

Slovenia presented a fresh and dynamic architectural design of the Slovenian Pavilion (designed by Studio Sadar) at a press conference in Frankfurt on 15 June.

The design focuses on books and emphasizes the highlights of Slovenia's performance in October, including a reading by Florjan Lipuš, performances by Drago Jančar, a concert by Laibach (Alamut), a confrontation between the Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis and the Frankfurt School, and the presentation of The Fabjan Hafner Translation Award. On 15 June, a major poetry and music event with original music by double bassist Tomaž Grom took place at the renowned Kunstverein Montez in Frankfurt. The event was also captured on film.

On 11 June, the Slovenian Cultural Days started at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen in Berlin. The museum hosts an exhibition titled "Buzzing Slovenia. Of Bees and People" about Slovenian beekeeping, which thematically coincides with the slogan of Slovenia's guest appearance in Frankfurt, which is "Honeycomb of Words". The rich cultural program prepared by Saša Šavel, the head of the Slovenian Cultural Center SKICA Berlin, includes performances by the following artists and experts: Katalena and Širom music groups, Saša Spačal, Polonca Lovšin, Nataša Kramberger, Anja Mugerli, Gorazd Trušnovec, Janez Janša Kodila, and Ožbej Peterle.

The exchange between the German and Slovenian cultural scenes will continue in August when the Slovenian Book Agency, in collaboration with the Goethe-Institute in Ljubljana, organizes a second visit of German journalists to Slovenia.

The leadership of Frankfurter Buchmesse will also participate. The first visit of journalists took place in March, and both visits will include meetings with authors, publishers, journalists, visits to libraries, cultural, and natural landmarks. As part of the second visit to Slovenia, the participants will also attend Days of Poetry and Wine in Ptuj, with the main guest being Ilma Rakusa, a German-language author with Slovenian roots who also received the Vilenica Prize in 2005.

German and Austrian literature will be in focus at the Vilenica International Literary Festival from 7 September to 11 September. An anthology with excerpts from works by authors who have not yet been translated into Slovenian will be published during the festival. Among the prominent guests of the festival will be Thomas Stangl and Silke Scheuermann, distinguished figures in the literature of German cultural region, which is historically and geographically very close to Slovenia but often still not well-known.

THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND GERMANY

With all the mentioned activities, the connection between Slovenia and Germany is being strengthened. Germany is not only an important economic and strategic partner for Slovenia, the described projects also allow Slovenian authors to establish personal contacts and, through them, long-term involvement in literary events and publishing programs in the German-speaking area.



Slovenia: Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2023 - Pavilion Photo: Studio Sadar



Project »Slovenia – Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book Fair 2023, a model for sustainable international promotion of Slovenian literary creativity« is co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund.

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2025 NOVA GORICA – GORIZIA

Go borderless

KLAVDIJA FIGELJ



The main message: Go! Borderless Photo: Rosana Rijavec/STA

In 2025, Nova Gorica and Gorizia will be the first cross-border European Capital of Culture. Two cities in two countries, Slovenia and Italy, but at the same time most closely linked both through the history of the 20th century and the region between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea. Here you can listen to the many voices of history, discover the enigmatic destinies and become part of the extraordinary stories woven together with contemporary artists.

The European Capital of Culture will open on 8 February 2025, the Slovenian cultural holiday, with the opening spectacle directed by Neda Bric Rusjan.

The Capital's projects will take place in different locations, with a detailed programme establishing its true profile day by day.

The organisers aim to show the best of what is being produced in the region, to inform visitors about new practices of artistic creation and reflection in Europe and to leave indelible traces in the processes of creation and access to cultural content.

The Solkan Bridge will be transformed into an open-air concert hall, with pianist Alexander Gadjiev performing on the bridge, a dance performance is being prepared in the Solkan quarry with MN Dance Company, and a tribute to painter Zoran Mušič will be



Photo: Ernad Ihtijarević

one of the main projects, with his works being exhibited in six locations, we are putting the psychiatrist Franco Basaglia under the spotlight, and at the very heart of both cities we are putting EPIC – European Platform for the Interpretation of the Century, which will bring together Slovenian and Italian historians under the same roof. Around 90 projects are being prepared.

The winning slogan “Go borderless” also helped both Goricas to acquire the title of European capital, which is being developed further in various fields of activity – from culture and art to economy, tourism, public administration, and gives impetus to go beyond existing structures, opens the field to new possibilities of action.

As the pianist Alexander Gadjevič says: “Borders exist because there used to be differences, although in every difference there is a new richness. The concept of a border is to attract us and to make us realise this richness.”

START WITH A FILM

The first projects are already underway, such as the EAST-WEST Border through Film and History, a project of Gorica's Kinoateljje, which explores the concept of cross-borders through moving images through the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica – Gorizia programme. Last year, it was first prepared in Trieste, while this May, at the Gorizia Kinemax and the Slovenian Cinematheque in Ljubljana, it focused on a film horizons and archive material as instruments in the presentation and teaching of history.

“Along the Slovenian-Italian border, we are not just bumping up against dividing lines, quite the opposite. Throughout history, this is where a connecting point has been established, which has also produced a unique audio-visual heritage,” is the conviction of Kinoateljje, which in the programme of the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica – Gorizia also acts as a Cinema Hub in Cinecittà – City of Film. In the coming years, the Cinema Hub will

develop and promote the cross-border audio-visual sector, based on the networking of different film and cultural institutions and productions in the region.

“Film, its creation, its screening and its ideas, teaches us, in these geographical latitudes, how demanding we can be of ourselves and our neighbours. This idea of film definitely proves that it transcends borders, that it is limitless, that it is borderless,” adds Stojan Pelko, Programme Manager of GO! 2025.

The film takes us to the city orchard, which is part of the Atlas of Forgotten Orchards project and is placed in the heritage corridor of the conurbation, connecting the Koren stream, Laščak's villa with the botanical garden, the famous Kostanjevica, Gorizia's Cappella Street and Europe Square. The orchard includes local old varieties of apple and pear trees from Goriška region, named Krnelova, Perifigi, Trdoleska, Aljanka and Fermentinka, which were inventoried 100 years ago. The seedlings planted were organically propagated in Kozjansko Park, which is a recipient of the UNESCO Greece Melina Mercouri Prize.

“This orchard in Nova Gorica, as well as providing fruit on high-growing trees that are more resistant and do not need to be sprayed, will also be a small genetic bank. Unfortunately, these varieties are no longer available in nurseries and have been almost forgotten,” says Gregor Božič, a researcher of old varieties and film director who is implementing the Atlas of Forgotten Orchards project as part of the European Capital of Culture.

He adds that these varieties can only be found today in the old varieties orchard in Kojško, with a few old trees still growing on farms.

Gregor Božič is a researcher of old varieties and a film director, winner of many national and international awards, his feature film Stories from the Chestnut Woods was Slovenia's entry for the Oscar for Foreign Language Film. He is currently working on a new feature film, Fruit Film. He is the author of the text of the book monograph Fruit of the Sun, in which he describes old fruit varieties and their stories and draws attention to their inestimable value.

WARMING UP WITH ROCK STARS

The warm-up for a wider audience begins this autumn. The organisers have conceived the idea of holding large concerts at Rožna dolina, at the crossroads of the two Goricas, bringing together audiences from both sides of the border. Two big names in music have already confirmed their participation, the British band The Editors and the New York punk rock icon Patti Smith, who came to us with a sound clip in which she said in her slow poetic rhythm:

“Hi, I'm Patti Smith. I can't wait to perform at the upcoming European Capital of Culture. I can't think of a better name for borderlessness than Rožna Dolina, which unites the Italian city of Gorizia and the Slovenian city of Nova Gorica. Coming to the region where Pasolini, Kosovel and Rilke wrote their poems is inspiring for me. I hope to write poetry and perform with you soon. See you on 5 October! Go borderless, what a beautiful concept... and Rožna Dolina (Rose Valley), I can already smell the scent of harmony.”

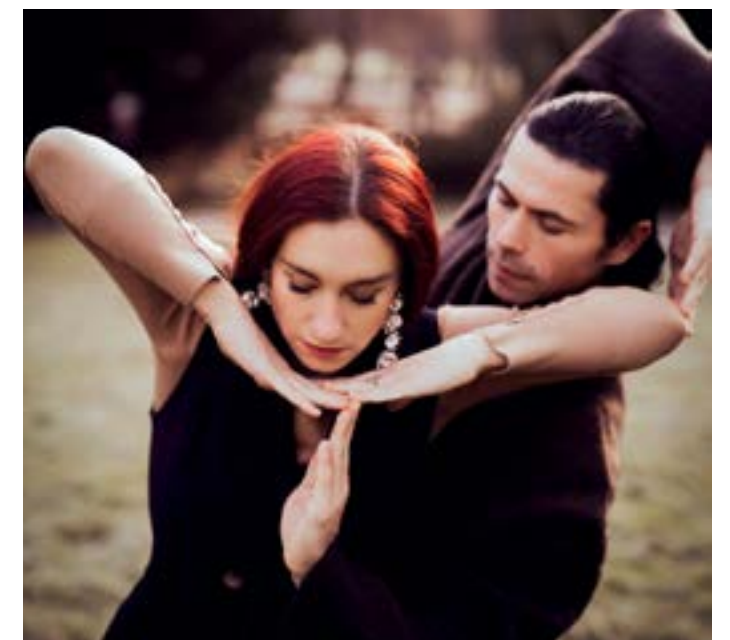
WHAT WILL BE LEFT BEHIND?

When the European Capital ends, it wants to leave behind a cross-border conurbation of two cities, a new awareness of the multidimensionality of history and highly qualified staff for future cultural and artistic ventures in the region from the Alps to the Adriatic.

Why a capital on the far border of two countries? To make us more aware of the importance of the historic struggles. To make the reputation of the cities on both sides of the border reach far beyond the borders. To distinguish real art and culture from the vulgar copies and cheap approximations. To help people know each other better and live better.



Patti Smith will perform in October 2023. Photo: Steven Sebring



MN Dance Company. Photo: Nino Bektashvili

SUMMER FESTIVALS IN SLOVENIA

Don't miss them

DANILA GOLOB



The Ljubljana Festival will feature world-class chamber and symphony concerts, ballet, opera and theatre performances, musicals, the Ljubljana Festival on the Ljubljanica River, the International Art Colony, masterclasses, and much more. Photo: Ljubljana Festival

Slovenia is a land of festivals, and especially in the summer, all parts of the country are vibrant. Enjoy music, watch a film or a theatre performance and learn about traditional Slovenian dishes and local customs.

Ljubljana is a true capital of experience, offering a wide range of festivals. Our biggest summer festival is the Ljubljana Festival, which always features great world-class orchestras and artists from different genres.

This year it will take place from 20 June to 3 September.

Traditionally, the festival starts at Congress Square in the centre of Ljubljana with the Summer Night, this time dedicated to the work of singer-songwriter Tomaž Domicelj. His best-known works will be performed by a number of local singers, accompanied by the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, Big Band and the RTV Slovenia Youth Choir.

A VARIED PROGRAMME FOR THE 71ST LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL

This year's Ljubljana Festival will feature a variety of guest orchestras, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra with conductor Andris Nelsons and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, the Concertgebouw Orchestra from Amsterdam with conductor Ivan Fischer and the festival will close with the Gewandhaus Orchestra from Leipzig with renowned conductor Herbert Blomstedt.

Orff's greatest hit Carmina Burana will this time be staged from a concept by choreographer Edward Clug.

Ballet lovers will also be able to see a performance by the Astana State Opera and Ballet Theatre ballet dancers as well as a production of Daniele Cipriani's impresario for dance, art and ballet entitled Les Étoiles.

At Cankarjev dom there will be a concert by Macedonian pianist Simon Trpčeski who, accompanied by the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Vasili Petrenko, will pay tribute to Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff. Russian soprano Anna Netrebko will also perform, interpreting excerpts from Verdi's works with three other singers and the Radio Symphony Orchestra.

The Spanish theatre group La Fura dels Baus, directed by Carlus Padrissa, will return to the Festival with two performances; To Be or Not to Be and Pastoral for the Planet. Spanish flamenco dancer and choreographer Maria Pages will also be performing at the festival once again, this time with the performance Scheherazade.

Zagreb's City Theatre Komediya will stage the musical Beauty and the Beast, while Venice's La Fenice Theatre will offer Puccini's Madam Butterfly. Musical theatre will also present the musicals Mamma Mia! and The Water Man.

There will also be several concerts of film music and fans of the English band Pink Floyd will be able to enjoy the rock opera The Wall.

SCENTS OF THE SEA

The Slovenian Mediterranean and the Karst region invite you to numerous festivals and events. In the beautiful surroundings of Piran and Koper, an international summer chamber music festival dedicated to Giuseppe Tartini, who was born in Piran, will take place in August and September. The Dreams Festival, which will take place in June in the Karst region and Goriška Brda, will offer summer evenings of music and poetry by various performers from both Slovenia and abroad. The Vilenica International Literary Festival will host poets, writers, playwrights and essayists from more than 20 countries at the beginning of September. For a sweet end to summer, Koper invites you to the Sweet Istria gastronomic festival at the end of September.

The Seviq Brežice is an early music festival.
Photo: Andrej Tarfila/www.slovenia.info



THE FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE OF THERMAL PANNONIAN SLOVENIA

Ptuj, Slovenia's oldest town, offers a wide range of events in summer, but the most renowned international poetry festival in this part of Europe is the Days of Poetry and Wine, which combines the art of poetry and oenology.

The Grossmann Fantastic Film and Wine Festival, held in Ljutomer, is dedicated to genre film, horror and fantasy. In addition to a varied film programme, there will be wine tastings, a concert, workshops and lectures.

In mid-July, Laško will host the Beer and Flowers Festival, where visitors can learn about the rich tradition of brewing and taste famous Slovenian beers.

The Seviq Brežice Festival showcases European and world music heritage.

Each year, the festival's concert programme covers musical heritage from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century. Jazz lovers will find their place in August in Novo mesto. Jazzinty is an international jazz festival with a long tradition, which takes place in the Old Town.

A real festival for metal music lovers is Metaldays, which is considered to be one of the biggest festivals of its kind in Europe. This year the festival is moving to Velenje, to Vista Park by Lake Velenje. The atmosphere will also be very merry in Velenje in September at the Pippi Longstocking Festival, which is the largest family festival in Slovenia.

SOČA VALLEY

Each year rock, punk and reggae music lovers from all over Europe gather at the confluence of the Soča and Tolminka rivers. The Punk Rock Holiday and Overjam International Reggae Festival have a long tradition in the Soča Valley.

The Sajeta Creative Camp is a festival that brings together different creative practices. Although music takes centre stage, film, multimedia, poetry, sculptures, performances, dance and graphics also have their place.

Music festival in the idyllic surroundings of the Triglav National Park. Photo: Boris Pretnar/www.slovenia.info



Festival Lent is a celebration of art, culture and creativity of all genres for all generations. Photo: Narodni dom archive/www.slovenia.info

COME TO BLEED

At the beginning of July, the Bled Festival invites you to come and enjoy classical, jazz and crossover music. The Okarina Festival Bled is also interesting. Visitors can listen to the sound of flutes, the unusual rhythms of percussion instruments, the sounds of violins, oriental instruments and voices in languages that only a few people understand.

FESTIVALS IN MARIBOR

At the end of June, the Lent Festival will once again open the colourful summer events in Maribor. Days and nights at Lent and other locations traditionally provide a mix of art, culture and gastronomy. In September, the traditional Maribor Festival

delights, hosting renowned local and international performers of orchestral, chamber and vocal works.

Youngsters can visit the Summer Puppet Harbour, which is an international puppet festival offering performances, workshops and exhibitions in August.

Slovenia is a land of festivals and offers much more than can be presented in one place. Visit our country, get to know the attractions, enjoy music, dance, taste Slovenian food, feel Slovenia.

SLOVENIAN SPACE STRATEGY 2030

Slovenia: small on Earth, but large in space

DANILA GOLOB



The lively space sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Slovenia. Photo: tom.grieger/depositphotos.com

Slovenians are also leaving their traces in space. Astronauts of Slovenian descent have already flown into space, companies and research institutions develop space technologies hand in hand, and the third Slovenian satellite has also been launched successfully. One step forward towards space research has also been made with the draft of the Slovenian Space Strategy 2030.

The lively space sector with its excellent projects and results reveals that Slovenia has the potential to further enhance its role in this field. Slovenia's objective is to become a full member of the European Space Agency (ESA) and unlock the potential of its space industry in the European space programmes. "ESA is crucial for the continued growth of our space sector. A strong space industry can contribute significantly to the increased added value of the entire Slovenian economy," emphasised Matevž Frangež, State Secretary at the Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, at the presentation of the Slovenian Space Strategy 2030.

Gordon Campbell, the ESA representative, commended the drafting of the Space Strategy and highlighted that Slovenia has already been recognised within the European agency for its successful work.

RAPID GROWTH OF THE SPACE INDUSTRY

The Slovenian Space Strategy, which encompasses the period from 2023 to 2030, was drafted with the intention to steer and support the space industry and research activities. The leading programme measures include development of space technologies, participation in research and the expansion of space applications.

The space sector is also one of the fastest growing sectors in Slovenia. Its growth affects the economic growth, employment, green digital transition and development of research activities.

It also impacts everyday life: it is used in production, healthcare, agriculture, transport, education, the energy sector, security and many other fields. The importance of the space industry has also been recognised within the EU, as the field of space is incorporated in various programmes ranging from security to innovation.

Tanja Permozer, Head of the Slovenian Space Office and Head of the Slovenian Delegation to ESA, explained at the presentation of the Slovenian Space Strategy that Slovenian companies and research institutions were present in almost all space segments.

Slovenia participates in five selected programmes and its Strategy also follows in the same direction.

Permozer stressed that space technologies were not just about rockets and space travel, but advanced technologies that enabled better life and faster development. A dynamic and rapidly growing ecosystem in the field of space has already developed in Slovenia, which covers several different niche activities, particularly with regard to Earth observation, telecommunications, as well as robotics and human research. As a result, three Slovenian satellites have already been launched into space, the ESA-owned Short Arm Human Centrifuge was established in Planica and the Sentinel Hub, an innovative platform for processing satellite data, was also launched.

Presentation of the draft of the first Slovenian Space Strategy 2030 – “Slovenia: small on Earth, but large in space”. Photo: Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport



SLOVENIAN ASTRONAUTS

Slovenia has yet to join the countries which have sent their astronauts and cosmonauts to an international space station or to orbit in a capsule around our planet. However, four of the American astronauts who have already been into space have Slovenian roots, i.e. Ronald Michael Šega, Jerry Linenger, Sunita Lyn Williams, and Randolph or Randy Bresnik. Šega was the first among them to travel into space. First in 1994 and for the second time in 1996 when he also photographed Slovenia from space.

Although Slovenia cannot be easily noticed from such height, Randy Bresnik was able to spot it and photograph Lake Bled. The astronauts also took the Slovenian flag with them, and Sunita Lyn Williams received Kranjska sausage as a Christmas gift, which had arrived at the international space station even before the crew.

Space research accelerates and astronauts have increasingly more work. In April 2022, ESA published a call for new astronauts, to which Slovenians applied as well. Some 22,589 applicants met the conditions, of whom 62 were from Slovenia.

Seven of them made it to the first round, including theoretical physicist Lara Ulčakar and experimental physicist Patrik Gubeljak who made it to the second round, but were later unfortunately eliminated.

During the challenging selection, both candidates obtained new knowledge and walked away richer for an interesting experience. Perhaps they will apply again and take Slovenia into space.

Space is certainly an area in which companies and research institutions work together hand in hand. In doing so, it is vital to not neglect the role of the state, which must be aware of the importance of a rapidly growing space industry and become involved in the promotion of cooperation between companies and research institutions by providing its assistance.

Sunita Williams, American astronaut of Slovenian and Indian descent. Photo: NASA/Wikimedia Commons



Randy Bresnik, American astronaut and pilot of Slovenian descent. Photo: NASA on the Commons/Wikimedia Commons

EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL MARIBOR 2023

Competitors in sports, united in the Olympic spirit

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ



Young athletes at the Olympic Festival in Slovakia, 2022. Photo: Aleš Fevžer

With a tradition of more than 30 years, the European Youth Olympic Festival is the largest sports event for young athletes between 14 and 18 years of age. It is a festival that gives young athletes their first encounter with Olympism and Olympic values.

The Festival is held every two years under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee and is organised by the European Olympic Committees.

This event, which will be hosted by Slovenia's second largest city between 23 and 29 July, is not only the largest youth sports event, but also an opportunity for tourism and economic development, which is why the Republic of Slovenia, through the Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, has financially supported the project.

A SPRINGBOARD FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

The EYOF is the largest sports event for young athletes to gain experience for future competitions, to experience Olympism and Olympic values for the first time, and to bond through fair play and new friendships. The EYOF is undoubtedly one of the first international competitions for young athletes and is often a springboard for their future in sports. During the Youth Olympic Festival, Maribor will be transformed into a vibrant sports city.

Young athletes will compete in athletics, judo, tennis, gymnastics, road and mountain biking, swimming, 3x3 basketball, and skateboarding.

Visitors will be able to watch 123 competitions at 13 venues. The organisers will award 742 medals and 3,588 athletes and support staff

(coaches, doctors, assistants), 300 EOC (European Olympic Committees) delegates, and around 800 technical delegates and sports officials will attend the competitions.

To ensure the success of the EYOF, the Municipality of Maribor has also made extensive investments in new sports infrastructure and renovated existing sports facilities.

The fact that Maribor is a true city of sports is also demonstrated by the fact that many of the athletes will be accommodated in private accommodation under the "family and friends" system, while most of them will stay in the Athletes' Village.

VOLUNTEERING IS A TRADITION IN SLOVENIA

The fact that Slovenians love to help is also evident from the large number of volunteers who will be helping with the event.

Volunteering is a part of our identity and almost 1,000 volunteers will be helping with the event in Maribor.

The European Youth Olympic Festival in Maribor is also an incentive to formalise the concept of promoting volunteering in sports in Slovenia.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

One of the central squares in Maribor, Trg Svobode, will serve as the Fun Zone. There will be concerts by various bands and sports games from the Middle Ages (based on the Gladiator Games but with a running theme of Maribor). Trg Svobode will also be the venue of the EYOF closing ceremony.

The Sports Promenade will run along the street of Maksimilijan Držečnik, where the Festival's central information point will also be located. The Sports Promenade will showcase all the venues and all the disciplines in which the athletes will compete. The promenade will also serve as a link between two important venues (Trg Svobode and the venue for the 3x3 basketball competitions).

The city park will be a Relax Zone and will offer relaxing activities with cultural, scientific, sports, recreational and fun content.

Maribor Island will serve as the Green Zone. This part of the town will offer athletes and other visitors a place to relax. Pilates and yoga, swimming, beach volleyball, and other relaxation activities will be available.

The city's main square, Glavni Trg, will serve as the Sport Presentation Zone and showcase new sports that may not be as well-known and popular, but are gaining more visibility abroad.



Maribor Photo: Dražen Štader/www.slovenia.info

Visitors will be introduced to disc golf, footgolf and water basketball and witness a demonstration of weight-lifting.

Many events will also take place in the Athletes' Village, where the Maribor University Sports Association has been organising and implementing extracurricular sports activities since 1998. These events and activities will include: Explore Maribor, Photo Box, Live EYOF Logo, International Evenings (Slovenian evening – presentation of Slovenian culture, cross-cultural introductory evenings), Inflatable Area, Wet EYOF Day (with numerous refreshing activities), Gaming Room (dedicated to playing video games and VR games), Movie Night, Crash Course in Slovenian, No Phone Day, Traditional Timber Rafting (free timber raft trips in cooperation with the Maribor Tourist Board), Reading Corner (in cooperation with the University Library of Maribor), EYOF Young Ambassadors programme, Decathlon Area (Decathlon sports corner, relaxing activities), RED-S syndrome (exhibition stand aimed at raising awareness about energy/nutrition deficiency in sports, which is often caused by coaches or other authorities demanding top results and can lead to eating disorders, oligomenorrhoea, reduced bone mineral density, etc.).

BE PART OF EXTRAORDINARY MOMENTS

The main purpose of the Olympic Festival is to unite and to reinforce the values of fair play, friendship and tolerance. We will enjoy an exceptional sports and accompanying programme.

This Olympic event will surely be an unforgettable one in the history of the city and in the history of Slovenia.

Let us show our pride and support to all who will visit Slovenia on that occasion.



The Torch of Peace, which arrived from Rome, received an unforgettable welcome on June 6. Mayor of Maribor, Aleksander Saša Arsenovič, handed over the Torch of Peace to Slovenian Alpine skier Ilka Štuhec. The torch will travel to nearby municipalities and primary schools in Maribor to spread message of peace and inspire people. Photo: Andreja Seršen Dobaj/STA

In the past, many Slovenian athletes had their first Olympic experience at these Festivals. Among them are ski jumpers Peter Prevc, Timi Zajc and Nika Križnar, swimmers Anja Klinar and Blaž Medvešek, athletics competitors Matic Osovnikar and Brigita Langerholc, handball players Vid Kavtičnik, Blaž Janc and Urh Kastelic, volleyball player Dejan Vinčič, judo competitors Adrian Gomboc and Kaja Kajzer, and many others.

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Refined basketball moves on the Ljubljana floor

ŽIGA FIŠER



The Slovenian team played their opening match on the first day of the championship, facing Great Britain on Thursday 15 June. Photo: Aleš Fevžer

In the second half of June, Ljubljana hosts the best women basketball players from the old continent. The European Women's Basketball Championship will not only determine the European champion among the national teams, but will also determine the countries that will compete at next year's Summer Olympics in Paris.

In addition to the Slovenian national team, which is attempting to take advantage of its home court, 7 other teams are participating in the group part in Ljubljana.

In the play-offs, 4 more teams are moving from Tel Aviv to Ljubljana.

The final event will take place on the evening of 25 June, and the tickets for the Olympic Games will be distributed in Ljubljana in the afternoon of the same day.

The Slovenian girls are playing in the Old Continent Championship for the fourth time in a row.

So far, they have finished 14th once and 10th twice. This time, they are chasing the highest ranking at the European Championships, which they will surely manage with plenty of help from the stands, where loud support for the national team girls is expected.

The Slovenian team played their opening match on the first day of the championship, facing Great Britain on Thursday 15 June, followed by Germany a day later and then, after a day off, France on Sunday 18 June.

The spectators have immensely enjoyed the matches of both the Slovenian and other national teams so far.



Slovenian national team. Photo: Jure Banfi

Unlike men's basketball, women's basketball is more about subtlety and elegance of movement along with beautiful and precise passes. in a row.

There is still a great deal of fighting, but with less aggression, which makes the basketball game itself much more beautiful to look at, more harmonised, refined and, above all, more sophisticated.

For the final part of the championship the organisers, together with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), are preparing a unique match experience for both the competitors and the spectators. Lights and other effects will be used to create an unforgettable backdrop that will be a feast for the eyes.

PRIMOŽ ROGLIČ

Roglič Wins the Giro in Front of the Colosseum in Rome

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: ANŽE MALOVRH/STA



Slovenian cycling star Primož Roglič (Jumbo-Visma) won the Tour of Italy.

Slovenian cycling star Primož Roglič (Jumbo-Visma) won the Tour of Italy at the end of May. He finished the last stage in Rome in front of the Colosseum in time with the majority and secured his victory after three weeks, overcoming not only his rivals, but also numerous crashes, a dropped chain on Višarje and the hellish climb to eternal glory.

VIŠARJE – A SACRED PLACE FOR CYCLING

For centuries, Svete Višarje has been a pilgrimage shrine for the nations. On Saturday, 27 May, it also became a cycling holy place for Slovenians. The atmosphere was euphoric, united, mountain-like and unique.

On Saturday, mostly Slovenian flags were fluttering at Svete Višarje, and in between them, Roglič fought his way to victory in stage 20, and also in the overall standings, his 73rd and 74th win of his career.

Fuelled by the fans and adrenaline, he beat his Welsh rival by 40 seconds. Enough to win the Giro by 14 seconds.

"I have no words, I have goose bumps and tears in my eyes, when people support you no matter what the result, it's amazing. I am extremely proud to have been given this honour. I gave it my all and I will never forget this day," said the main hero of the day.

According to some estimates, there were around 40,000 cycling enthusiasts at Višarje.



On 27 May Višarje became a cycling holy place for Slovenians.

Primož Roglič in cycling gear.



SLOVENIA'S FIRST GIRO VICTORY

All he had to do to secure the first Slovenian victory at the Giro was to cross the finish line safely in Rome. He held on to a 14-second lead over his rivals, after a brilliant performance the day before to win the race at Svete Višarje and put on the leader's pink jersey.

"It was definitely the decisive stage, I had my legs on the right day, not to mention everyone's support. I really enjoyed every single metre I cycled. Basically, it was the people's energy that kept me going. I don't even know how hard it was, I just flew," said Roglič, dressed in pink.

A day later, Roglič became the first Slovenian winner of the Giro near the Colosseum in Rome, and Slovenia became the 17th country to win the La Corsa Rosa.

With this, Slovenian cyclists have also won all three of the three-week races on the calendar.

With his fourth victory in three-week races, having previously won the Vuelta three times in a row between 2019 and 2021, the 33-year-old ace caught Switzerland's Tony Rominger, Spain's Robert Heras and Italy's Vincenzo Nibali in 11th place on the all-time leaderboard. With six wins, Slovenia is now eighth in the national standings, as Tadej Pogačar also has two Tour wins (2020, 2021).

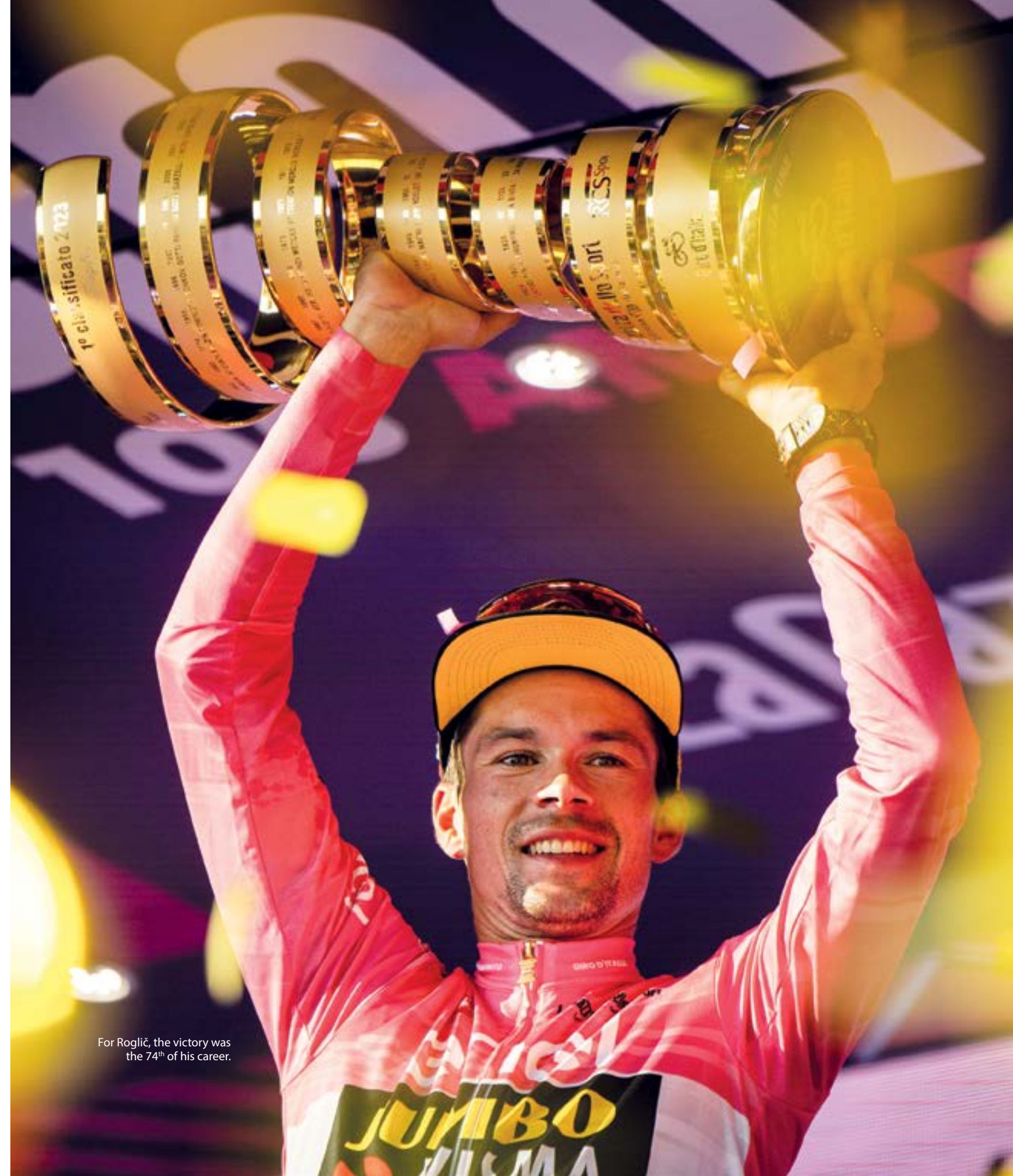
THE SLOVENIAN CYCLING FAIRY TALE HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR YEARS

The Slovenian cycling fairy tale has been going on for several years and there is no end in sight. Roglič's fairy tale is particularly incredible, as he was ski jumping for many years and was World Junior Champion in the team competition in 2007. Now all that's left of his ski jumping times is celebrating on the podium. This time in Rome, he was joined by his son Lev for some unforgettable photographs in an already very rich collection.

For Roglič, the victory was the 74th of his career. This season, he also won the Tirreno-Adriatico and the Tour of Catalonia, continuing his string of victories in the biggest one-week races.

"I don't fully realise it yet, but I certainly enjoyed the moment and the range of emotions and everything that happened at Višarje. It's always nice to win in the end, but it's even nicer after yesterday's atmosphere and cycling around this spectacular city. I enjoyed it very much," said Roglič in his first reaction to the organisers.

"As I always say, every victory is special and I am really grateful to have achieved it at the Giro. This will always remain in my memory," added the cycling star from Kisovec.



For Roglič, the victory was the 74th of his career.

SLOVENIA BUILDING TRUST.
SECURING FUTURE.



In 2024–2025, Slovenia will be a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.