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The latest from Slovenia

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I FEEL
SLOVENIA



THE POWER OF TRUST

1 – 2 September 2014
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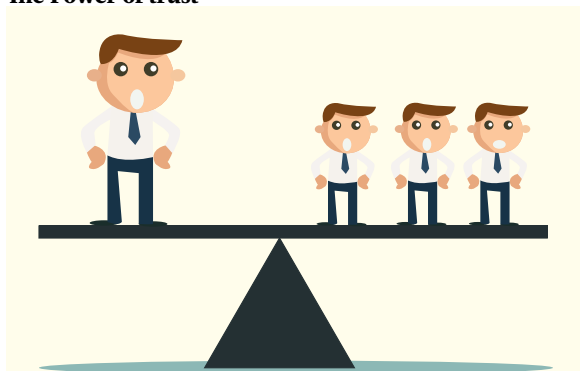
Bled
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Juraj Migaš, the Slovak Ambassador

Slovenia is the bridge between the countries of Central Europe and the Adriatic Sea region

Photo: Simon Podgoršek/Mostphotos



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Rade Šerbedžija, actor, poet and musician

Bled is more beautiful place for the film festival than Cannes

Photo: Tina Kosec/STA

**SINFO – SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**

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Tanja Glogovčan, editor

The power of trust and cooperation

What is trust anyway? Is it a personal belief or value which everyone and the whole community should strive for? We have incorporated this idea into quite a few of our interviews and articles. Trust can mean trust in a person, knowledge, cooperation, and so much more. Trust is also the value we seek in selecting our political candidates, and it is their responsibility to take our trust and do something constructive with it. Trust, therefore, is not a small thing. We have to nurture it and to work together to foster it. This is why we also emphasize that our wealth lies in our diversity. What do we have in store for you this time? Many things, but in this editorial I would like to point out a few of them. Just enough to get you to open the magazine and to keep reading it until the last page.

International relations can be strengthened in several ways, and diplomacy has a big role in this respect. This time we spoke with Juraj Migaš, Slovak Ambassador to Slovenia. We asked him what he thinks of the collaboration between Slovenia and Slovakia, two Central European countries. He told us that he sees Slovenia as a bridge between the Visegrad Group countries and the Adriatic Sea region. Although he has been in Slovenia only a few months now, he enjoys living here and is inspired by the natural beauties and culture.

Global demographic change is a challenge faced by the entire world. Is there trust between the generations? Is there enough trust that the young people and those with more experience can live together in harmony? That is what we talked about with Mateja Kožuh Novak, who says that we are all one big family.

As we already announced in the previous issue of the Sinfo magazine, we have once again devoted a few words to the Bled Film Festival. Enjoy reading an interview with versatile artist and world-renowned star, Rade Šerbedžija, who had also been living in Slovenia for a while.

The Sinfo magazine has always endeavoured to present you an image of Slovenia in terms of its cultural heritage, but this time, we focused on Slovenian castles, including those that offer you the opportunity to take your own place among the nobility.

At the end I wish you to have a nice holiday. Spend part of it discovering Slovenia, including the things that we have highlighted for you this year.



Photo: UKOM archives

Bled Strategic Forum Slovenia's biggest foreign policy event

Bled is certainly one of the most beautiful and best known places in Slovenia. It is known for its wonderful lake and island, as well as the castle towering above them, which rounds out a distinct alpine view known all over the world. In recent years, Bled has also become known for the Bled Strategic Forum (BSF), a foreign policy conference, where politicians, statesmen, academics, economists and various experts, i.e. both practitioners and theoreticians, gather and discuss strategic questions concerning our present and especially our future. BSF is an important foreign policy event in Slovenia, where we can put our thoughts and have them face the deliberations and conclusions of guests from all over the world. Similar events, which are of course better known, more established, and which have a longer and more distinguished tradition, are for example organised in Davos and Crans Montana. However, the BSF has established itself more and more, especially in Central Europe and the Western Balkans, where it is becoming one of the key reference points in strategic issue debates.

Slovenia decided to organise an international strategic forum in 2006, after it successfully chaired the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This was the first real global external policy challenge for the newly established country, which Slovenia took good advantage of. The foreign minister at the time, Dimitrij Rupel, assessed that it would be unfortunate not to take advantage of all the contacts, knowledge and reputation, which Slovenia had obtained by chairing the OSCE. The forum was thus established, which attracts many respected guests every year, but above all offers many substantive challenges for considering and planning the future. The rich list of respected guests throughout the years also shows that the BSF has asserted itself as the most important crossroads of people who in one way or another decide about the development of the Western Balkans. The area, which was radically fragmented and devastated by the war at the time of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, is trying to connect in terms of economy, energy and transport, as this would bring benefits to all the newly founded countries in the region. The Bled forum is also an opportunity for bilateral meetings between

high-ranking political guests, who can thus hold more informal discussions in a casual atmosphere, which can in turn help in reaching final decisions regarding open foreign policy issues. The main themes of this year's BSF are demographic changes, cybernetic security, Central Europe and the future of the Western Balkans. These are topics which present a perfect opportunity for high-quality debate, and I am convinced that the participants will make good use of them both for the exchange of opinions and beneficial networking.

This year's BSF will also coincide with the establishment of the new government of the Republic of Slovenia. The deep economic and financial crisis in Slovenia has been very damaging, causing a massive drop in economic growth and in gross domestic product, and especially political instability due to which we will have our fourth government. After a long time, the country has registered economic growth again, and the trust of international financial markets has started growing. However, in order to fully emerge from the crisis, a strong government with a coalition of parties is needed which will be able to transcend party interests and act for the benefit of the country. At the early elections in July, an entirely new political party won by a large margin, under the leadership of the lawyer Miro Cerar, who previously hadn't been politically active. Mr Cerar won over voters with the announcement that he will put an end to the practices of inter-party competition, exclusion and ideological confrontation, which support narrow, partial interests rather than the interests of all citizens. Many voters see in his position a continuation of the politics of the former long-term premier of Slovenia, Janez Drnovšek, who knew how to curb the appetites of political parties and maintain equilibrium and stability with calm and thoughtful action. Miro Cerar won 36 in the 90-seat parliament, which is the most ever in Slovenia. The convincing victory and demanding economic and financial conditions in Slovenia, and especially the public's expectations that the fourth government in three years will finally be able to improve the situation, present Miro Cerar with an enormous challenge.

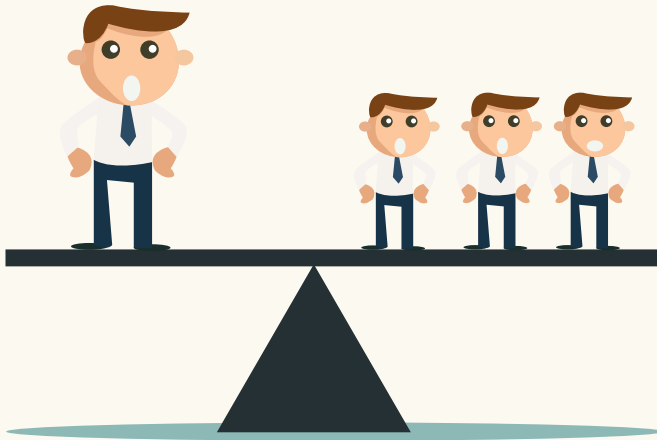
Bled Strategic Forum 2014

The Power of Trust

Global turmoil caught many unprepared to face the consequences of malfunctioning financial systems and empty social policies. Even more worrying is the global lack of trust, which is an inextricable part of well – functioning societies. The crisis has further increased the lack of trust at the national, regional and global levels, permeating all social strata. Placing trust in someone means putting yourself at risk, and, by extension, trust can be placed only in those who are credible and trustworthy. However trustworthiness is earned gradually, requiring better transparency, vigilance and credible communication.

BSF will look into the effects and consequences of the lack of trust, and open a discussion about the power of trust to improve the world.





Traditional forms of leadership are proving too rigid and too slow to respond to new global challenges. Leaders must change their mind-sets to face new global trends and phenomena that transcend nation states and give rise to new conceptual links.

Ensuring cyber security and protecting fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law in cyberspace have become central challenges for governments, the business sector and civil society, both at the national and international level.



The lives of the older and the younger generations are in fact becoming increasingly interwoven and interdependent, and new approaches such as the social mobility of the older is much needed. Global demographic change – another threat or an opportunity?



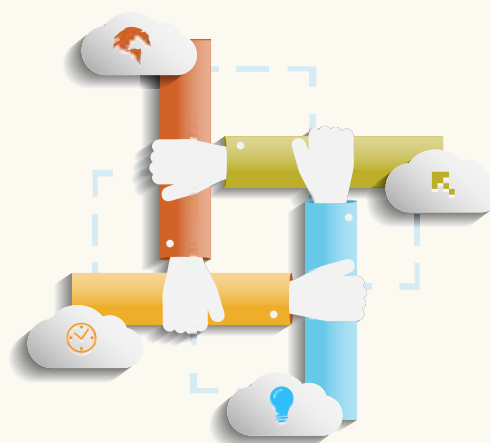
Slovenia is ideally located to bring together a forum on the growing spirit of the heart of Europe, which needs strengthened integration, the eradication of economic and social differences, unified standards and effectiveness, and a common approach to addressing international issues.





How to make regional cooperation work? The question now is whether there is enough trust and political will to engage in concrete activities, with a special focus on infrastructure, economy and culture.

There's more to international relations than meetings around mahogany tables and sessions in the conference halls of international organisations. Where are the hidden dimensions of international relations?



Trust is essential to business... The 2014 Business BSF has been designed to identify and highlight factors that increase competitiveness and bring prosperity and welfare to a society.

Young leaders will continue discussion on the clash of generations, and potential of building long-term trust for global development, inter-cultural cooperation, and innovative driven leadership, 2014 Young BSF will be held under the title The Potential of Trust.



Source: Alain Brian Bergant and Timotej Šooš
BSF Concept paper, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Juraj Migaš, the Slovak Ambassador **Slovenia is the bridge between Central Europe and the Adriatic**

The Slovak Ambassador Juraj Migaš says he feels at home in Slovenia, and he is one of the rare foreign ambassadors who has learned Slovenian. He says the Slovenians are like the Slovaks – very friendly, helpful, sociable, and hospitable. In his opinion, Slovenia is the bridge between Central Europe and the Adriatic Sea region. He finds Slovenia a heaven for tourists: he would love to come back to Slovenia after the end of his term.



Juraj Migaš has a PhD in international law. He has been working as a diplomat for 33 years. Before starting his term in Slovenia, he worked as an adviser to the prime minister. Before that, he was the Slovak Ambassador to Hungary. He has been the Slovak Ambassador to Slovenia since January 2014.

You have only recently moved to Slovenia and yet you have already managed to visit many Slovenian companies and meet some of the mayors and politicians. How did you choose or plan these visits?

Yes, that is true, I have been living in Slovenia for six months. Of course, my first meetings were a part of protocol. I handed over the letters of credence to President Borut Pahor in January. Later on, I met other notable politicians. At first, I made contact with companies which are already working with Slovak companies or are interested in establishing such collaboration. When I visit a certain company, I also try to meet representatives of the local authorities and mayors. For me, these conversations have proven excellent, as well as very useful and productive. At the same time I always try to bring with me "a piece of Slovakia" in a form of exhibitions and cultural events. That is how my visits of Maribor, Murska Sobota, Kobarid, Tolmin, Postojna, Ptuj, Piran, Kranj, and other towns have looked like. I have already visited companies such as: Krka, Port of Koper, Kolektor, Žito, Kodila, Jupol, Mura, SGG Tolmin, and GGP Postojna.

Does Port of Koper have a special strategic importance for you?

Of course. Slovakia's automotive industry is highly developed and Port of Koper is the distribution point.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a visit of Slovenian entrepreneurs to Slovakia. Did you join them?

I was a member of the Slovak delegation as a part of the official visit of Karl Erjavec, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Slovakia on 21 March 2014. There were representatives of 17 companies in this delegation. Among them were companies such as Adria Kombi, DataLab, Port of Koper, Slovenske železnice, and Slovenija Trade. At that time a Business Forum was held in Bratislava. There were around 100 participants. The conversations focused on the development of economic cooperation between Slovenia and Slovakia in the area of infrastructure and logistics. These events are an excellent opportunity to make personal connections which are, in my opinion, the fastest way to achieve

economic partnerships.

You come from Slovakia, which is a part of Central Europe. In your opinion, what are the opportunities for collaboration between the countries of this region?

I would like to use the words of Miroslav Lajčák, the former Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, during the meeting with his Slovenian colleague Karl Erjavec, emphasized that Slovenia is the closest partner of countries such as Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary (the V4). Slovenia is a part of Central Europe from a geographical, historical, and cultural point of view. Many Slovenian partners point out that Slovenia bridges the gap between the V4 countries and the region of the Adriatic Sea. I could not agree more. Slovakia took over the presidency of the Visegrad Group on 1 July. Our aim is to improve common endeavours between the V4 and Slovenia. Our presidency programme is a testament to this, as it foresees a number of joint meetings and events at different levels. We are planning a joint meeting of the Ministers responsible for justice, agriculture, and health. We also organize various projects within the International Visegrad Fund programme for countries of the Western Balkan. I think that this field offers an important prospect for tight collaboration with Slovenia. I believe that the largest opportunity for Central European countries to collaboration is in actively working on the area of infrastructure.

BSF is a successful platform for a strategic dialogue. One of the panels will focus on Central Europe. Its topic is "The Spirit of Central Europe". I am looking forward to the debate, where the Central European ministers in charge of foreign affairs will also be present. Miroslav Lajčák, the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, confirmed his participation as the first among the major participants of this year's BSF. Our minister will participate at this event for the sixth time. This serves to affirm the view that Slovakia has of this event.

Would the V4 accept Slovenia's membership? Would Slovakia be prepared to lobby for Slovenia?

It would, of course, but the goals

need to remain clear. There is no point in uniting and enlarging without a vision.

Slovakia joined the EU at the same time as Slovenia. What is your experience?

It is positive. From the historical point of view, I believe that this is the best period of contemporary history. The accession of Slovakia to the EU is one of the most important milestones, as it strengthened the country's international status and credibility. Thanks to the perspective of joining the EU, Slovakia was quick to implement high-quality political, social, and economic reforms before 2004, which would have been impossible without this inspiration. The reforms and further development continued after our accession to the EU. Accession brought us new opportunities, such as the opening of the EU labour market and the freedom of movement. In my opinion, EU membership served to mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis on the Slovak economy and its level of GDP. Another challenge for Slovakia, but also an opportunity to strengthen the idea of a common Europe, will arise in the second half of 2016, when we will commence with our first presidency of the Council. During the accession negotiations, I worked as a permanent representative of the Slovak Republic to the European Union. I participated in the negotiations which were often very hard but brought us to the EU. I would like to point out that the EU is going through one of its most important periods in terms of its future development. I am convinced that joint efforts will help us find the correct model of future regulation which will ensure a balance between responsibility and solidarity.

Does this mean that you support EU enlargement, namely the accession of the former Yugoslav republics?

As I said before, Slovakia's experience with joining the EU is very positive. This is why we support the accession of these countries, provided that they settle all disputes as required by the EU. Serbia should definitely settle its conflict with the Republic of Kosovo. All member states want a stable and safe European Union.

Slovenia is a part of Central Europe from a geographical, historical, and cultural point of view. Many Slovenian partners point out that Slovenia bridges the gap between the V4 countries and the region of the Adriatic Sea. I could not agree more.



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You mentioned stability. Slovakia borders Ukraine and depends on Russian gas. Are you looking on the conflict between Ukraine and Russia with fear?

If we talk about Russian gas, Slovakia most certainly wishes for stability, especially as it is a transit country itself. This also means that this question is not only about energy security in Slovakia, but also in other European countries.

As a diplomat and representative of Slovakia in Slovenia, you represent the interests of your country. What are the goals of the Slovakian foreign policy in general, and specifically regarding Slovenia?

Slovakia's foreign and European policy is based on four principles or targets. The first target is bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, i.e. the development of bilateral relations with countries, active participation in international organisations, strengthening stability and welfare, especially, but not only, in its direct surroundings, in order to promote our interests and priorities in the area of economy. The second principle is European policy. My emphasis here is on national and transnational goals which include all the ministries and other national authorities. The third scope of foreign policy activities is business diplomacy and a coherent presentation of our country abroad. Our target is to coordi-

nate the incentives of commercial and business interests abroad and showcase a unified image of Slovakia. We also aim to strengthen economic cooperation. This is the essence of Slovakia's new business diplomacy. Our fourth goal aims at helping citizens and improving the quality of consular services with modern technologies. We wish to strengthen our bilateral collaboration with Slovenia, which is already very good.

Do you often meet your diplomatic colleagues?

This is not only the key, but also an interesting part of the job of a diplomat. I could never imagine my job without regular meetings, exchanges of opinions, and the establishment of new contacts. I have friendly relations with the Slovenian Ambassador to Slovakia. I believe our working relationship is very successful. During my 33-year-long diplomatic career, I have made a number of true friends among other diplomats, with whom I am still in contact today.

It is unusual for foreign Ambassadors to Slovenia to speak Slovenian. But you are one of them. What is it about Slovenian that made you want to learn it?

I attend many cultural events, exhibitions, and theatre. I read the Slovenian newspapers, listen to the

radio, and watch the television every day. I think that having knowledge of the language unites people and gives a certain amount of respect of the nation and the country. Many things are lost in translation. I prefer reading the original, which also helps me to learn. If you know the language, you can get deeper into the country and its people. That is the reason why I learned Swedish, Polish, and Hungarian, which is particularly hard to learn for a Slovak.

It is summertime, time for holidays. Did you go on holidays around Slovenia? Did you take a trip that left you with nice memories?

Slovenia is a relatively small country and therefore nice and not too difficult to get around. The nature here is really beautiful and there are many historical sites which are worth seeing. My wife and I enjoyed the seaside atmosphere in Koper, Piran, and Portorož. We went hiking in the mountains and admired the extraordinary Lake Bled and Lake Bohinj, the wonderful mountains and the gorgeous caves. We also walked through the picturesque villages and tasted the variety of Slovenian cuisine. Slovenia really is heaven for tourists. When my term here in Ljubljana ends, I would certainly be glad to come back to Slovenia.

All of Society is One Big Family

Due to demographic changes, the social and economic challenges are increasingly pressing. The reasonable question is: is this a threat or is it an opportunity for the society that can forge a closer link between the older and the younger generations?

Photo: Mostphotos



For a society to persevere, there has to be harmony between generations, meaning that there should be no divide between the older and the younger generations, says Mateja Kožuh Novak, chairwoman of the Federation of Pensioners' Associations of Slovenia (ZDUS). The older generations must take care of the younger ones and vice versa. Both the old and the young should have equal access to financial resources. It should be in the vital interest of middle-aged person that the elderly receive proper pensions to ensure their financial independence. Good planners are needed to distribute financial assets. In France, for example, a quarter of the income tax is allocated to a demographic fund which ensures that the future generations of retirees receive their retirement benefits. Slovenia, too, should allot part

of its revenues to such a fund in order to guarantee pensions for the future generations. In 1991, parents were able to take care of young people who were unemployed. Nowadays, with 80 percent of pensions below standard, this is no longer feasible. This issue creates disparities in society, but a prudent society has to plan and envisage such disparities in the farther future.

THE NUMBER OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IS INCREASING DRAMATICALLY

The reasons should definitely be sought in the past and in former social circumstances. After World War II, there was a baby boom as a logical consequence of declined natality during wartime. The professional and educational emancipation of women, coupled with a change in the traditional role of chil-

dren within families and a rising number of two-generational families, contributed to the decline of birth rates. The greatest achievement of the 20th century is definitely contraception, which gave parents the power to plan the number of their children and to decide when they want to see their children born. Consequently, there are fewer young people, while the elderly ones can expect to live longer. In fact, the group of those aged over 80 has been increasing most rapidly, and this certainly requires every society to carefully consider the options for future social development that is both cohesive and inclusive of all generations. It is definitely a demanding issue. In the past, intergenerational conflicts were resolved within families, but nowadays, demographic changes call for long-term planning

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Photo: Mosphotos

by the entire society. With one social group increasing in number and another one declining, there is a need for changes in all areas of life. Already during the 1970s, experts started highlighting the need to make projections on the way society functions in the future, when the number of elderly people inevitably increased. For years, Slovenia has been placing too great an emphasis on the palliative care of elderly people, thus neglecting the encouragement of active and healthy ageing which undoubtedly reduces the costs of healthcare and extends the period of elderly people's active involvement in their families and in the broader society, Kožuh Novak estimates.

SOCIETY SHOULD TREAT ELDERLY PEOPLE, SO THAT THEY MAY REMAIN INDEPENDENT AND ACTIVE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

Even now, experts are faced with the tough question of how to treat elderly people in order to ensure their long-term independence and health and to make the process of dying as short and cost-effective for society as possible. In healthcare, there are two life periods that are most costly: premature birth and dying. There are many things which must be improved in connection with the two. For some

years, experts from the ZDUS have been warning the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the need to prepare a comprehensive strategy for the development of a long-lived society. Such a strategy should reach all governmental sectors and should cover the entire life period from birth to death. Children must be taught a healthy attitude towards elderly people. The elderly, in turn, have to learn tolerance towards the younger generations, whose habits and needs are different from those the elderly had in their youth. With an increasing number of elderly people, development planners must ensure that a proper attitude towards them exists, lest the lack of an intergenerational harmony cause problems, including a gerontocracy. A strategy is now being put together at the national level to promote active ageing, says Kožuh Novak. Although ZDUS has only recently been invited to collaborate, the elderly now have the chance to express by themselves what they can offer to society, as well as what they expect from it.

ELDERLY PEOPLE, TOO, CAN BE HEALTHY AND WELL-EDUCATED

The participating experts are drafting an analysis of the general situation and the priority

tasks for the future. Social sciences have difficulties accepting that elderly people, too, can be healthy and well-educated, that they have different needs and can offer society much more, if only the younger generations give them the opportunity to do so. I consider it regrettable that a group of young managers leads the process of the privatisation of state-owned property in Slovenia, thus excluding their older colleagues from politics and decision-making processes, emphasizes Kožuh Novak. This is an endemic problem in post-communist Eastern European societies, which has proved baneful. It is true that all books of wisdom, including the Bible, were written by old people. But it is also true that years of experience make one wise and mindful. Without the wisdom acquired from a range of life experiences, the young, daring, and enthusiastic development planners are prone to make too many mistakes. Youthful eagerness and the wisdom of old age should work in concord to find the right balance.

THE ISSUE OF AGEING IS MORE PRESSING IN EASTERN EUROPE THAN IT IS IN WESTERN EUROPE

In the latter, people have learnt to keep a rein on the daring, capable, and ruthless members of the society. In Western capital-

The enthusiasm and courage of young people must be counterbalanced by the foresight and experiences of elderly people.

ism, the older generations have long learnt to fight for their rights to avoid ill prospects. ZDUS has been advocating the rights of elderly people for nearly seventy years. In the past twenty years, including in the period of economic prosperity, retirement benefits were continuously jeopardised, for young economists have viewed pensioners and elderly workers as a waste group and an impediment to generating profits. It is imperative that the younger generations change their attitude towards the elderly. We must realise that the contribution of the older generations to their families and their living environment is valuable for young people's quality of life, as well. Unless society changes its disposition towards the increasing numbers of elderly people, the struggle of the elderly for their rights will bring about a gerontocracy in modern society. Today's politicians assumed power in their 30s or 40s. Do you believe they will ever be ready to renounce their powers in favour of the younger generations as they grow old by teaching young people that the elderly are the burden of the society, asks Kožuh Novak. There has to be intergenerational harmony among development planners, too. The enthusiasm and courage of young people must be counterbalanced by the foresight and experiences of elderly people.

CURRENTLY, THE MOST TOPICAL PROJECT TAKEN UP BY THE ZDUS IS THE HUMANITARIAN PROJECT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

The project has been going on for 11 years now. It involves senior volunteers who are prepared to assist those in their domestic environment who are over 69 and are in need of help, with the ultimate goal of ensuring their long-term independence. As life energy wanes, elderly people are faced with a number of issues affecting the quality of their lives and their independence. Through mutual assistance, many of these issues can be alleviated by the elderly themselves. If there are serious problems, we inform professional experts who are paid to help the elderly and the infirm. In its 11 years, the



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

Dr. Mateja Kožuh Novak, chairwoman of the Federation of Pensioners' Associations of Slovenia

project has included 142,661 elderly people, representing 62% of those aged over 69 in Slovenia and having offered to them various forms of assistance just as many times. Larger cities are the greatest hindrance to the project. In Ljubljana, for example, they have been unable to obtain a proper list of elderly people. Such a list is urgently needed, for in larger cities, people do not know each other, and without their addresses, they are unable to reach those who need help. In cities, those needing help outnumber their counterparts in rural areas, because social networks are poorer in cities. Nobody is forced to accept the assistance. In 2013 alone, the volunteers in the project performed more than 830,000 hours of voluntary work, the value of which amounts to nearly 5.3 million EUR.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

The emphasis will be that the elderly are a specific generation owing to their life experiences and that development planners should therefore duly take into account the proposals and suggestions of the elderly in future plans regarding their lives. We would also like to underline that old people are able to independently monitor the services responsible for the elderly and that they have the right to propose improvements, says Kožuh Novak. A debate on

the need to adopt a Convention on the Rights of Elderly People has been going on within the United Nations for two years. Developed countries have been reluctant to adopt the convention, claiming that the rights of the elderly are not being violated. Naturally, the difficulties affecting elderly people in less-developed countries, where their rights are grossly violated, are of no interest to them. We must be aware that all of society is one big family, stresses Kožuh Novak. Young people should endeavour to keep this family alive and flourishing, while the elderly should prevent that its development brings about class divisions and exploitations on the part of its cunning and resourceful, yet ruthless younger members. Intergenerational harmony should be an earnest mutual effort. A quarter of those aged over 69 live alone, half of them with a partner, and another quarter live in communion with their children. But what they all have in common is exclusion from their families and broader society. Self-assistance projects pursued by pensioners' associations, such as ZDUS, are a valuable contribution to a society endeavouring to advance comity among all generations. Through assisting the elderly and those in need of help, they ease the burden on the younger generations and make old age more bearable. Sadly, development planners are not too well aware of that.

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Slovenian forests

An investment opportunity?

For centuries, forests have driven our development and figured prominently in the progress of Slovenian society. Slovenia takes great pride in its vast meadows, clean rivers and forests, which paint the country in every imaginable shade of green.



Although the possibilities are numerous, ranging from the production of diverse commodities to the production of clean energy, much potential remains untapped, and although forests are central to all human life, we have yet to fully grasp their investment potential.

Slovenia is one of the countries in Europe with the largest area of forests, which account for a good half of its territory. They provide a diverse range of resources, but perhaps most importantly, they store carbon and purify water, thereby mitigating the effects of global warming. At the helm of forest management in Slovenia is the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, which seeks to ensure multi-purpose and sustainable management harmonious with nature. This is different from the approach taken by countries such as New Zealand and Indonesia, which prefer clear-cut belts. Forest management

regulates hunting and protects wildlife, and plays an important role in protecting the forest ecosystem and biodiversity. The protection of the sixty-nine indigenous tree species in Slovenia is essential for sustainable development and environment preservation, and includes protection against insects, forest tree diseases, fires and herbivores.

Although the possibilities are numerous, ranging from the production of diverse commodities to the production of clean energy, much potential remains untapped, and although forests are central to all human life,

we have yet to fully grasp their investment potential. As an alternative asset investment, forest management can be a safe choice for the Slovenian government to secure conservative but stable returns and finance its budget for long-term infrastructure projects. By improving the efficiency and effectiveness of forestry asset management, Slovenia could not only become a strong regional player in the forestry industry, but also affect the vertical supply-chain.

In the winter of 2014, however, Slovenian forests were badly hit by unusually extreme weather, and glaze ice either destroyed



or substantially damaged large areas of forest throughout the country. Estimates indicate that 40% or some 500,000 hectares of all Slovenian forests were destroyed. If we take into account how heavily fragmented private ownership of forests is – with plot sizes averaging less than 2 hectares – new business models for exploiting woodland will have to be considered through a more organized and collective market presence to achieve global competitiveness.

Since its onset in January 2007, the global financial crisis has claimed a number of high-profile causalities, including the economies of Iceland, Ireland and Greece, and uncertainty over the future of major Eurozone countries continues to loom. Slovenia is no exception. In current conditions, many investors are reducing their exposure to equities, and seeking alternative assets in order to

boost returns without dramatically altering their overall risk profile. Consequently, investors are seeking alternative investment assets with tangible asset characteristics that retain capital value; simple, secure investments involving direct ownership; assets that generate tax-efficient income to replace lost risk-free income; low or zero correlation to financial markets; capital growth supported by solid fundamental trends.

Well-managed forestry investments have all of these characteristics, making this unique asset class a popular tool among institutional investors for diversifying and optimising investment portfolios, reducing overall risk, generating income and growth, and in many cases, improving tax efficiency. Billions of euros in investment are being allocated to forestry assets by a number of large institutional in-

vestors that have acquired commercial timber properties.

Global demand for timber is expected to increase substantially in 2020 and start creating a supply shortage by 2050, when demand will exceed supply by more than 40%. As biological processes cannot be interrupted by external factors such as economic crises, forestry investments offer stable long-term growth throughout any set of economic conditions. At the time of financially restructuring forestry assets management and establishing long-term strategies for its most efficient management, Slovenian government should take into account new demands from institutional investors, benchmark investment returns and profitability with global markets, and encounter global trends of forestry industry.

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Lushna's eco-villas

In Harmony with Nature

Do you long for a pleasant escape in the woods without having to forego comfort? Lushna eco villas are made from natural materials and offer everything you ever felt was missing in a hotel stay and much more besides. Experience glamorous camping – or “glamping” –, which is conquering Slovenia.



Lushna mobile wooden tourist facilities are designed with a twin focus on comfort and a genuine experience of nature.



So who are the creators behind these charming wooden huts that are delighting visitors? The Lushna Group connects people and companies who share the same values and goals and have the will to realise them in life and space for the benefit of us all. It brings together nature lovers, bioclimatic architects, researchers, wood builders, and tourism and marketing experts who believe in sustainable tourism. Current members of the group are Lushna d.o.o., Tina Gjud (from the TI institute for tourism), Superform d.o.o., Matej Kučina (from Bruto d.o.o.) and Zaš Brezar (from Landzine.com), Soba d.o.o., CBD d.o.o., Intech les d.o.o., EkoArt d.o.o., Indijanski šotori d.o.o. and Zelena trgovina d.o.o. They have been active in glamping since 2008 and have been officially acknowledged as glamping providers by ranking among the twenty glamping destinations listed in the London Times in May 2011.

Lushna offers a comprehensive solution for the development of glamping tourist destinations, working with their customers from the beginning to the end,

through the entire process of site development, and providing them with everything they need for a swift and successful entry into glamping tourism.

LUSHNA PRODUCTS

Lushna mobile wooden tourist facilities are designed with a twin focus on comfort and a genuine experience of nature. Villa types are tailored to different sites and needs, while they are all made from durable, ecological and nature-friendly materials. Their innovative design means that the villas are protected from damp, cold, heat and uninvited insects. And their prefabricated construction is such that the villas could be produced anywhere in the world. The Lushna designers have eliminated each and every architectural element that might infringe on a flawless experience of the surroundings and scaled their products to the human body and its range of perception. In structure and construction, they have used the knowledge of our forebears and combined traditional woodwork with modern aspects of

glamping. "Lushna is synonymous with smart and simple design, functional construction and manufacturing logic all the way from concept to detail," says Peter Ličen from the Lushna company.

Lushna are also well aware of the fact that two of Slovenia's biggest economical potentials lie in the wood industry and boutique tourism which takes advantage of its unspoiled and very diverse nature: "Our mission is to design quality products for the Slovenian wood industry and use them to create recognisable tourist destinations with a high level of tourist offer," adds Mr. Peter. Lushna products are made from top quality untreated wood of local origin, wood fibre insulation boards, modern ecological textiles and traditional roofing materials such as wood or stone or even a modern, green roof covering.

LUSHNA FOREST VILLAS IN BLEĐ

When developing each Lushna destination, the creators always follow the same principle: they focus on creating a symbiotic

Lushna Villas are 100% ecological, made of solid larch wood. Its innovative design provides protection against moisture, insects and cold.

The exquisite glamping destination in Bled was designed in 2009, its owners naming it Forest Villas. The villas are tucked away in a quiet part of the campsite, surrounded by greenery but still in close proximity to Lake Bled.



Take the best from both worlds: hotels and camping. Have a glamorous evening under the stars.

For the Bled site, the most robust villa option, called the Lushna Villa Massive, was selected. These are made 100% from wood, are well insulated and heated, and are therefore suitable for use at any time of the year.

relationship with the surroundings to build inspiring experiences for their guests. This principle plays the key role in Lushna's facilities design, tourist activity programmes and adventures. The exquisite glamping destination in Bled was designed in 2009, its owners naming it Forest Villas. The villas are tucked away in a quiet part of the campsite, surrounded by greenery but still in close proximity to Lake Bled. For the Bled site, the most robust villa option, called the Lushna Villa Massive, was selected. These are made 100% from wood, are well insulated and heated, and are therefore suitable for use at any time of the year. For extra comfort, there is an outdoor firewood-fuelled wooden hot tub to bring cheer to even the coldest of evenings. Guests can diversify their stay in Forest Villas with a range of wellness services and take part in the countless possibilities for an active outdoor holiday offered by Bled Camping. Lushna Forest Villas are open for seven months in the summer season and one month during the New Year's holidays.

In 2012, 60% occupancy was recorded, this rising to 90% occupancy in 2013, with 40% of the stays by domestic guests.

NEW DESTINATIONS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The wonderful lakeside location by Blaguško Jezero is an ideal candidate for transformation into a Lushna destination. The environment offers plenty of natural beauty that leave its visitors at a loss of words. The region is rich with culinary specialities – top quality homemade food can be washed down with first-rate local wine. The location is ideal for outdoor activities and exploring the surrounding area. Its easy access and location close to three neighbouring countries is another advantageous feature which bodes well for its future success. “We are currently still in the planning phase, as our original project has expanded. The destination, with its fifty housing units, restaurant and country club and with all its infrastructure and landscaping in place, is planned to open for the beginning of the 2016

season, or 2017 at the very latest,” says Mr. Peter. Elsewhere, the Lushna Group is completing the development of new products for glamping destinations which will be presented to the market in late summer. They are also intensively expanding their business abroad: currently they have sales representatives in Spain, England and Greece, but aim eventually to reach all world markets. Their product range, organisation and scope of services are constantly being upgraded to ensure even more glamping destinations with impressive views and in perfect harmony with nature in the future.

So do they themselves ever get the time to relax at one of their Lushna destinations? “We rarely get a turn,” chuckles Peter, adding that when they do, they are pretty demanding customers. But of course they too enjoy simple, genuine experiences, the company of friendly waiters and good authentic cuisine in a beautiful natural environment when they can!



Let your breakfast be served on the sunny side of life. Close your eyes, listen to the orchestra of trees.

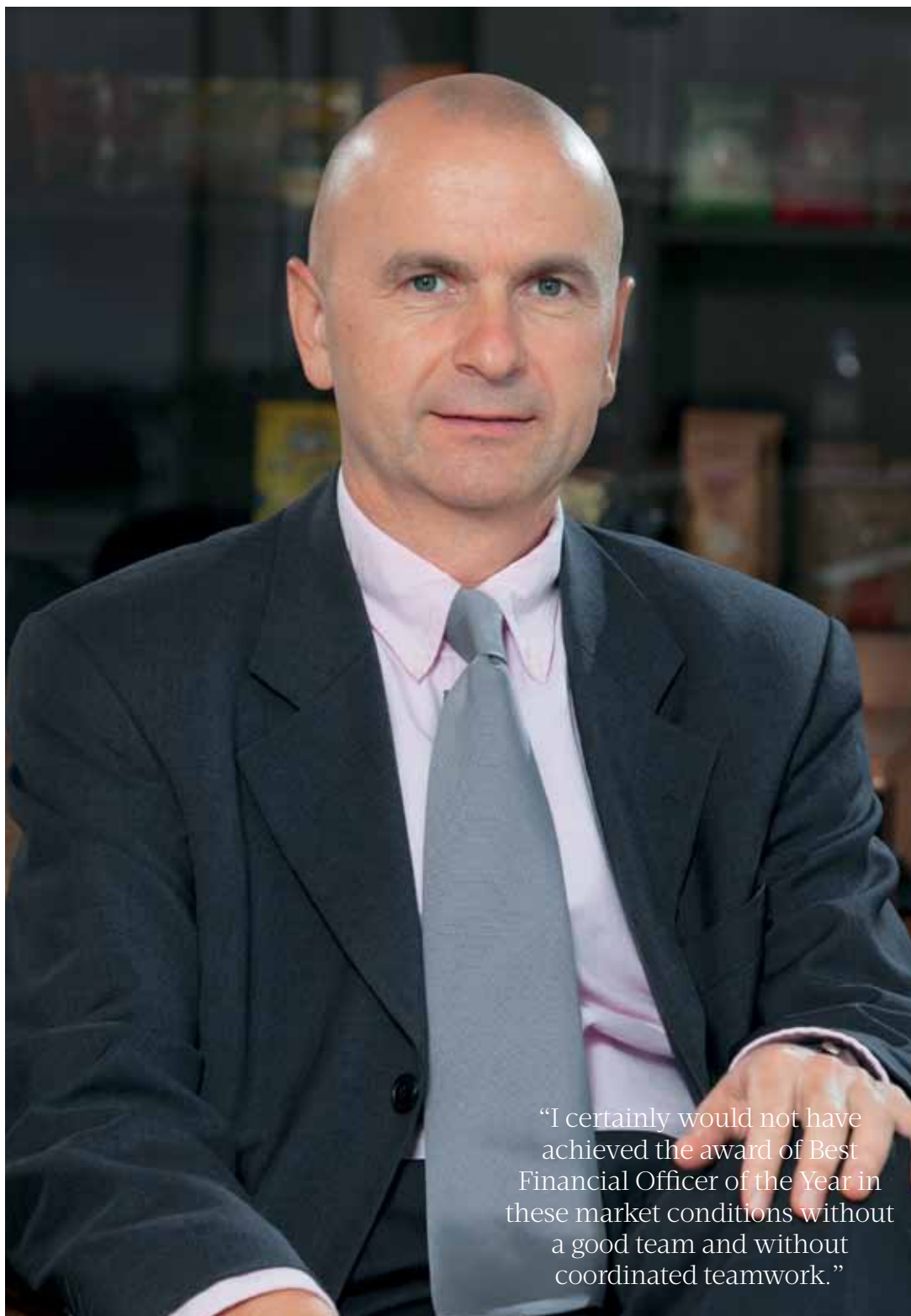


Escape the concrete jungle. Have some space and a breath of fresh air. Think about nothing at all.

Erik Žunič of the Žito bakery company **Best Financial Officer of 2013**

Erik Žunič began his career as an auditor in one of the four big international auditing firms and continued at Microsoft and the KD Group. In 2006 he was named CFO of Žito d.d. In the face of weak domestic demand, the company is innovating and successfully importing its bakery products abroad.

Photo: Personal archive



“I certainly would not have achieved the award of Best Financial Officer of the Year in these market conditions without a good team and without coordinated teamwork.”

Private consumption fell in 2013 by 3.5%. Nonetheless, you increased profits fivefold. What is your recipe for success?

Without consumers' trust in our products, and without the motivation of our employees, we would not have achieved these results. Our customers attest to the fact that we make excellent products every day, as they have awarded whole heap of them with the BEST BUY recognition, and we also received a record 23 medals for the quality of our bread and baked goods in the bakeries category of a competition held by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. Organizational changes also rank among our key achievements for 2013, which helped us as a company reach a higher level of efficiency, and as employees a higher level of responsibility.

We are also continuing to direct our activities towards exports, seeking new opportunities on new markets, and towards expansion, as well as upgrading new, and innovative products with added value, which are seeing increased consumer demand in various segments. We are especially successful in creating innovative products, like for instance special breads, which are really something else and which are already a real hit in foreign markets. We can also encourage interest with new combinations of flavours and methods of consumption in other products under our brand. We stay up to speed with trends. Our employees are innovative in developing new products, and we also follow the desires of our consumers.

Private consumption is set to fall even further in 2014. What are

the plans for this year?

Despite the negative trends, the company is forecasting both quantitative and qualitative growth. We will try to compensate for the negative growth on the domestic market in 2014 with even more ambitious forays into foreign markets. Because of improving conditions on global markets, exports will be, so to speak, the only thing to encourage economic activity.

We will also achieve sales growth with a more aggressive and more effective approach in the area of HORECA. Our forecasts are for the share of exports in 2014 to increase by 1.4%, i.e. to 17.8%. We are also working on brokerage agreements with major principals of globally established brands, like Bavaria, Nestle, and Wrigley.

We are also planning on a reduction in expenses. Productivity will increase as production processes become more automated, and as work is organized more efficiently. In terms of logistics, optimising our sales routes will also result in savings.

Our most important investments this year will be in automating production and packaging. We are also planning on expanding retail by purchasing or renting points of sale in new locations, as well as redesigning the image of our existing retail units. All said we are planning EUR 5.4 million in investments, which will in their entirety be funded from the cash flow we produce.

At Žito you emphasized that the population's weakened purchasing power, a result of the eco-

nomical crisis, significantly affected the Group's revenues. Buyers are becoming more sensitive to prices. How did you overcome this problem?

We adapt to conditions on the market. Otherwise it does not work; we need to be flexible. By modifying our strategy until 2015 we have defined and set for ourselves clear and realistic goals. We have focused on strengthening those activities with the largest potential for growth and profitability. We have focused on increasing the share of products which have higher added value, and on developing, marketing, and selling our key categories or brands, which are strong enough that, given the demand from buyers, achieve good results. This is also reflected in our operations.

What traits does a good financial officer need to have?

A financial officer must have the same traits as a good manager. They must follow what is happening on the market and make decisions. I certainly would not have achieved the award of Best Financial Officer of the Year in these market conditions without a good team and without coordinated teamwork.

Why is the function of financial officer in a company so important?

In a company, the financial officer is just as important as a sales agent, a production worker, and anyone else who contributes to creating added value and profit. The financial officer is responsible and liable for areas which comprise a part of the mosaic which is establishing and running a successful company. I do not consider

Our customers attest to the fact that we make excellent products every day, as they have awarded whole heap of them with the BEST BUY recognition, and we also received a record 23 medals for the quality of our bread and baked goods in the bakeries category of a competition held by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

Žito's beginnings go back to 1947. It started in the milling industry, and soon expanded into baked goods and dough-making. Up to 1970, the company continued to grow, and operations further expanded into confectionery. Another new feature was frozen goods. In 2006, Žito d.d. was joined by its subsidiaries: Žito Grande d.o.o., Žito Intes d.d., Pekarna Vrhnika d.d., Kruh Pecivo d.d., and Dolenske pekarnje d.o.o. Later Žito Gorenjka d.d. also merged, completing the consolidation of the Žito Group. In March 2009, Žito introduced new products, such as: tea, rice, and milled products, as well as seasonings and seasoning mixes. Žito's growth in 2013 exceeded expectations.



Golden baked Jelen, rustic Hribovc, juicy Zlati, or the rich-flavoured Stoletni – each of Žito’s loaves is unique. Which one is your favourite? Pictured: Buckwheat bread with walnuts. Source: The archives of Žito d.d.

Our social responsibility is both local as well as regional, and we actively engage in promoting a healthy way of life, self-sufficiency, reducing the return of food, and in projects focused on providing children and young adults with a higher quality of life.

the role of financial officer as any more or less important than other functions. It is important to know and understand what the source of creating profit is, as this is the precondition for a company’s development.

You are also successfully expanding into foreign markets – where and what products do you offer abroad?

In terms of exports, we have plans for growth in the baked goods segment – bread, especially in par-baked products. We also have plans for growth in the other categories which are directed towards exports, like candy, rice, and seasonings. We see possibilities for sales growth primarily in exports. The share of exports in sales will continue to rise.

You also have some successful projects which show your integration into the local environ-

ment. Why are such projects important?

Social responsibility is important for the Žito Group. Buyers prefer products from companies which are committed to sustainable development and social responsibility. This is especially true for food products.

Our social responsibility is both local as well as regional, and we actively engage in promoting a healthy way of life, self-sufficiency, reducing the return of food, and in projects focused on providing children and young adults with a higher quality of life (e.g. Food Revolution, projects from the Krog institute, Botrstvo, and donating to the victims of the recent floods in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia).

In the Best Buy Award survey for 2013/2014, which was conducted in Slovenia and Bosnia and Her-

zegovina, Žito stands out as the leading provider of the best price to quality ratio for many products. What is your opinion of the idea on “donating money” in terms of a company’s successfulness?

We decided on using the certificate, since it is a survey conducted by an independent international institution. The questions in this survey are open, so those surveyed do not choose from a list of possible answers, but by themselves indicate the products which, according to their experience and/or the experience of those closest to them, offer the best cost to quality ratio in the Slovenian market. This fact raises the certificate’s level of credibility even further. The recognitions we have received for quality and innovation in our products is absolutely a guideline for further development and expansion of our award-winning product groups.

Craftsman workshop Vevče

Handmade paper – a jewel of Slovenian handicraft

The old tradition of hand crafting products is hard to find in Slovenia these days. It is sad to stroll through old towns and find shops with a long tradition of hand-made products no longer exists. Many of those that remain are hard to find and are but a shadow of their former selves. But the Vevče Craftsman Workshop is a beacon shining brightly. It continues the authentic medieval paper-making tradition.



Handmade paper can be easily recognized by its irregular “deckle edges”. Each sheet is manufactured separately in the desired size and shape, so there is no need for additional cutting.



Pressed flowers paper - in limited editions, whole pressed dried flowers can be incorporated into paper.

The last 20 years saw several important projects, including the printing of the Dalmatin's Bible facsimile, which was printed in 100 copies, and several other, smaller projects.

The very beginnings of this art go as far back as 1579, when the first paper mill was built in the eastern suburbs of Ljubljana. Handmade paper reflects the cultural environment, has a rich symbolic value, and is connected to its roots and ethnic symbols.

While it used to be part of the Papirnica Vevče paper factory, VEVČE d.o.o. has been an independent business for 20 years and makes handmade paper based on the 400 year-old Slovenian tradition. This is unique, even in Europe (the first paper mills for producing paper pulp were built in Germany in 1400 and only 179 years later a paper mill was built in Slovenia near Fužine Castle). The last 20 years saw several important projects, including the printing of

the Dalmatin's Bible facsimile, which was printed in 100 copies, and several other, smaller projects. VEVČE is preserving this jewel of Slovenian handicrafts by creating envelopes, invitations, thank you letters, acknowledgements, diplomas, and by hosting special events.

The craftsman workshop has retained its original logo of the old Fužine-Kisel paper mill, which was built in 1579 and which manufactured paper from cotton and flax fibres. Cotton, which is used in the paper-making industry only for top-quality art paper, has many advantages compared to cellulose: it is more durable, does not turn yellow with age, withstands higher pressure when printing various graphic techniques, and allows for better colour texture application.

CREATING PERFECTION

Handmade paper can be easily recognized by its irregular "deckle edges". Each sheet is manufactured separately in the desired size and shape, so there is no need for additional cutting. It is therefore a precious and unique product whose handmade production requires many steps: the craftsman first prepares the cotton pulp in a special Hollander beater machine and adds water while taking into account the desired paper weight. Then, he screens the solution by submerging the special mesh in the solution and drawing it out horizontally, while shaking it slightly to remove excess water and to allow uniform coating of the mesh. Next, the paper mixture is separated from the mesh. This process is called couching.



The Vevče Craftsman workshop makes paper in different formats, ranging from A6 to B2.



The craftsman delicately turns the mesh and presses it on the damp cloth. The damp cloth absorbs water and at the same time it separates the wet mat of fibre from the mesh. The mesh is clean and ready for the manufacturing of the next sheet. But the “sheet” on the damp cloth is still not paper, but resembles a wet sponge mat. It needs to undergo high pressure in order to remove an additional 70% of water. Then it is carefully removed from the damp cloth and dried in the drying room. When it is completely dry, it is soaked in hot animal skin-based glue,

pressed again to remove excessive glue, and dried again. Lastly, it is dampened slightly and rolled out to form smooth sheets. The stacked sheets are pressed in manual presses for some time to allow fibres to completely set. Only then is the paper ready for various types of printing, colouring, writing, and calligraphy. It can also be shaped into various unique products, offered by our workshop.

To avoid predicaments at an award ceremony, the Craftsman Workshop Vevče offers various files for awarding and storing

documents, diplomas, acknowledgements, business invitations, greeting cards, wedding invitations, menus, writing kits, envelopes, and special book editions.

Watermarks are the oldest, but still the most reliable element for protecting paper authenticity. They are most frequently used for official documents or personal correspondence. For more demanding projects a shaded watermark is used, which shows a desired three-dimensional motif.

More information could be found on the webpage www.vevce.si

We have become oblivious to the importance of paper in the digital age. It is somehow neglected, misunderstood and forgotten, an everyday material for plain everyday use with short life span. But seemingly delicate lifeless sheet of formed fibers is a powerful tool. Paper may be disposable but also indispensable. Aesthetic piece that provoke the viewer with true visual or tactile nature. Paper is the message itself. The dialogue of creation is fusion of two different ideas. The paper is the essence and the ideas are the principles to handle materia/matter.

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Doctrina.si

The best start-up idea of 2014

The doctrina.si portal is a website which facilitates the quick and efficient transfer of knowledge between pharmaceutical companies and pharmacies. Using the portal makes professional consulting easier, as well as cheaper, quicker, and better.



Photo: Jaka Gasar

Founders of Doctrina d.o.o. Tomaž Erjavec and Jure Pučko.

More than 213 pharmacies with 1081 employees work with Doctrina. Currently, the platform is only available in Slovenia, but possibilities for collaboration are increasingly being sought abroad, as well.

The Doctrina platform is designed as a bridge between the producers of pharmaceutical products and pharmacies. Its initiators, Jure Pučko and Tomaž Erjavec, have designed webinars enabling a quick and simple transfer of knowledge between pharmaceutical companies and pharmacies in the form of pre-recorded video seminars, available on-line. Pharmacists thus have permanent access to high-quality professional consultancy.

Pučko and Erjavec both have experience from working in the field of pharmaceuticals and

know the field inside and out. They found a solution by working together with pharmaceutical companies, pharmacies, and Salus. Within a year, they formed a business model in which pharmaceutical producers are required to pay for the video, while pharmacies have free access to it.

On-line training programmes are designed so as to produce, in conjunction with a pharmaceutical company, a five to eight minute-long video featuring the professional qualities and contents of a particular product.

Consultancy and training for pharmacists is usually organised by field practitioners, but these only reach a narrow public, making the whole process time-consuming and costly.

This is precisely Doctrina's added value, as it provides pharmaceutical companies an opportunity to train, to a high standard and in a single location, the experts whose task will subsequently be to sell these companies' products. Pharmaceutical companies thus save time and expenses on training, while pharmacies gain better knowledge about products. Through

The screenshot shows the Doctrina website interface. At the top left is the Doctrina logo and contact information (080 50 07, info@doctrina.si). Navigation links for 'Domov', 'O Doctrini', 'Storitve', and 'Kontakt' are on the top right. A green login bar contains the text 'Prijava v portal:' followed by input fields for 'Vpišite vaš email' and 'Vpišite vaše geslo', a 'Prijava' button, and a link for 'Še posebej geslo?'. Below this is a video player showing a woman in a white lab coat. Under the video are three columns of text:

- Izobraževanje zaposlenih v lekarnah:**
 - Interaktivna predstavitev vaših izdelkov
 - Optimizacija dela in časa
 - Informiranje vsah zaposlenih v lekarnah
 - Povišanje frekvence obiskov
 - Doseg in merljivost
- Z nami danes* dosežete:**
 - 14 javnih zavodov
 - 213 lekarn (BZ in zasebniki)
 - 1.081 zaposlenih v lekarnah

*Številka raste z vsakim dnem
- Panikvar Martina - Lekarna Pobrežje**

Potuhnila bi vaš nov sistem izobraževanja? Zadeva mi je zelo všeč zato, ker si lahko predstavljam ogledamo v miru taktič, kadar imamo čas, pa čeprav je to v prostem času. V lekarni namreč ponavadi ni možnosti, da bi vsi lahko v miru poslušali, kar nam želijo predstaviti predstavniki podjetij, tako da marsikomu ne sluhimo. Mislim, da je za naše uspešno delo to zelo dobrodošlo! Se že veselimo naših izobraževanj!

At the bottom of the page, it says 'Doctrina © 2014. Vse pravice pridržane. | Splošni pogoji uporabe'.

the platform, pharmacy directors can see how many people have already watched a webinar, while pharmaceutical companies can monitor which pharmacies have shown the webinar and to how many people.

Doctrina collaborates with experts from pharmaceutical companies and pharmacies, as well as with a public appearance trainer, thus ensuring that the presentations and trainings

are truly a top-notch product. Doctrina also enjoys great support from its co-founder and investor, Salus d.d.

More than 213 pharmacies with 1081 employees work with Doctrina. Currently, the platform is only available in Slovenia, but possibilities for collaboration are increasingly being sought abroad, as well. Larger markets are particularly attractive as they have more pharmacies op-

erating, and because the business model, as described above, is yet unknown there. Doctrina's founders certainly wish to spread their solutions abroad, where interest has been extraordinary. Their plans for the future include even more intensive collaboration, both with pharmacies and with pharmaceutical companies, as their ultimate goal is to create a portal that is efficient and easy to use for all participants.

The Doctrina portal provides pharmaceutical companies an opportunity to train, to a high standard and in a single location, the experts whose task will subsequently be to sell these companies' products.

The Doctrina platform is designed as a bridge between the producers of pharmaceutical products and pharmacies.

National Institute of Chemistry Science and Economy Go Hand in Hand

A few years ago, the Institute of Chemistry, an internationally renowned research organisation in the field of chemistry and related disciplines, adopted a strategy to win recognition as a knowledge and education provider in the international market as a part of its market activities. These studies are financed by foreign businesses. In the first five years, the share of exported knowledge grew from zero to ten percent of income from business.



Photo: Damijan Makuc

In 2013, Pregl Research Centre was an outstanding acquisition for the Institute of Chemistry and for the Slovenian science. It is one of the most state of the art research centres in Europe, built in accordance with energy efficiency guidelines. The Centre has cutting edge equipment in the total amount of EUR 7 million.

The Institute of Chemistry's basic and applicative research is focused on areas which are of long-term importance both for Slovenia and the world in general: biotechnology, environmental protection, structural and theoretical chemistry, ana-

lytical chemistry, materials research, and chemical engineering. The Institute is coordinated with the needs of the chemical, pharmaceutical, rubber and food industries. The work of the Institute is in accordance with the priorities of the Frame-

work Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020 which brings to the fore genomics and biotechnology for health, nanotechnology, quality and safety of food and nutrition, sustainable development, and global change.



The research assignment conducted by Aleš Zupančič and Jaka Šikonja also included a business part. They proved that recouping hydrogen from biodegradable waste can be a profitable activity.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As The Institute of Chemistry is aware that the future is in the hands of young people, one of their most important fields of activity is education. They cooperate with Slovenian and international educational institutions and offer possibilities of scholarships as well as collaboration in writing theses and fulfilling obligatory internships. There are 74 graduate students, i.e. about 25% of all employees, who are currently enrolled in a PhD programme as a part of the young researchers programme. It was once again proved that young researchers are a big potential for Slovenia, as Slovenian high school students were among the best in the 2014 GENIUS Olympiad for young researchers, which took place in the USA in June. They won a gold, a silver, and a bronze medal. Students Aleš Zupančič and Jaka Šikonja, who won the gold, carried out their research in Laboratory for Environmental Sciences and Engineering of the National Institute of Chemistry. They outmatched the competitors from all over the world and showed how to recoup hydrogen and produce electricity from biodegradable waste. The National Institute of Chemistry, which offered the two young researchers support and excellent

conditions for research work, is enthusiastic about the success of the young researchers. On their return from New York, the winners Aleš in Jaka said: "We will continue the work in Slovenia since we believe that the university environment is very good. We highly appreciate that the National Institute of Chemistry made it possible for us to work in accordance with the highest scientific standards." They hope that they will become a part of the Institute's scientific team.

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH BUSINESSES

Collaborating with businesses is becoming a very important part of the Institute's work. The Institute is the research institution with the highest number of patent applications. In the last three years there were 17 patent applications or granted patents in Slovenia and 18 applications at the international level. The National Institute of Chemistry is a research institution with the highest number of commercialised patents per employee. Over recent years it has become an important partner for global companies and multinational firms. They sell patents and carry out research under contracts. The employees of the Institute of Chemistry are proof that public

institutions can be managed in the same way as is expected from successful private companies. Innovativeness, knowledge, and drive of Institute's employees make it possible to exceed the expectations since the Institute of Chemistry is a public institution, and therefore not supported by proper funding. The Director of the Institute, Janko Jamnik, says that all their researchers obtain funds, including the funds for salaries, via tenders. "Since the share of successful candidatures is getting smaller, the researchers need to spend more time on writing projects which are not funded afterwards," said the Director and pointed to the institute's excellent collaboration with industry: "According to financial effect, our collaboration with pharmaceutical industry has proved to be the most important in recent years. This kind of cooperation is encouraged though research financing, transfer of knowledge to production, and the employment of our young Doctors of Science in the pharmaceutical industry and vice versa." The Institute of Chemistry has successfully collaborated with Krka, d.o.o., Novo mesto, and Lek, d.d. The Institute is working with Lek on developing biological medicinal products or biosimilars which are mainly intended for cancer

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The work of the Institute is in accordance with the priorities of the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020 which brings to the fore genomics and biotechnology for health, nanotechnology, quality and safety of food and nutrition, sustainable development, and global change.

and autoimmune diseases treatment. Biosimilars are the world's fastest growing segment of pharmaceutical industry. The collaboration between the Institute of Chemistry and Lek has brought about excellent results as two of three similar biological medicinal products sold by Sandoz (a part of which is also Lek) were developed in Slovenia.

EDUCATION PROVIDER IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The Institute of Chemistry began a more intensive breakthrough in the international market five years ago. Their researchers are recognized worldwide. Director Janko Jamnik says: "The only thing we did was to systematically ensure support in the area of intellectual property and ensure business support in concluding contracts. When a researcher informed us that a foreign company is interested in their knowledge, the supportive services joined in and saw out the process to the signature of the contract. An important factor was also the entrepreneurial culture which we foster at the

Institute and which is based on willingness to accept risks and learn from mistakes." The Institute of Chemistry collaborates with foreign companies from Israel, Great Britain, Japan, Germany, and France. To point out a few examples: It does fundamental research for the Japanese company Honda on modern battery systems which could be integrated in Honda's new electric vehicles. For an English company Oxford Nanopore Technologies it is developing a device for DNA sequencing the size of a USB-Stick. For BrightSource Energy from Israel it is working in the field of spectrally selective solar absorber coatings. The Institute of Chemistry also works successfully with Slovenian embassies around the world.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

An important and topical international project in which the leading partner is the Institute of Chemistry is PLASTiCE, the development of an innovative value chain for sustainable plastic in Central Europe. Its aim is to promote new environmentally

friendly and sustainable types of plastic. The purpose of the project is to identify and overcome burdens which hinder a faster and more massive implementation of sustainable types of plastic, especially bioplastic (biodegradable plastic and plastic on the basis of renewable resources) in Central Europe. The core of the project is to make plastic from natural renewable materials. When we throw it away, it can return to the natural cycle. The project is led by Andrej Kržan from the Institute of Chemistry in collaboration with 13 partners from four Central European countries. With the help of national information centres they will produce scientifically proven information on sustainable types of plastic by establishing a system of certification of biodegradable plastic, appropriate for composting, and by planning a transition to sustainable types of plastic. What makes the PLASTiCE project special is that it focuses on the transfer of knowledge on economic and social development.

Photo: Studio Majhenic



Janko Jamnik, the Director of the Institute of Chemistry.

Is the future of business to be found in connecting with science?

"There is no doubt about it. It is interesting to see how the boundary between science and business is becoming blurred," says Director Janko Jamnik. He adds that the future goals of the National Institute of Chemistry are based on the Institute's mission, which is to discover new knowledge in the field of life sciences and materials sciences. "We will certainly share this knowledge with the world we live in," assured the Director of the successful Institute of Chemistry.

Bled Castle

Let it enchant you like in a fairytale

The mighty Bled Castle stands on the top of a steep cliff rising above Lake Bled. The resplendent château looks down over a romantic island with a church in the middle of the lake. The castle and island have made Bled famous all over the world.

Photo: Bled Castle archives



Bled Castle offers its visitors beautiful views of the lake and its island, as well as of the Julian Alps, the Karavanke, Lesce, Radovljica, and the surrounding area. Last year, the castle received around 265,000 tourists – an increase of almost 4 per cent compared to 2012. The most foreign guests came from Great Britain, Japan, Italy, and Israel, followed by those from Korea, Germany, the United States, Russia, Hungary, Croatia, Spain, and the Netherlands.

A WALK THROUGH THE CASTLE

The castle buildings are erected around the castle courtyards in two levels. Formerly, there were industrial buildings in the lower

courtyard and residential areas in the upper courtyard. The chapel in the upper courtyard, which was built in the 16th century, was consecrated to the Bishops St. Albuin and St. Ingenuinus. It is painted with interesting frescoes, while next to the altar there are paintings of the German Emperor Henry II and his wife Kunigunda. The castle wall is Romanesque while the remaining buildings stem from the Renaissance period. There is also a smithy in the lower courtyard with forged products displayed in it. Visitors may imprint a memorial coin on the anvil. In the past, the surroundings of Bled with their iron ore resources gave rise to a traditional culture of forging useful products from

iron. Today, the smith at the Bled castle represents the fourth generation of Kropa smiths, which proves that knowledge, appreciation, and passion for smithery have been passed on from generation to generation. The castle printing shop features a model of Gutenberg's original wooden printing press. The printer walks visitors through the process of printing with historic print plates and leaden letters on a hand-made paper. If you wish, you may try the Black Art yourself and make a memorial imprint as a souvenir. The museum part of Bled castle contains a permanent exhibition from the National Museum of Slovenia. The history of the Bled area is presented in eight sections, spanning from

According to written sources, the Bled castle is the oldest castle in Slovenia.

The castle buildings are erected around the castle courtyards in two levels.



The symbol of Bled and Slovenia, Bled castle, stands on a mighty stone cliff, rising 1.30 metres above the glacial lake of Bled.

when the landscape was formed all the way up to modern times.

SAY "I DO" AT BLEED CASTLE

The alluring Bled castle on the stone cliff and the superb view of the surrounding area has enticed many couples to choose this as the perfect place to say their vows. The organisers at Bled castle make wedding ceremonies a truly vivid and unique experience, ensuring a lasting memory for the newlyweds. First, the bride and the groom are received by the lord of the castle in genuine medieval fashion. Then, the wedding guests are treated to exquisite culinary delicacies, while enjoying the marvellous view from the castle terrace. Finally, the castle's wine cellar offers up some top-notch vintages, which can be tasted and bottled from oakwood casks. The wedding couple may fill a bottle by themselves, stopper it with a cork, wax it and receive a memorial certificate to remind them forever of the most beautiful day of their lives.

THE RICH HISTORY OF BLEED CASTLE

The history of the castle traces its beginnings to 10 April 1004,

when the German Emperor Henry II donated his estate at Bled in Carniola to Bishop Albuin of Brixen. The present-day castle is first attested as castellum Veldes in a deed of donation from 1011, when Albuin's successor Adalberon received the castle as a gift from Henry II. Later, the Bishops of Brixen leased their estate. The first tenant was Konradt von Kreigh and the Kreigh family would remain tenants for nearly 200 years, followed by the Turn family who were relatives of the Kreighs. Eventually, it was Herbard Auersperg of Turjak who, having fought heroically against Turks, became the tenant of the estate. Herbard Auersperg attempted to buy the castle for his family. After an earthquake in 1511, he set about renovating the castle. During his tenancy, the castle became a stronghold of Protestantism and, in 1561, Primož Trubar settled there. Later on, the tenants were Ivan Josip Lenkovič and count Žiga Turn. Following a period of tenancy, the Bishop of Brixen appointed lords of the castle. Up until 18th century, these lords were aristocratic noblemen and eventually they ranked from among the townspeople. Some of them resided in Bled, while others managed the estate through

custodians. In 1803, the Bled estate was nationalised. When Napoleon occupied Carniola, the estate became a property of the Illyrian Provinces. The estate was then returned to the Bishops of Brixen in 1838. In 1918, the castle and its surroundings, including the lake and the island, were bought by Ivan Kenda, a hotel keeper from Bled. Kenda had ambitious plans of changing the castle into a hotel. However, his investments proved unprofitable and in 1937, his entire property was confiscated by the Cooperative Economic Bank and later on by the Drava Banate. A fire broke out on 18 August 1947 and destroyed large parts of the castle's roof. Organised renovation of the castle began in 1952, following plans laid down by architect Tone Bitenc, a student of Jože Plečnik. In 1961, renovation was finally completed and the castle received a new and more modern look, suitable for tourist visits. In 2008, the Bled Culture Institute renovated the museum part of the Bled Castle and a renovation, reconstruction, and restoration of both castle buildings are also planned. More beautiful than ever before, the Bled castle invites you to visit it.

The alluring Bled castle on the stone cliff and the superb view of the surrounding area has enticed many couples to choose this as the perfect place to say their vows. The organisers at Bled castle make wedding ceremonies a truly vivid and unique experience, ensuring a lasting memory for the newlyweds.

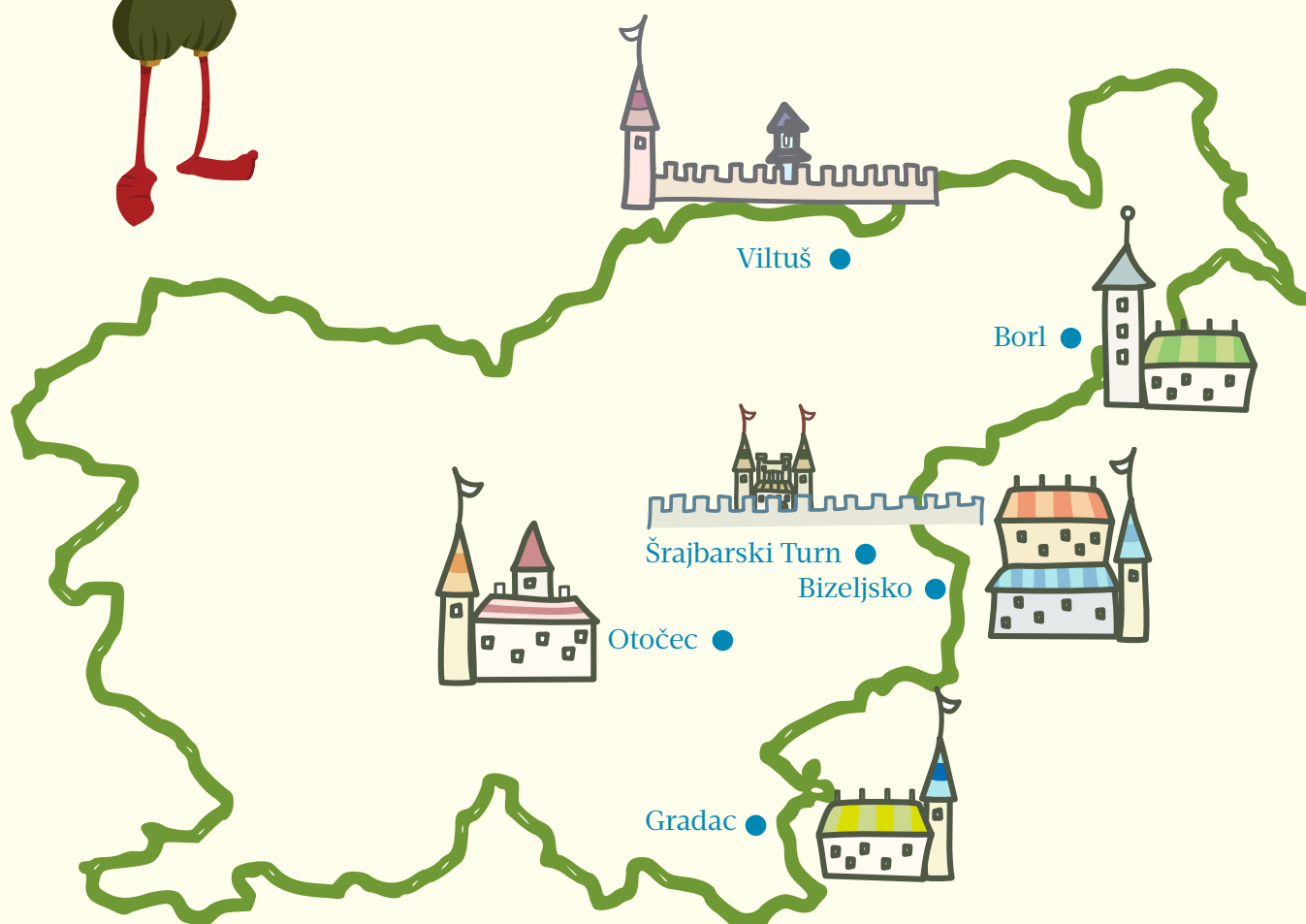
The castles and manors of Slovenia

Would you like to become lord of a castle or manor?

Illustrations: Mostphotos



There are over 1,000 castles and manors in Slovenia. Some of them have been renovated and converted into museums or hotels. Many castles stand on hilltops with stunning views, making every visit worthwhile.



This year, the Ministry of Culture plans to sell six castles: Bizeljsko, Borl, Otočec, Gradac, Šrajbarski Turn, and Viltuš. Some of these have been renovated and offer catering services and rich cultural programmes for their visitors, while others lie in disrepair and decrepitude, regaling only themselves with stories of the past.

The Renaissance-style castle of Otočec is the only castle in Slovenia situated on a river. A true pearl of the Lower Carniolan landscape, it is built on a small island in the middle of the Krka River, surrounded by lush greenery.



Photo: Jakše-Jeršič

THE PEARL OF LOWER CARNIOLA

The Renaissance-style castle of Otočec is the only castle in Slovenia situated on a river. A true pearl of the Lower Carniolan landscape, it is built on a small island in the middle of the Krka River, surrounded by lush greenery. The island is linked to the mainland by two bridges leading both northwards and southwards. The picturesque castle building with its residential core and extensive walls has undergone renovation and is now a world-class hotel. Its newly designed interior combines the styles of Gothic and Renaissance, integrating the ultimate experience of its noble past with the perfect comfort of modern era.

The castle restaurant offers exquisite culinary dishes and the finest Slovenian wines, meeting the expectations of even the most demanding guests. Moreover, Otočec Castle is the perfect place for business meetings and one of the most frequently chosen locations in Slovenia for weddings and other ceremonial events. It was also in the enchanted milieu of Otočec where Anže Kopitar, Slovenia's best hockey player, said "I do" to his wife. The castle is managed by Terme Krka d. o. o. from Novo Mesto.

ROMANTIC TURRETS

Bizeljsko Castle is situated on a rocky hill above the Bizeljsko village and was the home of

many families of nobility in its past. Its architectural style is typical of the Renaissance and is characterised by two turrets and an interior arcade courtyard. The castle edifice itself stands atop a knobby hill, with the service buildings situated below. The pathway towards the castle wind around the hill and, on passing through the gate turret, the visitor enters the castle courtyard. Also worth seeing is its rich ornamental stucco work, found in three castle chambers and in the interior of the chapel. The castle premises offer delightful views of the surrounding wine-growing area. Inside the castle, there is also the Klakočar wine cellar, where visitors can be poured a dram of the best vintages. The



Photo: Matevž Lenarčič

The Klakočar family have been living in Bizeljsko Castle for 40 years and offer sightseeing tours around the castle, the wine bar, and other tourist features in the surrounding area.

Photo: Matevž Lenarčič



The Brol Castle certainly has potential for tourism, as well as for catering and hotel activities.

castle further provides rich range of culinary delicacies and opportunities for professional activities, including education, hotel management, museum exhibitions, and business activities.

ON A SLOPING ROCK ABOVE THE DRAVA RIVER

The medieval Brol Castle played an important strategic role in the past, owing to its natural position, defined by the Drava river and a rocky pier on which the castle is built. It is an important monument to the period of World War II. In 1952 the castle was turned into a hotel, but the venture proved unprofitable and was eventually abandoned in 1981. A full-scale renovation got

underway after that. First, they started on the entrance tract with a large cellar below and a baroque chapel above it. Further work is still in progress. The entrance tract is now used for organised events and exhibitions, while the chapel has also been renovated. The decoration and interior equipment have been partly preserved. Ceremonial premises in the castle include the knights' hall, while the neighbouring room contains a unique ceiling painting, worth marveling at. In the courtyard, there is a baroque fountain with an original stone ring and a hand-forged spout. Organised cultural events are a mainstay at the castle, particularly during summer.

IN THE ČRNOMELJ-METLIKA-SEMIČ REGION

Gradac Castle is one of the greatest and most beautiful cultural sights in the region of White Carniola. It has been preserved almost in its entirety and is now a tourist point. The medieval castle building comprises the lower and the upper castle, as well as a stall, a former school, and a garden park. Worth seeing are the remains of an old stall which was damaged in a fire and a wooden bridge which once led from the castle to its adjacent fields and ironworks. The castle once had a beautiful park with a tree-lined promenade and a garden. The remains of the park can still be seen today and are part of the ar

Photo: Gradac Castle archives



The location of Gradac Castle is ideal for organising summer schools and research camps, particularly archaeological ones. In future, Gradac has the potential to become a centre of tourism in White Carniola.



Photo: Matevž Lenarčič

Šrajbarski Turn Castle offers opportunities for catering and hotel services, as well as other tourist activities. It could also serve as a premise for seminars and congress events.

chitectural heritage.

AN IMPRESSION FROM THE RENAISSANCE

To the north of the village of Leskovec pri Krškem lies Šrajbarski Turn Castle, a characteristic example of centrally-based defensive architecture. The four residential wings enclose the most significant architectural feature of the building: a beautiful arcaded courtyard. The arcades are supported by Renaissance-style chapters, among which there are remains of the original

painting and a painted sundial. Above the main entrance to the castle proudly hangs a relief of the coat of arms of the house of Auersperg-Falkenhayn, while the courtyard wall displays the arms of the noble family Khysl. The 17th century Renaissance-style castle park contains a monument erected in memory of Alfonz Paulin (1853-1942), a famous Slovenian botanist and son of the castle ward.

AN EXOTIC CASTLE PARK

Viltuš is a romantic castle from

the late 19th century. It enchants its visitors with a multitude of turrets and pinnacles, and above all with its great corner tower that dominates the entire building, lending it something special. The park stretches out around the castle building. It comprises several constituent parts: an orangery, a floral garden, lawns, a tree park, a fishpond, and a forest. The park is an example of high-quality gardening from the late 19th and early 20th century. Its style is typical of Romanticism, with elements of eclecticism and exotism.



Photo: UKOM Archives

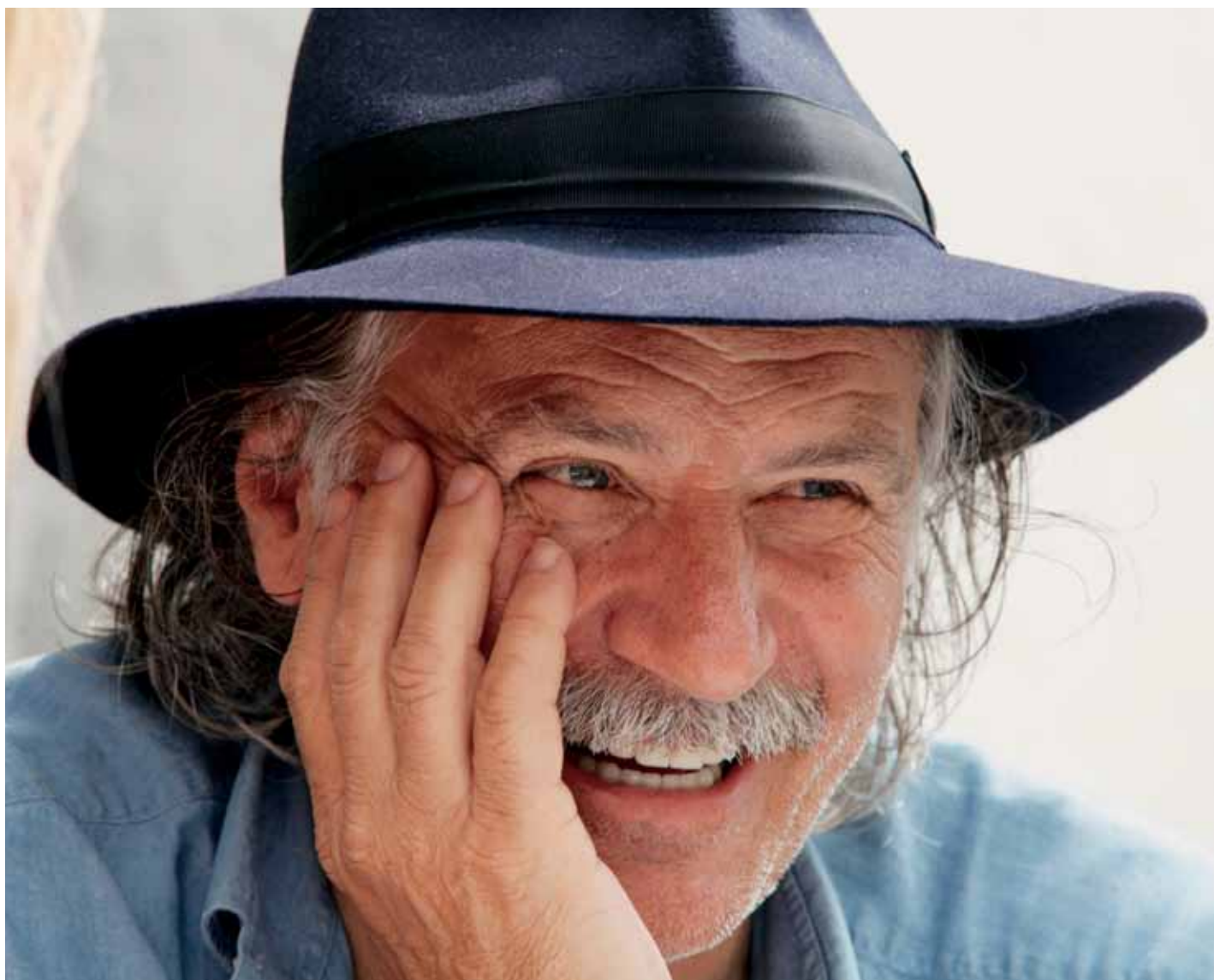
Viltuš is a romantic castle from the late 19th century. It enchants its visitors with a multitude of turrets and pinnacles, and above all with its great corner tower that dominates the entire building, lending it something special.

Rade Šerbedžija, president of the first Bled film festival

Bled is more beautiful place for the film festival than Cannes

The mountain resort of Bled hosted the first Slovenian film festival in June. It's president was Rade Šerbedžija, an actor, poet and musician famous in Slovenia and abroad. The great Stanley Kubrick wanted to film Rasputin with him, he won a game of chess against Guy Ritchie, and his greatest passion is football.

Photo: Tina Kosec/STA



Rade Šerbedžija was born in 1946 into a Serbian family in the Croatian town of Bunić. He graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, Croatia. Since then he has starred in almost every Yugoslav film and has become a Yugoslav movie star. In 1992 he moved abroad due to the war in the Balkans and for some time lived as a refugee also in Slovenia, where he acquired Slovenian citizenship. He is a poet, a musician, and an actor. On the Brijuni Islands (Croatia) he founded the Ulysses theatre and he is also a lecturer at the University of Rijeka, where he gives lectures on the subject of acting. Currently, he spends most of his time in Croatia and is still a frequent visitor to the USA. He has collaborated with many world renowned personalities, e.g. Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Vanessa Redgrave, Tom Cruise, Clint Eastwood, and Stanley Kubrick. He believes that he has been very lucky in life.

You know, Bled and its surrounding area have simply stunning scenery, which is an ideal setting for such event. I personally believe that this setting is much more beautiful than Cannes.



Photo: Tina Kosec/STA

At the beginning, we asked him, why he chose to actively cooperate on such a demanding project as the Bled Film Festival (BFF), when he had so many other offers. “You know, Bled and its surrounding area have simply stunning

scenery, which is an ideal setting for such event. I personally believe that this setting is much more beautiful than Cannes. However, we, who collaborated actively, only started and introduced the festival tradition. It is essential for

BFF that the Slovenian intellectual sphere recognises its significance. I wish this were not only a film festival, but a setting for a discussion, especially a discussion on ecological issues and first of all on the issue of water. We wish to be part of

Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA



global ecological movement for saving our planet.”

In addition to ecological views, he also explained his other vision: “In the future, I wish that a passionate discussion of philosophers, writers, and other social activists would take place here. Journalists, renowned actors, other artists, and the audience itself need to encourage this. Most of all, I want the festival to be an opportunity for young people. That is why I supported the idea of both young initiators, Marko Gajič and Danijel Utješanovič.”

He believes that the Bled Film Festival, which places an emphasis on ecology, should be designed differently from the usual film festivals. “Every movement towards something for the people, something as beautiful as our festival, should be recognised and supported,” he added. He emphasised that in his opinion only Slovenia of all the former Yugoslav republics

is prepared for that. Slovenian theatre has always been the strongest. In his opinion, the best actor is definitely Radko Polič. Then, he reveals his views on artistic purity: “I know that I am not pure. I need to make compromises in life, I need to survive. I am a man of compromises.”

I SET MY GOALS EVERY DAY

As we start talking about how he personally sets his goals and makes decisions, he says: “I make decisions every day and on everything I do. This is very important for the work I do, especially as an actor. You carry out research every day and you can only do something if you know why you are doing it.”

It is not possible to overlook the issue of his Yugoslav identity. Rade Šerbedžija was namely born in Croatia, his family is Serbian, and he has a Slovenian citizenship. Sincerely, with tears in

his eyes, he responds: “When the war in the Balkans started, my life took a drastic turn. However, people, my friends, remained the same. No physical boundaries can change this. You see, Slovenia was the first of the former Yugoslav republics that became an EU Member State. Croatia was the second. I believe that Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and others will follow. And what happens then? We will be united again, side by side, but this time in the EU. I can read poetry of the Slovenian greatest poet France Prešeren in Slovenian. I have this privilege, while some German or Englishman does not. Just like Slovenians understand Croatian and Serbian films. We eat similar food, drink similar drinks and are bound by our history, our region. This is not a political idea, it is cultural connection. I believe that we, former Yugoslavs, should be more connected to the Bulgarians and Hungarians, since we have a lot

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Šerbedžija believes in brotherhood among people and his opinion is that the most important thing in life is to recognise that we are not alone in this world, we are the same as others and that we can find a brother in everyone.

in common. But, of course, the EU is not Yugoslavia.

I WAS ASHAMED

Rade Šerbedžija is man of many talents. He also loves to show off his musical skills. He describes himself as a people's person, a people's artist: "I am the audience's friend. If I make a mistake, for example during the concert, I just repeat the lyrics and the audience laughs. My audience knows what to expect. You see, I do not pursue a career in music, I just simply love it and this is how I see it as a part of my life. I wrote many songs, many about war, which have a special social aspect. I am especially proud of my song "Neću protiv druga svog" (I will not harm my friend, I will not fight against a friend and my nation), which became a popular song during the pre-war period. I remember that for two months every daily news broadcast ended with this song: "Neću protiv druga svog." But afterwards, I did not sing it anymore, because I was ashamed, since the war had already started. The war in the Balkans was truly shameful, I still feel this way. I, too, have experienced the hatred of some people, but I have never returned it.

MUSIC AND FOOTBALL

When I am writing songs and commenting on them during a concert, I place emphasis on the content. The music is secondary, although I have been lucky and have worked with many very talented musicians. My songs are about life matters, loss, death, love, war, and friends. We all learn for as long as we live. Well, I also learned something about music business. But it is true that I usually fall sick after concerts (he laughs). They are exhausting. Usually, I start the tour in Zagreb, next I perform in Ljubljana and I finish the tour in Belgrade."

He also says: "I am probably not a real poet, I am most certainly not. My real passion has always been

football. And Albert Camus, the French writer and philosopher, interestingly, also loved football. How inspiring is that for me? A green field, two heroes competing for the ball. But some people think it foolish that 22 people on the grass field are running after one ball. That is the way it is."

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Šerbedžija believes in brotherhood among people and his opinion is that the most important thing in life is to recognise that we are not alone in this world, we are the same as others and that we can find a brother in everyone. As an artist, he got to know himself the most while playing Molier's Don Juan, who is in his opinion the definitive character of global literature. He says he has good opinion of all actors. Šerbedžija believes that actor's efforts should be appreciated, even if they are bad. In his opinion, every attempt in art should be appreciated at this time, when there is so much negative energy in the world. He also mentions his American colleagues and points out Tom Cruise: "He is a very good actor, especially when he interprets his roles in a way that he is not actually acting. Some underestimate this, but I believe that only the greatest actors can act this way. And Tom Cruise is a great actor and at the same time a very good man."

I ALWAYS LEAVE SLOVENIA EXTREMELY HAPPY

The conversation, which we started with the festival, concludes with the question, how he feels in Slovenia.

"You know, this is an extremely beautiful country. I always make beautiful memories, friends always take me to some good restaurant, we set off on a trip to the mountains and I always leave extremely happy. It is true that I feel great here, among all my friends. I try to enjoy myself everywhere and I am always looking for positive aspects in people and places. I love similarity and

at the same time diversity. But my home is in Istria. In Slovenia I feel at home, even though I was not born here."

He also compares his views on life in this country, where he was not born, with his life in America: "I felt good and I feel good there. But those are different feelings. I had a nice house there, my family is large, because I am a family man, you know. I always cook and I also like to buy prepared, but delicious food. I always buy too much that is why my wife gets angry at me. I am just like my mother, who cooked every day as if she were cooking for a feast, always too much."

WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

Rade Šerbedžija is a charming man, radiating positive energy, who is still driven by his creativity. His thoughts on important matters in life are rooted in the arts, philosophy and friendship. His opinion on today's leaders is: "Today we are faced with the question of who rules democracy and what values leaders represent. In the past we had charismatic political leaders. But today? They are gone. Which politician is outstanding today, who stands out in a positive sense? The latter is especially important."

When I ask him, whether he believes that he is one step ahead with his life vision, he says: "That is not true. I am not one step ahead, but on a parallel path. I like the multiethnicity and diversity of the world. Every day anew. Warm, gentle, that is my life. People respond to that, recognize it and love it."

His message to the readers of Sinfo: "The most important philosophy is that you are not alone. It is important to recognise this blessing. All these disputes between countries and the hatred they cause are primitive and a waste of time. It is important to recognise opportunities for collaboration, to be positive and creative."

Film Producer Dunja Klemenc

Slovenia's diversity makes it the perfect backdrop for filming

Dunja Klemenc developed an interest in film art in her early years. She was part of film circles hosted by the late Jovita Podgornik and Mirjana Borčič. After graduating from the Belgrade Academy of Arts and the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts, she worked as an organizer and a producer at TV Beograd and TV Novi Sad in the 1970s.



Born 1943 in Ljubljana. After studying film production at the Belgrade Academy of Arts, she started working in 1967 as a screenwriter, assistant director, costume designer, and producer for documentaries, television series, and feature films. From 1987 to 1998, she was director of children's programmes for Slovenian television. After founding the Studio Maj production company in Ljubljana in 1989, she went on to coproduce films including "No Man's Land" (dir. Danis Tanovics, 2001, Oscar for best foreign Film, Golden Globe, European Film Award, Cottbus 2001), and "Warchild" (dir. Christian Wagner, 2005).

In 1978 Dunja Klemenc moved to Slovenia and worked for Mirjana Borčić for a couple of years. “At that time, journey was incredible. She brought together young directors and directors of photography and there I meet a whole generation of film-makers.” In 1989 she founded her own production company, Studio Maj, and she also worked as a children’s programme producer at TV Slovenija in the 1990s.

As an executive producer and co-producer Dunja Klemenc co-operated on more than ten films with international cast members, among others on “No Man’s Land”, which won Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. She points out that co-production means mixing knowledge and cultures.

In addition to the Oscar, the French-Slovenian-Italian-Belgian-British co-production “No Man’s Land” won another 20 awards. After this success, Dunja Klemenc started regularly collaborating with Tanović, and their last project was the international co-production “Cirkus Columbia” (2010).

THE NUMBER OF SLOVENIAN PRODUCERS

According to Dunja Klemenc, there are around ten feature film producers in Slovenia, who enjoy good relations between each other. It is difficult to make a living as a film producer, since own funds are required. None of them has yet earned enough to pay

film workers “in cash”. They have to get loans, if they wish to invest in new films. They get royalties, which they can choose to pay out or not. The quality of good film producers is that they can find a good script and a good director. In Slovenia, scripts are financially undervalued. No one makes a living solely by writing scripts. She believes that if they had, their selection would be much greater. The general rule of thumb is that for every ten scripts, one will be filmed. Scriptwriters should attend workshops, which last one, two, or three years. You finish one workshop, you start participating in another. Every scriptwriter sleeps with his script and improves it. Tanović took 3 years to write his script for “No Man’s Land” for three years. It was realised so quickly, because it was so carefully crafted. At that time, Tanović was a refugee and a student, who made a living by chopping wood.

Slovenia was especially suitable for filming, due to its natural diversity and small size. The possibilities for filming co-produced films in Slovenia are underutilized. We do not realize what potential profits this could bring, which is crucial. The thing that makes me the happiest, how the foreigners’ “jaws drop”, when they realize, how good our film workers are.

REVIEW OF THE BLEDED FILM FESTIVAL

The Bled Film Festival, which

recently screened its last movie, was an initiative of two Bled natives, who wanted to make something different. Did they succeed? In part, says Dunja Klemenc. All the visitors who attended the festival were extremely impressed by our country and they would all visit us again. This is good for our country. By all means, the festival’s best idea was care for our environment, because the vision of the Bled Film Festival was not only to present films, but also to raise environmental awareness. The goal was to hold a festival which would balance glamour and ecology, so that the representatives of the glamour world would help to address the ecological issues. Interesting and high-quality films were shown, interesting people from the film-making world were invited, and ecological issues and the problem of water protection on this planet were raised. That is why the festival was held at Lake Bled, which is not only beautiful, but is also a symbol of purity of water and nature.

And her current projects? She is collaborating with a Bosnia team on a film, which is being filmed both in Slovenia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main character is a Bosnian girl, who gets pregnant after a liaison with a Slovenian. You will soon be able to see the remainder of the story by yourself, she says. The Viba Film studio has very modern technology, which makes working extremely easier, she also adds with pride.

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Since 2007, STUDIO MAJ has co-produced:

- Teah by Hanna A.W.Slak, a Slovenian-Croatian-Polish co-production; AWARDS: the Slovenian Film Festival Portorož for best sound, and from the association of Slovenian film critics for best film of 2006;
- Warchild by Christian Wagner, a German-Slovenian co-production; AWARDS: the Bayerischer Award 2005, the jury award for the best film; the 30th World Film Festival Montreal, best screenplay; the Slovenian Film Festival Portoroz, audience award; the VIII European Cinema Festival in Lecce, Golden Olive Tree (best film award by jury) and special audience award for best film 2005
- Two for a Game by Dejan Šorak, a Croatian-Slovenian co-production in 2004-05
- Shadows of Time by Mike Maria deRam, an Austrian-American-Slovenian co-production in 2002
- “Lilly’s Story” by Robert Mantoulis, a French-Greek-Slovenian co-production in 2000 - (and executive produced) “No Man’s Land”, directed by Danis Tanovic. A French-Belgian-Italian-UK-Slovenian co-production; AWARDS: Academy Award 2002 for Best Foreign Film, Golden Globe 2002, European Film Academy Award

and produced

- Well Tempered Corpses by Benjamin Filipović, a Slovenian-Bosnian-French- Italian co-production in 2003
- (and executive produced) Danis Tanovic’s short film, part of the collection of films “11’09”01” produced by Galatée Films and StudioCanal, Paris in 2001

Biennial of Design – Bio 50

From competition to collaboration

BIO 50 is opening its doors to the public on 18 September 2014 in Ljubljana, unveiling the results of an ambitious six-month collaborative effort of 11 different teams. The opening will be accompanied by a rich program, including the award ceremony, the unveiling of the BIO exhibitions at two other locations, and several other events across the city.

Photo: Tomislav Vrđović



After BIO 50's lively introductory event, which took place in February in Ljubljana and which brought together more than 120 participants, the collaboration has continued, with participants using various creative and unexpected ways to communicate, organize, and further develop their design process. "From a constant postcard exchange between the Walking the City team members, to Skype dinners with wide range of ingredients organised by the Knowing Food team, the participants have found countless ways to surprise us with their engaging resourcefulness and boundless enthusiasm," said BIO 50 curator Jan Boelen.

Jan Boelen, who was invited to curate the jubilee edition of the Biennial by the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO), has changed the Biennial's concept into a new, innovative form of design event, takes an important step forward from international competition toward collaboration and experimentation. "We absolutely have to end the fetishisation of products that has alienated design from production. I believe that BIO should play an active role in this and strive to support creativity in its most delicate and vulnerable stage. This means that in the future, BIO has to increasingly play a research-based, experimental role," explains Matevž Čelik, Di-

rector of the Museum of Architecture and Design.

ELEVEN CONCEPTS

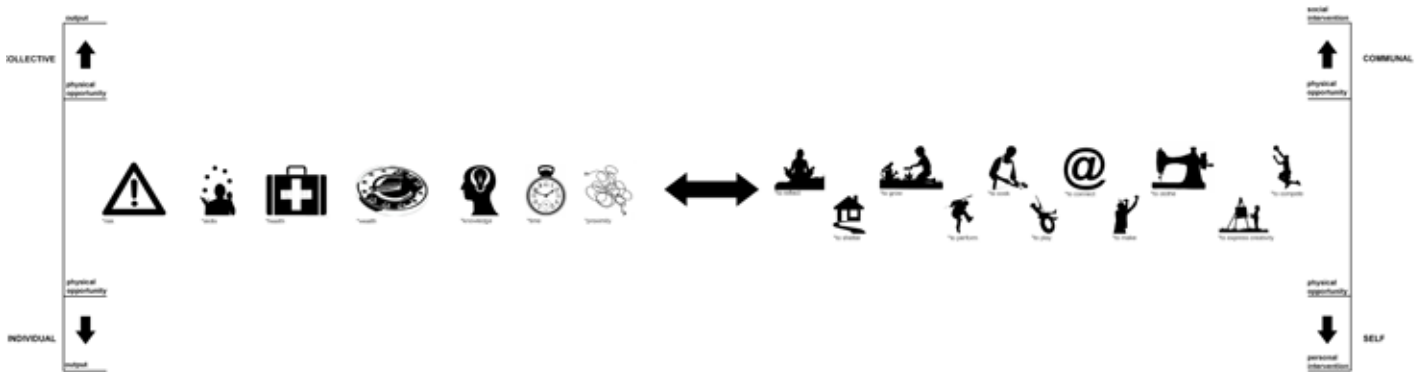
For the last six months, more than 100 multidisciplinary participants from 20 countries have been collaborating under BIO 50 on the topics of Affordable Living, Knowing Food, Public Water – Public Space, Walking the City, Hidden Crafts, The Fashion System, Hacking Households, Nanotourism, Engine Blocks, Observing Space, and Designing Life. International and Slovenian mentors, who put together project guidelines for each team, lead and monitor project progress, whereas members with diverse

Nanotourism meeting

The BIO 50 exhibition will be open from 18 September to 7 December 2014 at the Museum of Architecture and Design, the Jakopič Gallery, and the Museum of Modern Art, and will showcase the outcomes of each team's work.

// AFFORDABLE LIVING //

*CHEAP? *HOUSING?



Affordable Living, sketches by Lee Ivett

experience, skills, and motivation work on one or more of the projects that will be presented at the Biennial.

The designers included in the Hidden Crafts team have been collaborating with Slovenian companies in the research process, which could lead to new ways of understanding crafts. Project development is a joint effort along with the companies Steklarna Hrastnik, Tiporenesansa, Kamena, Petrič, Rokodelski center Ribnica, and Interseroh & Consensus & Plastika Skaza. Apart from the above-mentioned Skype dinners, the Knowing Food team is working on possible scenarios for the future of food and is planning to plant a garden in the museum. While the Designing Life team is examining the intersections of biology, science, and design, as well as possible life forms in extreme conditions, the Observing Space team is exploring new ideas that could be provoked by human presence in space. The Hacking Households team will present two scenarios of “hacked” household appliances, one of which will be based on open programming interfaces, and the other on programmed objects. The Engine Blocks team will use a deconstructed, interchangeable, and removable Tomos engine on other devices such as a brick maker, a motorcycle, a saw, a water pump, and a boat. The main objects of The Fashion System team’s concern include research on materials, such as local wool and second-hand clothing, their decompo-

sition, and the development of new production systems and their applicability. Projects undertaken by the Public Water Public Space team naturally focus on water in public spaces, such as a fog garden, a four seasons fountain, an irrigation system, and more. The Walking the City team has set up an agency for walking to explore and promote different ways of walking in the urban area. The potential uses of empty and derelict buildings top the Affordable Living team’s list, along with developing strategies and programmes for the revival of neighbourhoods within communities, and tackling the problems of affordable ownership. The Nanotourism team is looking for alternatives to the existing tourism industry, suggesting new possibilities at the micro-level, and expanding the project beyond Ljubljana to Maribor, Vitanje (in collaboration with AA Visiting School), and Zagreb.

The BIO 50 exhibition will be open from 18 September to 7 December 2014 at the Museum of Architecture and Design, the Jakopič Gallery, and the Museum of Modern Art, and will showcase the outcomes of each team’s work. Information on the progress and outcomes of each team’s projects will be published in an accompanying catalogue. The international jury consisting of industrial designer Konstantin Grcic, design commentator Alice Rawsthorn, and designer and professor Saša J. Mächtig will assess the teams’ work and grant an Award for Best Collaboration.

EXHIBITION OF THE BIENNIAL'S 50-YEAR HISTORY

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the 24th Biennial of Design (BIO) builds on the event’s tradition and history, advancing into uncharted experimental, collaborative territory. The main show of BIO 50 will be accompanied by an exhibition of the Biennial’s 50-year history, which will highlight the significant changes and shifts in society, everyday life, and, consequently, design. As Cvetka Požar, one of the co-curators of the Biennial of Design, pointed out: “Besides the Milan Triennial, in the 60s BIO was one of the most important design events in Europe and the first of its kind in the world. Designers from Western as well as Eastern European countries attended it en masse ... BIO remains a very important event in the region. Today, more than ever before, it not only helps maintain contact with the international community, but it also acts as a catalyst for the transfer of innovations, incentives, and, in particular, alternatives to the existing system into our environment.”

In addition to addressing visions of the future and thinking about the past, a lively program of events, exhibits, and lectures entitled BIO NOW is set to animate the city of Ljubljana for the duration of the Biennial of Design. For news and details on the work process and project teams, as well as on events to be held during the week of the opening, follow us at www.bio.si.

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Something special Under the earth and in the air

Slovenians are well known for their fondness of good cuisine. Now the challenge is to tempt diners into the most unusual of settings. Dinner in a coal mine or in gondola, anyone?

Photo: Gostinstvo Jezeršek archives



As much as Slovenians enjoy adrenalin sports, they are ever more enthusiastic about adrenalin-based gourmet experiences. Would you fancy having lunch in a mine shaft and then a dinner in a gondola lift?

A DINNER WITH THE MINERS

Ana Roš, co-owner of Restaurant Hiša Franko, is a chef and one of the world's top-profiled cooks. She recently put forward a special challenge for all lovers of culinary delicacies. Her daring invitation was: "How about a dinner in a mine shaft? Would you go for it?" She thus organised a dinner at the Mining Museum in Velenje, the only underground mining museum in this part of Europe, where visitors can descend 160 metres below the earth into mine shafts. Here is how she commented on the experience: "Our desire was to take our guests on a culinary

journey through traditional Slovenian dishes. Both Ana's kitchen and the Mining Museum remind us how important it is to be aware of one's roots and to preserve one's heritage." For this purpose, Ana designed a special and highly inventive menu, which gracefully integrated traditional local dishes with a whiff of avant-garde cooking. In preparing the dishes, she followed the philosophy of miners' wives: make it simple, tasty, and homely. Upon arrival, guests were treated to a slice of bread and a pinch of salt – once a frequent miners' meal and also a sign of welcome. As a starter, guests were served steak tartare with sour cream mousse, anchovies, and oysters, followed by a more classical combination of crusted asparagus with sweet prosciutto, black truffle, and egg. The main meal included lamb in combination with starflower and celery.

Guests found the event delightful and Hiša Franko certainly intends to organise it again in future. There are many challenges, as they say at Hiša Franko. Currently, the restaurant is working on a project entitled Street Food, which in July and August is already taking place in Bled as well as in Portorož and Koper.

FEELING DIZZY

Two top-notch restaurants of the Upper Carniolan region joined forces and launched a project which serves as an excellent promotion for the region: dinner in a gondola lift.

It is a unique culinary experience high above the ground. The experience can best be enjoyed as a romantic dinner for a couple, but is intended for a maximum of four people. While riding in a Krvavec gondola and savour-

As much as Slovenians enjoy adrenalin sports, they are ever more enthusiastic about adrenalin-based gourmet experiences.



Photo: Restaurant Hiša Franko archives

Dinner at the Mining Museum in Velenje.



Photo: Restaurant Hiša Franko archives

In preparing the dishes, she followed the philosophy of miners' wives: make it simple, tasty, and homely.

ing the treats of restaurants Dvor Jezeršek from Cerklje na Gorenjskem, and Gostilna Krištof from Predoslje, guests can enjoy panoramic views of Kranj and the Ljubljana basin, embraced by the Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

Three meals are offered alternately between two routes up-

wards and back. On the first route, guests are served sparkling wine and an appetiser. The second route comprises the main meal, while the third route includes a stopover on the panoramic terrace of the upper gondola station and something sweet for dessert. Those who favour organic food can choose the

so-called "eco-dessert" where the ingredients are 100% biodegradable and natural, including a tree twig instead of the ice-cream spoon, the ice-cream cup, and a tree leaf as the guest's "napkin". The ingredients are largely of local origin and are the primarily characteristic of Upper Carniolan cuisine.



While riding in a Krvavec gondola and savouring the treats of restaurants Dvor Jezeršek from Cerklje na Gorenjskem, and Gos-tilna Krištof from Predoslje, guests can enjoy panoramic views of Kranj and the Ljubljana basin, embraced by the Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

Welcome to Seventh Heaven! Cheers!

Bianca Žvorc Morris

Business success based on values: health, quality, sustainability, ecology and ethics

Bianca Žvorc Morris was born in Murska Sobota and can pride herself on a long and varied career in graphic design, multimedia creation, designing, photography and education. Her life, both private and in business, is focused on her contribution to improving our planet and helping people to enjoy healthy and ethical products.



Photo: Simon Kaleznik

She is one of those who stand out from the negative and sensational entrepreneurial stories. She has worked for the largest corporations in the world and has met the biggest stars such as Uma Thurman, Jared Leto and Steve Jobs. Such stories as hers are rare indeed, since the business world is dominated by values such as ingenuity, though often at the expense of fellow human beings. With Bianca this is turned the other way round.

What is currently taking up most of your time?

We are redesigning websites and consolidating the BeeZee EcoLand brand, which brings together all our products, i.e. all our established brands. The new collection features clothing for babies, women, maternity wear, men, pets, jewelry and artistic prints with messages of love for nature, animals and home. BeeZee EcoLand project is my essence - ideal, compassionate to all beings and our planet, the world. My most ardent wish is for the textile industry to return to Europe and, in general, for the health and ethical values underpinning the products to be placed above quantity and promotion of consumerism.

Why is the company in Slovenia, and you live in Germany?

I wanted to help local people with this project. I was tempted to register my company in London or Düsseldorf. I still don't understand why there are so many bureaucratic obstacles in Slovenia. In the US, where I lived for 13 years, everything is much simpler. They really want people to become self-employed. However, I still believe in Slovenia and Slovenian people. The world is changing and I want Slovenia to jump soon onto this train of "green" changes, or, as I always like to say, join the process of the green revolution. I hope that Slovenia will in some time truly be a country of compassion, ethics and great concern for nature. Slovenians can compete only with quality, luxury products, and unique products, know-how, its beautiful natural environment, organic farming and eco-tourism.

Do you want your business to become a corporation one day or are you more inclined to boutique business?

I have never thought about this project as of a corporation, but as of a group of people with similar goals and infinite love for what they do in life. My goal is not to expand on a large scale, my goal is above all to help as many women as possible from Prekmurje who lost their jobs in the Mura company. The increasing unemployment in Slovenia makes me very sad. We maintain a personal relationship with our customers. I like to be involved in all levels of the



Photo: Jure Zauñker

company's operations and enjoy being in very close contact with and available to all who are part of this project.

In your experience, how much of this kind of business is carried out abroad and how do you assess the situation in this field in Slovenia?

In general, there are few such companies throughout the world. However, more and more companies that at least partly include the green and ethical dimension in their business model are emerging. From the financial perspective, it is not easy what I do. To be good, to raise awareness among people and to speak the truth is much more difficult than to lie and sell toxic pig in a poke, I would say (laughs). Greedy corporations in cooperation with manipulative media have left their mark in the last 50 years.

Two years ago when you won the SEA prize, you said that you were going to focus on the global market. Have you succeeded?

Of course, as we have clients from

Melbourne to Dubai to London, Seattle, New York, Paris and even Wellington in New Zealand. However, I have to emphasize that German and Austrian customers predominate. But this year, to my delight, we have also recorded an increase in Slovenian customers. Up to the current month in 2014, foreign buyers accounted for 45% of customers, and last year this figure was even higher. Quite a few people visit our beautiful studio / showroom in Düsseldorf, and my Mom is very active in the showroom in Slovenia (Murska Sobota). There would be nothing without my Mom. I had quite a few very large demands for supply from the US distributors, but we are too small to be able to sew 3,000 pieces of some product in a week. I am conservative and I prefer us to remain a healthy small business than to engage in some maneuvers that could ruin us financially in the long term.

It is often said that the success of a company largely depends on the manner in which the business is

The BeeZee EcoLand and BeeZee EcoKid brands offer products to informed, educated and compassionate customers.

BeeZee EcoLand project is my essence - ideal, compassionate to all beings and our planet, the world.



The BeeZee EcoLand and BeeZee EcoKid brands offer products to informed, educated and compassionate customers.

Our customers also help the Slovenian economy with their purchase. The money goes to the people who make these products and not to intermediaries. You really get something that is full of positive energy and you get it for yourself, your family and the whole world!

managed, that is, on the personal maturity of its leader, the director. What kind of a business leader are you?

I am an emotional person and I can't hide anything. Anybody can tell anytime what's on my mind (smile). I treat colleagues as my equals and friends until something goes wrong. Then I turn into a problem solution seeker and include them in the process. I believe in financial rewards and I also give loud praise to all. Above all, I value my colleagues as people. When we achieve major success I also invite them to dinner to reward them symbolically. I believe that by discussing the problems we are facing we grow as persons. Sometimes, however, I also become a kind of "drama queen", particularly when I cannot understand why everyone is not as passionate about the project as me (smile).

If you were asked by a young person how to become a successful entrepreneur - what would you tell him or her?

Dream big, work hard and do not let others stop you.

Eco-products are expensive. Why would someone who has an average income buy your product and



what would you recommend to them as their first purchase?

For me, the values that I look for in the product that I buy are its healthiness, quality, durability, ecological factor and ethical dimension. Our products last longer, although their maintenance may be a bit more demanding (natural materials breathe, natural colours are washed out more quickly, textiles without toxic additives are less wrinkle resistant...), and are healthy. Our customers also help the Slovenian economy with their purchase. The money goes to the people who make these products and not to intermediaries. You really get something that is full of positive energy and you get it for yourself, your family and the whole world! We are cheaper in the long term.

Who are your buyers?

The best-informed are educated women who take care to eat healthy, who do not want to be part of the cruel and profit-driven global corporations that exploit child labour or engage in mass murder of animals, women who use natural compassionate cosmetics, who travel... But I am always surprised by men who buy our products in large quantities,

while women love the uniqueness of our products. They include girls aged 14 and span all ages up to our eldest customer, a 78 year old "girl".

You would not change your profession and the way you live your business life?

Never. My profession and what I do is me in person, I see almost no segmentation here any more: myself in private life and myself in business life are merged. I appreciate all the bad, the pain, problems and all the mistakes I've made in my life, because otherwise I could never be able to become what I am today.

You are a Slovenian from Prekmurje. What do you like most in Slovenia?

I like staying in the house where I grew up until I was 18, with my Mom and Dad. I am very proud of where I come from. I had enough entertainment and nightlife in my twenty years spent in Manhattan, so I stay at home and mostly focus on the family and, of course, the various projects which I am working on under BeeZee EcoLand and umbrella project.

Photographer Franc Goltez
The underwater world of Lake Bled

Franc Goltez is a renowned Slovenian photographer, a member of the Bled Society for Underwater Activities and of the Slovenian Divers' Association. In the course of his career as an artist, he has received numerous Slovenian and international awards. In 2006, he was awarded a bronze plaque by the Slovenian Divers' Association for his many years of active involvement in various bodies of the Association, particularly for his chairmanship of the Commission for underwater photography and for his achievements in sport and art.

The photograph presented in this magazine is from his exhibition of the underwater world of Lake Bled. This current exhibition is the result of forty years of his work in photography. It spotlights the underwater world through minute details. First, he portrays the bottom of Lake Bled covered by a myriad of microorganisms, then the world of fauna and flora unfolds before us, continuing on to a panoptic perspective of the underwater world, with its reflections of Lake Bled captured in daylight and at night. The exhibition concludes with a compelling environmental warning for the present day and even more so for the future. The photographs also tell their own instructive story, among other things. They draw our attention to issues such as the disharmony that exists among people and the problem of water pollution.

The exhibition begins by showing microorganisms in a droplet of water and by featuring algae and the process of photosynthesis. In the past, the shores of Lake Bled abounded in reeds, but nowadays all that is left as a reminder are their withered stalks below the water's surface. Here and there, one may find a living swan mussel which leaves its characteristic trail in the soft sediment. Small algae and a variety of other animals constitute a true miniature underwater forest. The crayfish are a surprising inhabitant as they try to avoid bathers. The most frequent fish in Lake Bled is the common rudd, but it is not indigenous. Tench and carp may also be found. The largest fish in Lake Bled is the catfish.

The larvae of the Chaoborus midge insect live in the water just above the sediment. In June and July, the midges fly about in large numbers. They shed their skin on the water surface and in summer, the lake is completely covered with their skins. Only anaerobic bacteria live at the very bottom of the lake, as they require an oxygen-free environment for survival.

As the photographs show, living conditions in the lake change through the seasons. In summer, the surface water warms rapidly. Three layers of water form in the lake which, due to differing densities, do not blend together. The largest numbers of living algae are to be found in the epilimnion and metalimnion. As they release oxygen through photosynthesis, the water becomes saturated with oxygen. Only when the differing temperatures of the layers of water equalize, can the wind stir up the lake. As the water masses are mixed, the lake is thoroughly ventilated from the surface down to the lake bed. Even in winter, when an icy lid covers the lake, the oxygen supply below it is limited. Only in the autumn, as the water cools down, and in the spring, as the ice cover melts, do the water masses mix. At this time, all nutrients are evenly distributed throughout the lake. These are the two periods of greatest abundance in all depths of the lake and it is precisely for this reason the lake blooms prolifically in autumn and spring.

Phosphorus is the biogenic element which regulates the growth of algae in the lake. Lake Bled has a surface of 1.48 km² and is classified as a minor sub-alpine lake with low inflow levels. The shores of the lake descend steeply to the lake bed and the average depth of the lake is 17.9 metres. The lake has no major natural feeder rivers and is fed only by a few minor spring sources.

Among the photographs at the exhibition, one is unique, featuring lily pads with Bled Castle as seen from below the water and is, according to the author himself, the first photograph to show Bled Castle from an underwater perspective.

