

Sinfo 07

ISSN 1854-0805

July 2013

The latest from Slovenia



ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA: **Welcome, Croatia!** IN FOCUS: **The Story of Salt is a Story of Hardworking People** HERITAGE: **“We carry Slovenian Identity in our Blood and Soul”**

Bled Strategic Forum



A Changing Europe in a Changing World



1 - 3 September 2013
www.bledstrategicforum.org

ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA 8

New Member of the EU

Welcome, Croatia!

Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA



IN FOCUS 14

A Close Look at the Slovenia's Salt - pans

The Story of Salt is a Story of Hardworking People

Photo: Trnkoczy / SPIRIT



HERITAGE 31

Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad

'Welcome Home' Gathering

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

**SINFO – SLOVENIAN INFORMATION**

Executive Editor and Editor – in – Chief:

Tanja Glogovčan, tanja.glogovcan@gov.si

Editorial Board: Vesna Žarkovič, Irena Kogoj, Tomaž Lisjak, Valerija Obu,

Polona Prešeren, Msc

Layout design: Janez Vidrih / Nuit d.o.o.

Photo Editor: Ajda Schmidt / Nuit d.o.o.

Production: Ajda Schmidt / Nuit d.o.o.

Translation: Prevajalska agencija PSD

Printed by: Littera picta d.o.o., Slovenia, Number of copies: 4500

Cover: The opening of the event "Welcome home". In the photo: girl in Slovenian national costume with Lipko, EuroBasket 2013 Mascot / author: Nebojša Tejić / STA

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

Photo: Bruno Toič

Tanja Glogovčan, editor

In Expectation of Holidays and Great Adventures

The most important political event in our region this month was undoubtedly the accession of our neighbour Croatia to the European Union. The border between Slovenia and Croatia has been opened and the barriers removed. Judging by all the good wishes expressed during this historic event, cooperation will continue to deepen.

We are almost on holiday with this issue – particularly with regard to the sea and the sun. We have prepared a fascinating history – even more than that – the story of the Slovenian salt-pans. We thought it would be interesting to present a piece of history which is slowly acquiring a commercial image, but still in the spirit of nature and the preservation of this extraordinary natural heritage.

In this issue, you can find many interesting interviews: with an expert on Slovenian salt-pans, Flavio Bonin, a culinary virtuoso, Darko Maršič, director of the RTA agency, Katarina Karlovšek, who serves as a link between the film industry of Bollywood and Slovenian sights, and the Slovenian designer, Simona Lampe, who is using recycling in fashion.

The 'I Feel Slovenia' is a brand to which Sinfo has been dedicating more and more attention. This time, we focus on its significance for tourism. The awareness of 'feeling' Slovenia and its qualities will be further nurtured together with you, our readers. Anyone who comes into contact with Slovenia tends to admire it, even if they are of royal blood. Something to leave a lasting impression on visitors can always be found here.

We are also dedicating special attention to the 'Welcome Home' gathering organised by the Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad at the beginning of July. It was dedicated to young people, so it was a very lively and colourful event. Young people from far and wide whose hearts also beat to the rhythm of Slovenia presented their activities. It is true: you are welcome at home!

It is important to be open, fun and educative. The National Assembly is aware of this and thus opens its doors and gives access to the centre of democracy to all, Slovenians and foreigners.

We are all eagerly awaiting the biggest event in September – EuroBasket. In this issue, we present Ljubljana, our last portrait of the towns hosting the championship. But that does not mean that we are ending the story.

We wish you a pleasant and relaxing holiday and suggest you read Sinfo on vacation. Although Festival Lent has already ended, Ljubljana Festival and many other events are still going on, so we have also included information about some of these. The rest is up to you. Enjoy!



One Hundred Days of the Government of Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek

At the end of June, one hundred days had passed since Alenka Bratušek took the helm of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. One hundred days is considered a milestone for assessing the work of the Government, a time during which ministers assume their responsibilities and are able to prepare all that is needed to implement their policies. After the lapse of one hundred days, the Government is subjected to unyielding critical judgment by the general public and the media. These are unwritten democratic standards during normal times, but the situation in Slovenia at present is anything but normal. On the contrary, the Government led by Alenka Bratušek found itself in a grave situation immediately after taking the oath of office at the National Assembly: the budget outlook was poor, and global financial markets and the public were already expecting Slovenia to follow the example of Cyprus and request assistance from the so-called Troika. Under such circumstances, the Government first tackled the resolution of the budget situation, and managed to sell government bonds worth 3.5 billion dollars thanks to a successful tour of the United States by the Minister of Finance, Uroš Čufer. At this time, we also witnessed an unusual move by Moody's rating agency, which lowered Slovenia's rating drastically in the middle of the transactions. Nevertheless, the Government successfully filled the financial hole and simultaneously began intensive preparations for the national reform and stability programmes, the two documents fundamental to overcoming the economic and financial crisis. Both programme documents, which plan for the consolidation of public finance, recovery of the banking system, privatisation of state-owned companies and public sector restructuring, were assessed by the European Commission as the first steps in the right direction, which is why the Commission extended Slovenia's deadline for correcting fiscal imbalances. Another good news was the agreement between the Government and the public sector trade unions on lowering pay, while significant changes also began in the legislative area. The political parties were able to agree on amendments to the Constitution, which is otherwise very difficult to achieve in Slovenia. The National Assembly thus included the so-called Golden (fiscal) Rule in the Constitution with a majority of votes; the Rule sets limits on borrowing and requires a balanced budget. The

rules on calling referendums were also amended because referendums have frequently been used as a tool of political obstruction in the past. All these changes attest to the fact that the political atmosphere in the country has changed and that the majority of people recognise that there simply cannot be any common solutions for exiting the extremely challenging economic and financial situation without cooperation and dialogue. This is precisely why Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek said that the first one hundred days of her administration had been characterised by dialogue and cooperation and that these would be the foundations of her future work. Relieving the political situation and alleviating ideological differences are undoubtedly the two most important anti-crisis measures.

The plan for the Government's work is clearly defined, the most important element being to restart efforts to establish a so-called 'bad bank', to which the receivables of Slovenian banks would be transferred, which would in turn allow the latter to clear their balance sheets. Banks will again be able to provide credit to finance the economy and thus help set the economy in motion. The final preparations for establishing the bad bank are currently being implemented and include, among other measures, a thorough review of bank balance sheets, in which international experts are also taking part. One of the goals of the Government's work that the Prime Minister emphasised specifically was a policy for young people and their employment, as youth unemployment is rising rapidly. The regulation of conditions in the healthcare sector is also very important, because the lack of financing will lead to the introduction of certain organisational and systemic changes. The Slovenian healthcare system is characterised by high quality and still provides care to all users, which is why preserving the availability of services for as many citizens as possible is the fundamental goal of the reforms planned by the Government.

In conclusion, we should mention an event that was warmly received by the Slovenian public: the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU. The Prime Minister expressed a sincere welcome on behalf of all the citizens of Slovenia to our neighbours, with whom we share longstanding historical ties, and more importantly, bold plans for future cooperation.

The Golden Order for Services

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, presented the Golden Order for Services to the best Slovenian skier Tina Maze at the presidential palace in Ljubljana.

On this occasion, the expert of the snowy slopes said that she was happy to receive the recognition, which was also a responsibility for the future.

She stressed that the state had always supported her also in the most difficult of times when choosing her national team. "This is a nice feeling, as the award is a great acknowledgement of everything we've done and everything I've done. And it's also a responsibility for the future to justify receiving a national award."



Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

Tina Maze was also happy to hear the citation, which stated that her successes were inspirational. "Perhaps I didn't notice that during the season. But afterwards, I met people who told me how they experienced my successes."



Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA

The Prime Ministers of the neighbouring countries met in Croatia for the first time. Prime Minister Milanović was the first guest of his Slovenian counterpart after her appointment as the Slovenian Prime Minister in March.

Meeting of the Slovenian and Croatian Prime Ministers in Opatija

The Slovenian and Croatian Prime Ministers, Alenka Bratušek and Zoran Milanović, met in Opatija at the end of June. Their discussion focused on Croatia's accession to the European Union. Croatia became a EU Member on 1 July.

Prime Minister Bratušek stressed that cooperation and dialogue are the right way and the only way forward. She expressed her certainty that many opportunities for agreement on political and economic cooperation would arise in the new extended European family. Prime Minister Milanović announced that working meetings or consultations taking place alternately in Slovenia and Croatia would become more frequent in the future. Milanović also said that it was necessary to cooperate on joint goals and interests, and emphasised economic cooperation several times. Bratušek again congratulated Croatia on its accession to the EU and welcomed the country, which became the 28th member on 1 July. The Slovenian Prime Minister also expressed the willingness of Slovenia to continue to aid Croatia with advice if required.

The Proposed Act on Corporate Deleveraging at the End of the Summer

In the National Reform Programme forwarded to Brussels in the spring, the Slovenian Government committed to taking a systematic approach to corporate deleveraging.

The harmonisation underway at the Ministry of Justice is in an intensive final phase; a draft act is supposed to be prepared for Government discussion by autumn. The act will regulate those companies which have work but are unable to take out new loans because they are already seriously indebted. The main objective is to maintain activities in companies and rehabilitate them quickly in agreement with creditors.



Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

The excessive indebtedness of companies, including those still active, is a key problem in the Slovenian economy. In the photo: Justice Minister Senko Pličanič.

Agreement on Contents of the Letter for BIS

The Slovenian and Croatian foreign ministers agreed on the contents of a letter for the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) asking it to mediate succession talks on state guarantees for foreign currency deposits among states which are successors to the former Yugoslavia.

The ministers stressed that now that Croatia as an EU member is subject to free flow of goods and services, there are no obstacles for the NLB bank, a successor of LB, to enter the Croatian market. "In accordance with EU membership, any bank seated in the EU is free to open its branch in Croatia as of 1 July," Minister Pusić said. According to her, the memorandum has opened the possibility to stay the proceedings if both parties in the procedure demand it and in this case there is a chance for the transferred deposits to be solved under the auspices of the BIS.

Minister Erjavec added that Slovenia understood that the memorandum stipulated a suspension of lawsuits against LB and NLB in Croatian courts until a final solution is found. He is convinced that the issue would be resolved soon under the guidance of the BIS.



Photo: Tamino Petelinssek / STA

Slovenian and Croatian FMs Karl Erjavec and Vesna Pusić met to debate further steps in solving the issue of the defunct Slovenian LB bank's deposits in Croatia. Persons: Zdravko Rogič, Vesna Pusić, Karl Erjavec and Dr France Arhar.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA

At the opening ceremony, the National Institute of Chemistry also presented the Pregel Award for outstanding achievements to Gregor Anderluh, Head of the Laboratory for Molecular Biology and Nanobiotechnology at the National Institute of Chemistry. Anderluh is one of the most innovative scientists in biochemistry and molecular biology in the world.

Pregel Research Centre is one of the Most Modern of its Kind

The Pregel Research Centre, one of the most modern research centres in Europe, has opened in Ljubljana. The investment amounted to fifteen million euros.

Dr Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner for the Environment, attended the opening and stressed that "the centre is an illustration of how to seek a way out of crisis through excellence". On that note, he highlighted the importance of measures to improve the competitiveness of Slovenian economy, which include a more significant role for science. The Centre features high-tech equipment worth seven million euros. It also includes the latest transmission electron microscope for chemical analysis. Some eighty researchers will be working at the centre.

Award for the Slovenian Ambassador to Hungary

Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi has awarded the Slovenian Ambassador to Hungary, Ms Darja Bavdaž Kuret, with the Silver Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

President of Hungary János Áder has honoured Ambassador Darja Bavdaž Kuret in recognition of her dedication and perseverance in deepening and strengthening the relations between Slovenia and Hungary. During her term as Ambassador to Hungary, a great number of high-level meetings took place. Ambassador also made an important contribution in promoting economic and trade ties between the two countries. In the field of science and innovation, Ambassador of Slovenia gave the impetus to the long-planned Slovenian-Hungarian / Hungarian-Slovenian scientific dictionary.



Photo: Tima Kosec / STA

Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia was active in promoting the rights of the Slovenian minority in Hungary and encouraging crossborder cooperation with the Hungarian minority in Slovenia.

Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA



President Borut Pahor was joined by almost 20 foreign diplomats to paint a local kindergarten playground as part of a charity project.

President Pahor and Ambassadors with Paints and Brushes

Slovenian president Borut Pahor and a group of volunteers featuring 19 foreign diplomats accredited to Slovenia visited a small town in the north of the country to give a local kindergarten playground a face-lift.

Equipped with paints and brushes, the caravan of volunteers stopped at Ljubno ob Savinji, where they painted the kindergarten playground and the surroundings of the local primary school. President Pahor said he was happy that so many ambassadors responded to the initiative for this charity undertaking. "The fact that ambassadors from various countries, the US, Europe, Venezuela, China, India, took part, shows that they are having a good time in Slovenia, that they love Slovenia and our people and are therefore willing to help in such a way, which means a lot to me," he told.

Preserving Taxpayer Money at Minimum Cost

In June, the Bank Assets Management Company (BAMC) first presented to the public its activities, which have been in progress since mid April. Members of the Management Board Andrej Šircelj, Lars Nyberg and Torbjörn Månsson emphasised that the BAMC's priority tasks included the assumption and active management of non-performing assets of banks and ensuring maximum yield on non-performing loans at minimum cost.

The establishment of the BAMC is one of the most important measures of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia aimed at enhancing the financial capacities and sustainability of system-relevant banks. The BAMC, together with NLB and the Government, has made all the necessary preparations for the assumption of the first debts. The European Commission supports the measures of the Slovenian Government but first wants to become fully acquainted with bank receivables and then take decisions to continue the transfer process. Provided that international professional standards are met, the BAMC will proceed to pilot transfers of receivables in the first stage.



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA

The majority of transfers from other banks are scheduled to be made in the autumn.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA



Ivo Vajgl stressed that respect for international law and high moral standards were crucial in international politics and that "foreign policy should not be influenced by international lobbies and individual countries' interests".

MEP Ivo Vajgl Receives Award for International Activities

Slovenian MEP Ivo Vajgl won the Giovanni Losardo Award for promoting peace and dialogue in solving international conflicts, particularly in the Western Sahara and in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While working internationally, Vajgl always agreed to "listen to both sides of the conflict", the commission which selected the winners of the award said in justifying its choice. Vajgl has always criticized wrongful actions, including when Slovenia was accused of having removed from the registry of permanent residents thousands of Yugoslav people, depriving them of social and political rights, the commission also said.

Welcome, Croatia!

On 1 July, Croatia joined the European Union, becoming the 28th full member. According to the statement of the Slovenian Prime Minister, Alenka Bratušek, Croatia's membership "opens new perspectives for cooperation and a new quality in the relations between the two countries."



Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA

On 1 July, Croatia joined the European Union, becoming the 28th full member.

On Sunday, 30 June, Zagreb and Croatia were preparing for the main event, which had been expected for over a decade. In addition to Slovenian President Borut Pahor, the main celebration was attended by 170 esteemed guests, including Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament, fourteen heads of state and thirteen prime ministers. Some 20,000 people gathered at the event,

full of delight, pleasure and expectations about the EU.

About a week before the celebration, the Slovenian and Croatian Prime Ministers, Alenka Bratušek and Zoran Milanović, held a working meeting in Opatija. The central theme of the meeting was strengthening cooperation between the countries in the light of Croatia's full membership of the EU, which is an opportunity for both countries to further enhance political and economic cooperation and dialogue.

After the discussions, the Prime Ministers said that the EU presents an opportunity to continue political and economic cooperation and dialogue between the countries. Bratušek expressed Slovenia's willingness to continue to assist Croatia if necessary. They both said that the meeting in Opatija was only one in a series of regular working sessions, because according to the Croatian Prime Minister, Zoran Milanović, "it is necessary to cooperate on joint goals and interests, especially in the field of economic cooperation".

At midnight, the moment when Croatia became the 28th EU member state, the EU anthem 'Ode to Joy' was played, followed by speeches from Croatian President Ivo Josipović and Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA

Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA



Slovenian president Borut Pahor was among 28 heads of state and government in Zagreb as the clock struck midnight, Sunday night, Monday morning, and Croatia became the EU's 28th member.

In the photograph: Slovenian president Borut Pahor, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and Croatian president Ivo Josipović.

Following Croatia's accession to the European Union, Prime Minister Bratušek in her statement said that the Croatian membership in the EU is in every respect in the interests of Slovenia. "Croatia was our only neighbour which was not a member of the EU and is one of our most important economic partners and the first and most important target for Slovenian investors. It will thus be possible to further enhance our economic cooperation. We are equally looking forward to the beneficial effects of Slovenian and Croatian joint membership of the EU, which will be reflected in contacts between people, and in education, culture and science," said Prime Minister Bratušek.

With the enlargement of the EU to Croatia, the area of stability is also expanding to the territory southeast of Slovenia and to all neighbouring countries, and the uniform rules and regulations of the common market are being established. As she further stressed, it is in our mutual interest that the countries in this region enter negotiation processes as soon as possible so that the EU border in the Balkans becomes unnecessary. "With Croatia's accession, Slovenia will gain a strong ally in confirming the European perspective of the countries of the Western Balkans," she added.

Prime Minister Bratušek is certain that Slovenia and Croatia will form a close partnership

and alliance in numerous fields of joint interest in the EU, "We will be able to simultaneously form such partnership relations also with other EU Member States, especially with those in our neighbourhood".

At the end of her statement, Prime Minister added that Croatia's accession to the EU is the result of a strict ten-year process in which Croatia confirmed its commitment to the principles of the EU and its readiness to meet the required criteria. "Membership of the EU offers many concrete possibilities for both Croatia and the EU. Let us apply them in such a way that they are beneficial to Croatia, the region and the whole of the EU," the Prime Minister concluded.

Prime Minister Bratušek is certain that Slovenia and Croatia will form a close partnership and alliance in numerous fields of joint interest in the EU, "We will be able to simultaneously form such partnership relations also with other EU Member States, especially with those in our neighbourhood".

Photo: Rasto Božič / STA



Slovenia's and Croatia's interior ministers Gregor Virant (right) and Ranko Ostojić (left) presented a new border crossing regime, as Croatia joins the EU.

The Earl and Countess of Wessex visit Slovenia

The Earl and Countess of Wessex, Britain's Prince Edward, the youngest son of Queen Elizabeth II, and his wife Sophie, visited Slovenia for the first time at the end of June. During their three-day visit, they met the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek, and attended several events to mark Great British Day organised by the British Embassy in Ljubljana.



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA

Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek acquainted Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex with her Government's efforts to increase the employment of young people.

On the first day of their visit, the royal couple were welcomed by Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek. The main topic of their discussion was the problem of youth unemployment and the greater inclusion of young people in society.

On the first day of their visit, the royal couple were welcomed by Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek. The main topic of their discussion was the problem of youth unemployment and the greater inclusion of young people in society. The Prime Minister presented Slovenian efforts in this field. The Earl and Countess also met the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and Zoran Jankovič, Mayor of Ljubljana. Prince Edward became the third member of the British Royal Family to sign the Golden Book of the City of Ljubljana.

The Earl and Countess attended the conclusion of a two-day workshop at which some fifteen participants and their mentor, Amanda Johnson from the London College of Fashion,

were seeking ways to incorporate sustainability in the design process and how to utilise and upgrade to the best degree possible sustainable and traditional Slovenian and British materials. The Countess of Wessex recently became honorary patron of the College, and as she stated at the workshop, it was one of the first events in her relatively new role.

On the second day of their visit, the royal couple visited Bled, where they met the participants of the Rolls-Royce Alpine Trail centenary celebration rally, who stopped in Bled on their tour through Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. At the meeting, they also celebrated the recent twinning of two world rowing centres, Bled and the English town of Henley-on-Thames.

In the light of this event, Andrew Page, British Ambassador to Slovenia, noted that the visit was also very important for Bled tourism.

Accompanied by the Mayor of Bled, Janez Fajfar, the Earl and Countess visited Bled Castle, from where they admired the view of the lake and the surrounding mountains, and were introduced to the old method of printing on a reconstruction of Gutenberg's wooden printing press in the castle's print shop. They were able to try the press themselves and make their own prints as souvenirs.

The royal couple were guests of honour at a celebration in Vila Podrožnik in the evening, which is held annually by the British

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA



Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex visited Slovenia at the invitation of British Embassy Ljubljana. They took part in various events aimed at promoting British innovation, fashion, heritage, business and the bilateral relationship with Slovenia.

In the photo: Sophie, Countess of Wessex, Prince Edward and British Ambassador to Slovenia Andrew Page.

Embassy to honour the birthday of Prince Edward's mother, Queen Elizabeth II. Some one hundred guests attended the reception and were addressed by Ambassador Page, who will be leaving his post in Slovenia at the end of the year. During his speech, he also spoke in excellent Slovenian and shared some of his best memories of his stay here.

On the last day of the visit, Prince Edward was honorary speaker at a business meeting as part of a separate programme. In his address, he stressed that young people must be given the opportunity to realise their dreams and an opportunity to

pursue their ambitions, because in this way they will contribute most to the community. Accompanied by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, the Earl then attended a presentation of MEPI Awards (International Awards for Young People) at Brdo pri Kranju. In the meantime, the Countess visited the Soča University Rehabilitation Institute, where she attended a wheelchair basketball game.

Before ending their visit, the British royal couple also stopped at the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of Physically Handicapped Children and Adolescents - CIRIUS Kamnik,

where they attended a presentation of therapeutic horse-riding, and in the company of the children from the centre a demonstration by the classical riding school organised in cooperation with Lipica Stud Farm. The Lipizzaner stallion, 204 Maestoso Canissa XX, and his rider Marko Blokar performed the most demanding dressage movements. The stallion is half-brother to 085 Favory Canissa XXII, the Lipizzaner stallion presented to Queen Elizabeth II on her visit to Slovenia in 2008. On this occasion, the Countess of Wessex was presented with an artistic photograph, the work of Alenka Slavinec, of a Lipizzaner's silky mane, entitled 'Loyalty'.

The royal couple were guests of honour at a celebration in Vila Podrožnik in the evening, which is held annually by the British Embassy to honour the birthday of Prince Edward's mother, Queen Elizabeth II. Some one hundred guests attended the reception and were addressed by Ambassador Page, who will be leaving his post in Slovenia at the end of the year. During his speech, he also spoke in excellent Slovenian and shared some of his best memories of his stay here.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA



A reconstruction of Gutenberg's wooden printing press in the castle's print shop.

Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino visit Slovenia

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, Japanese Prince and Princess Akishino visited Slovenia at the end of June. On this occasion, they also met Janko Veber, the President of the National Assembly, and Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek.



Photo: Daniel Novakovič / STA

Japanese guests during their walk through Ljubljana in the company of the Slovenian presidential couple.

Prince and Princess Akishino visited Slovenia as part of their European tour, during which they first visited Croatia and Slovakia. Their visit was also a return visit following the visit of President Pahor and his business delegation to Japan this March.

Their host, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and his partner, Tanja Pečar, welcomed the couple at Strmol Castle. The guests were first introduced to the history of the Castle and also admired the beauty of the surrounding countryside. The Japanese Prince and Princess took a walk with President Pahor and his partner through the old town centre of Ljubljana to Ljubljana Cathedral, where they were greeted by Anton Stres, the Metropolitan

Archbishop of Ljubljana. They then went up to Ljubljana Castle by funicular, from where they enjoyed the lovely view of Ljubljana. Prince and Princess Akishino accompanied by President Pahor, his partner and Britain's Prince Edward and his wife Sophie attended the opening concert of Ljubljana Festival.

The Japanese couple met Janko Veber, President of the National Assembly. President Veber said that Slovenia was honoured that representatives of the Imperial Family had also visited the country in the past. Prince Akishino agreed that ties with the Imperial Family have been lasting. On this occasion, President Veber congratulated all the diplomats who had established and maintained good relations over the years. During the discussions, the Prince also expressed gratitude

for all the words of support that Japan had received from Slovenia following the devastating earthquake in March 2011.

The Japanese guests were exceptionally impressed by the Slovenian Karst underground. Prince and Princess Akishino also visited Postojna Cave. The Prince, a great lover of fauna, was particularly interested in the presentation of the rich and diverse life in Postojna's underground world. Prior to their visit to Postojna, the distinguished guests visited the University of Ljubljana. Stanislav Pejovnik, Rector of the University of Ljubljana, together with his colleagues introduced the university and its activities. The Japanese guests also met students of Japanese language and culture at the Faculty of Arts and spoke to them in Japanese. They viewed

Both sides stressed that stronger links, especially among young people, are the foundation of good cooperation between the countries.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



Janko Veber, President of the National Assembly, stressed that while Slovenia is small, it is a very diverse country. He said that Slovenia devotes a lot of attention to nature conservation.

paintings by two Japanese artists who live and work in Slovenia, and also visited the Lace School in Idrija and Idrija Municipal Museum at Gewerkenegg Castle. Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek welcomed their Imperial Highnesses at Brdo pri Kranju. During their discussions, the Prime Minister focused on deepening cooperation between the countries, particularly in the scientific, cultural and economic areas.

The Prime Minister particularly expressed her support for establishing a Centre for Japanese studies in Ljubljana, which

would promote the study of Japanese language and culture in Central and Southeast Europe. Both sides stressed that stronger links, especially among young people, are the foundation of good cooperation between the countries.

The Japanese Imperial Couple also went to Bled, where they visited the castle and the island and planted a Japanese bush cherry.

Diplomatic relations between Slovenia and Japan were established in October 1992. The Slo-

venian embassy has been open in Tokyo since 1993, while Japan opened its embassy in Ljubljana in 2006. This was not the first visit of the Imperial Family to Slovenia. Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited in 1976, and according to Prince Akishino they had fond memories of the country. The Prince's younger sister visited Slovenia in 2000 and she also returned home with pleasant impressions, said the Prince.

The Japanese guests were exceptionally impressed by the Slovenian Karst underground. Prince and Princess Akishino also visited Postojna Cave. The Prince, a great lover of fauna, was particularly interested in the presentation of the rich and diverse life in Postojna's underground world.

Photo: Valter Leban



Postojna Cave impressed the Japanese guests with their beauty, and they promised to return with their whole family. Marjan Batagelj, President of the Management Board, and Katja Batagelj Dolenc, Executive Director of Marketing at Postojnska jama company, took the Imperial couple through Postojna Cave and to Vivarium Proteus.

The Story of Salt is a Story of Hardworking People

The salt-pans are a historical monument dedicated to the work of those who made them. It took centuries for them to be created and centuries to develop. Countless generations built, nurtured and extended them with care. Together with the formation of the cultural landscape, a tradition developed.



Photo: Archives of the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum

Transporting salt from salt makers' houses to public warehouses.

Favourable conditions for salt-pans were created many centuries ago at the point where the sea cut deeply into the land to form the bay between Piran and Strunjan. The salt-pans are already mentioned in surviving parts of the town statutes dating to 1274, which include several regulative decrees and people's rights to acquire and trade salt.

WITH A PINCH OF SALT FOR AN INTRODUCTION

The work at the salt-pans became a tradition, something that the Piran community came to depend on. Since the 14th century, when salt makers from the Island of Pag began producing white salt in Piran, the method of production has remained unchanged. The simple Piran salt makers did not have textbooks from which to learn, but only the tradition and experience of their forebears. This is also important, because the method of producing the white salt typical of Slovenian Istria has not survived anywhere else. The petola (a layer

of algae, gypsum and minerals up to one centimetre thick, which prevents mud from mixing with the salt) brought by salt makers from Croatia, settled in the ground well. This authentic Dalmatian tradition has survived only in the Slovenian salt-pans. Mostly Slovenians and Italians worked at the Slovenian salt-pans, with some Croatians. Each nation thus contributed to the salt-making tradition and customs. Modern methods were introduced over the years, but tradition has always prevailed. The system of daily harvesting proved the best. And so, even at modernised salt-pans, the traditional method of harvesting has continued.

PIRAN IS THE PRODUCT OF SALT

Until recently, salt was Piran's most important item of trade. The saying that "Piran is the product of salt" means that the beauty of the town comes from the income it made from the salt trade. The town's development depended to a large extent on the salt-pans in Sečovlje, Lucija and Strunjan.

In the case of Piran, the salt-pans are assuredly an ethnographic monument. But this is not all. When tourism began to develop more intensively in Istria in the second half of the 19th century, the area accelerated its development by offering therapeutic swimming pools with brine in Portorož. These laid the foundations for tourism and attracted foreign guests. It can thus be said that the salt-pans indirectly initiated and enabled the development of modern Portorož as it is known today.

PIRAN SALT IS WHITE

In agreement with Venice, the Piran authorities permitted the partial renovation of the salt-pans in the 14th century. At the time, Piran salt was not pure, and the salt makers had to learn how to produce high-quality salt. They invited several salt makers from the Island of Pag in order to "construct and fortify the cavedini, servidori and corboli (pools for crystallisation and evaporation) according to the Pag method".

When and how the salt-pans were created on the northern shores of the Adriatic Sea is not really known. The first written sources date back to the 13th century, although it is assumed that salt-pans already existed in this region during the Roman Empire.

Photo: Trnkoczy / SPIRIT



Its trademark sweet-mineral taste is due to the unique properties of the Adriatic aquamadre (the dense liquid that results from the natural production of marine salt from sea water), captured in the shining crystals.

Photo: Trnkoczy / SPIRIT



This salt is prized for its abundant of microelements, which are said to form in the petola, a foundation of biosediment, on the bottom of the crystallization pans.

This information is important for the subsequent history of the salt-pans, because petola has been cultivated there ever since, and this is what gives salt its distinctive white colour and good flavour. The salt-pans brought great wealth to the municipality and peasants. After the fall of the Venetian Republic, Austria quickly opened its market to the Piran and Koper salt-pans. Good-quality salt was in great demand and thus the price of salt rose.

SALT CRYSTALS

Each salt basin is divided into several pools where the water evaporates and the salt crystallises. The pools are linked with gates, levees and channels through which water runs from pool to pool, while

rainwater is discharged through a culvert into the sea. Each basin is formed according to the requirements of the soil surface where it is situated, so it is impossible to find two identical basins in the old salt-pans.

Water, sun and wind are needed for the creation of salt. The salt crystallises in so-called cavedinis (crystallisation pools). A brittle crust forms on the surface. To make the salt grow, the salt makers stir the water in places where the crust appears. After the daily harvest is done, the salt is stored in special warehouses. The salt used to be carried in troughs made of poplar and sometimes of lime wood. In the course of the daily harvest, none of the salt makers collects or rakes all the salt from

a cavedin. A layer of small crystals always remains in the bottom. The salt makers say that “yeast must be left for tomorrow”. At the end of the season, the salt was transported from the house storage to company warehouses, where it was iodised, packed and sent to customers.

THE WAY OF LIFE OF SALT-MAKING FAMILIES

All salt makers' families at the salt-pans lived in houses attached to the salt basins where they were working. The living quarters were on the first floor, which was the family's central living area. The authentic salt maker's life centred around the kitchen, the largest and brightest room in the house, where food was prepared and

The salt-pans are a historical monument dedicated to the work of those who made them. It took centuries for them to be created and developed. Countless generations built, nurtured and extended them with care.

Work must be done as quickly as possible or the harvest will be delayed. The wife helps the salt worker.



Photo: Archives of the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum

St. Bartholomew's Day, celebrated on 24 August, was considered the actual salt makers' holiday because it was when the salt-making season ended.

families met to discuss work and life in general.

Of all life's necessities, water was the most important to all these families, and was particularly scarce in Sečovlje. Women usually fetched water, sometimes twice or even three times a day.

A special site of interest was the wood-fired oven for baking bread. It is said that Lera had one oven and Fontanigge three. Many families baked bread at home or at local bakeries. None of the old bread-baking ovens remain at the Sečovlje salt-pans. Bread was baked once a week, when between ten and twenty kilos of dough was kneaded. They had no yeast, so the housewives prepared yeast with dough, oil and salt and left it to grow naturally until the next baking. Kneading bread is strenuous; there is even a saying that "The more you knead it, the better the bread". To identify who owned the bread, some families used brands, while others marked the bread with keys, scissors and the like.

The women always did the laundry at home. It was soaked in cold water in a pail. Soap and the ash of olive, oak and peach tree logs used as lye were used for washing. Olive ash was the preferred choice, because it made the laundry whiter. The process of washing and drying could

take up to three days. They used irons made of cast-iron or brass. Since the work was tiring, the women could be very irritable at those times. "When women are doing the laundry and kneading dough, it's best to stay away from them," goes the saying.

Each salt maker's house had a garden in which they grew all their essential vegetables. Almost everyone grew saffron, lettuce or radicchio, cucumbers and tomatoes. The work in the garden was left to the women. A special section was reserved for chickens, the only domestic animals they could keep at the salt-pans. They also ate plants which grow in and around the salt basins. These were cooked without salt, but with added garlic. They also cooked sea snails and shellfish. Fish was a typical salt makers' food, roasted and baked in olive oil. They also made various fish soups.

At Christmas, they made fritulas (called miške in other parts of Slovenia), prepared with almonds, chocolate, walnuts, lemon zest, apples, pears, raisins, vanilla and other delicious spices or additives. They made pinca (sweetbread with eggs and rum) for Easter and pinje (similar to the dough for pince) braided into plaits with an Easter egg.

CUSTOMS

The salt makers had different customs when burying children and adults, but among them, let us focus only on festive occasions. Many of their houses had an area for boules. Another pastime was fishing, during which they liked to tell legends and fairytales. Children were keen to listen to the old.

Like the Piran townspeople, the salt makers also celebrated St. George's Day, in honour of the town's patron saint. The salt makers frequently carried the cross in the procession. Because St. George's Day was considered the beginning of the salt-making season, the salt makers attended the procession and solemnly celebrated this holiday, in spite of the fact that this was considered more of a town holiday rather than of the salt-pans. At their houses, the salt makers had shrines with candles which were blessed on Candlemas on 2 February, with a mandatory bouquet of rosemary, laurel, daisy, camomile and sea wormwood. The bouquet was used together with the candle to drive away bad weather. St. Bartholomew's Day, celebrated on 24 August, was considered the actual salt makers' holiday. A mass was held on this occasion and a dance floor and green arch were erected. A mast was set up in the middle of the dance floor, which was covered with sails to protect the



floor from rain. The party included wine, beer, liquors and non-alcoholic beverages. Goulash, tripe, cod and roast chicken were served. In addition to dancing, there was bingo, climbing poles greased with resin, and sack, bicycle and donkey races. The jackpot prize at bingo was usually a shoat, a turkey or prosciutto. On this holiday, the men wore their Sunday best and the women were dressed in long wide fashionable skirts and tight blouses buttoned up to the neck. Most of the women wore salt makers' hats. They danced the waltz, mazurka, polka and quadrille once the atmosphere had warmed up. Another thing has to be mentioned about the customs. This tradition was not practised at the salt-pans, but is a salt maker custom and related to the final payment of salt around Christmas. It is the celebration of new year in the salt makers' families. It should be stressed that the purpose of this celebration was particularly to honour the elderly, because the people of Piran had deep respect for their elders. The celebration was held on the first Sunday in the new year. Up to ten families dressed in their best clothes would gather in a house with an accordion, zither or violin. The children went to bed early, and when everyone was present, the dance to honour the elderly commenced.

COSTUME

The Austrian artist August Tischbein, who travelled and painted in Istria in the first half of the 19th century, also encountered a Piran salt worker's wife. The salt work-

er's wife he depicted is dressed in a broad-pleated skirt. Her blouse is tight around the body; the sleeves are broad and tight around the wrist. She is wearing a cardigan without sleeves and broad straps over the shoulders. A scarf covers her shoulders and she has an apron over her skirt. She is wearing a salt worker's hat, reminiscent of a hat typical of China. This salt worker's wife also has jewellery, long elegant earrings. Her shoes are not visible in the painting. However, no record of a salt worker's costume is known to have existed. Over the years, the clothes came to resemble those worn by the salt worker's wife in the painting. It was known that the salt workers' wives went barefoot. The clothes of salt workers never explicitly evolved into a costume. In winter and on holidays, the men dressed in fashionable clothes, and when they worked, they wore airy shirts or undershirts and a pair of durable trousers. The only item that could be considered part of a costume is the hat. The women wore hats when working and on holidays, but on those occasions, they made it look much prettier and elegant. Wheat, barley or rye straw was used to make hats. The men also wore hats at the salt-pans; however, these were more common on women, while the men wore straw hats.

SAYINGS

The salt makers' sayings are divided into three groups. The first includes sayings about their chores and deal with salt production and general life at the salt-pans. The second group includes sayings

about the weather which are the result of long years of observing the sky and meteorological phenomena. These two groups are frequently linked. Some of these sayings are "If Candlemas comes with the sun and the bora, winter has already gone; if it comes with a clear sky, winter is yet to set in; if it comes with rain and wind, we are in the middle of winter." Or: "If on the eve of St. John's Day, the sunset is clear, the salt worker will have a good summer; if the sun sets between the clouds, the summer will be windy and rainy." The third group includes sayings about the family, marital relations, relations between the generations, relations with neighbours, friendship and sense of teamwork, which was very important for the salt workers' success. These include: "You can recognise a tree by its fruit" or "A healthy stem bears good produce".

THE STORY OF SALT IS A NOBLE ONE

The salt-pans are part of Slovenian tradition and the rich and noble story of a small coastal area. The story of salt is a beautiful story of hardworking people, a story of success due to joint efforts and common goals.

Sources:

Stare Piranske soline (Old Piran Salt-pans), Miroslav Pahor and Tatjana Poberaj, 1963, Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga. *Soline, Ogrožena kulturna krajina* (Salt-pans, Endangered Cultural Landscape), Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum, Birografika Bori 2009.

Slovenian sea salt from the Piran salt-pans has become available in stores in the UK. Not only will it be available in Selfridges stores in London and Birmingham and through Selfridges Online, it will also be used in the restaurant chain of world-famous British chef Jamie Oliver.

Currently, the salt from Piran can be bought in 15 countries around the world - the US, around Europe, in Japan and Australia - and is used in numerous high-class restaurants.

The salt makers' sayings are divided into three groups. The first includes sayings about their chores; the second group consists of sayings about the weather and the third includes sayings about the family.

Flavio Bonin

Salt is the Sea that could return to the Sky

The activity of the Maritime Museum Piran incorporates Slovenia into the Mediterranean and European region as a maritime country. It helps its visitors to understand the life of people living by the sea. This time, we spoke about the salt-pans, which is not only a wetland area, but a beautiful harmony of people's work and natural processes; only a few animal and plant species can live here. The salt-pans have had a significant influence on

the littoral landscape. The systems of channels, levees, salt fields and everything that people created in this area make a wonderful example of equilibrium with the environment. The staff at the Maritime Museum is aware of this exceptional heritage and is studying it closely. One of the people who enriches us with his knowledge is Flavio Bonin. His bibliography is rich and in addition to studying salt production.

Flavio Bonin is the museum adviser at Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum in Piran



Photo: Archive of Primorske Novice

The earliest information on the construction of salt-pans in north-western Istria was recorded in a notarial instrument dating to 1278, by which the Piran consuls permitted a certain Father Baldo from Manfredonia to construct two salt basins in the swampy area of St. Bartholomew's Channel.

What essentially defines salt production in the northern part of the Adriatic, or since its beginnings?

When and how the salt-pans on the northern shores of the Adriatic were created is not really known. The first written sources date back to the 13th century, although it is assumed that salt-pans were present in this region already at the time of the Roman Empire. They are already mentioned in the surviving sections of the town statutes from 1274 and include several regulative decrees as well as rights of people to acquire and trade salt.

To facilitate the flow of seawater, salt-pans were most frequently situated in depressions. In the area of the Slovenian Istria, the best conditions were in the wider area of Piran and on the outskirts of Izola and Koper. The ones in Piran were the largest, encompassing Sečovlje, Lucija and Strunjan salt-pans. The smaller salt-pans in Izola were abandoned in the 18th century and the larger ones in Koper at the beginning of the 20th century. The earliest information on the construction of salt-pans in

north-western Istria was recorded in a notarial instrument dating to 1278, by which the Piran consuls permitted a certain Father Baldo from Manfredonia to construct two salt basins in the swampy area of St. Bartholomew's Channel. After 1283, when Piran came under Venetian administration, about 1,200 crystallisation basins were said to be in the Piran area. The owners were mostly people of Piran, and almost all were patricians of the town: most were notaries, and also representatives of the church, carpenters, shoemakers, traders and, of course, salt makers.

Which salt-pans have been preserved?

From all units in the Gulf of Trieste, only those in Strunjan and Sečovlje have been preserved. They were part of the Piran salt-pans, together with the ones that are now destroyed in the Fazan Canal in Lucija. The Sečovlje ones are the largest operating salt works, and extend over an area of approximately 650 hectares at the mouth of the Draginja River near Sečovlje.

In 1989, the Municipality of Piran proclaimed the area of the salt-pans and the Seča peninsula a nature park.

The nature park is divided by the Drnica River (Canal Grande) into the northern and southern sections. In the northern section, called Lera, salt is produced by traditional methods. The southern section, Fontanigge, borders Croatia. Access to the southern section is by a road that starts between the Slovenian and Croatian border crossing. The Sečovlje salt-pans are wetlands of international importance and as such they were included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of

International Significance in 1993 due to their exceptional landscape and ecological values.

Besides the Sečovlje salt-pans, the ones at Strunjan were the most important salt works in the Venetian Republic between the 15th and 17th centuries. They are located on the Gulf of Trieste near the town of Strunjan and are the most northerly salt-pans still operating in the Mediterranean. Work there came to a halt for a while, but salt

Photo: Archives of the Sergěj Mašera Maritime Museum (both photographs)



In the museum's archives old postcards with the images of salt-pans and salt contracts are on the display as well.

production using medieval methods is being revived for tourist purposes.

What is the difference between the Strunjan and Sečovlje salt-pans?

There is no major difference really; the technology of salt production is the same. A particular feature is the Stjuža (Chiusa), a larger closed lagoon, which was used as an evaporation basin and later as a fish farm. There are three salt maker's houses at the Strunjan salt-pans, which are protected as ethnological monuments. Two were built at the beginning of the 20th century and the third in the 17th or 18th century. The older salt maker's house is an example of typical salina architecture, where the ground floor serves as storage for salt and the first floor as the dwelling of the salt maker's family.

What types of salt-pan are they?

We categorise them as traditional salt-pans, based on the exploitation of natural characteristics e.g. seawater, sun, wind and the tides. The production is characterised as manual labour. But they are no longer of any economic significance.

There is a saying that "Piran is the product of salt". Why was salt important?

The Venetian administration was divided into magistracies; we could call them ministries today, and they included a ministry or magistracy for salt. They grew rich on the great profits they made on salt. One-seventh of all the salt produced in Piran belonged to the community, and the scale of the production was decided in Venice. Piran salt was considered to be of high quality. Based on the profits from the salt, the Venetians then built palaces, and other crafts and trade began to develop. Municipal and state officials and also the army safeguarded the salt. The Venetians did their best to prevent smuggling, which meant evading taxation.

At the time, salt was important as a food preservative, since there were no refrigerators; it was also used in various medications, in the production of gunpowder, as ballast in ships, and similar things. Everything was calculated and specified in detail. For example, a ship was first loaded with salt i.e. one-third of the ship contained salt, the second layer was perhaps wool or hemp and the third layer consisted of valuable items. The salt also acted as a shock absorber for ships, which was important in battle, as it improved stability. The Venetians had a precise overview of production and trade. An-

nually, on March 1, they carried out a census of the local inhabitants. They thus knew the exact number and therefore the anticipated amount of taxes to be collected. They also limited the production of salt in order to maintain its price.

We've heard of so-called salt contracts. What was their purpose?

The transcription of the oldest surviving salt contract concluded between the Piran community and the Venetian magistracy of salt, who represented the Venetian government, dates to 1375. The people of Piran were represented by a college for salt, which included thirteen patricians and seven townspeople, all of whom owned salt basins.

The contracts reveal that the people of Piran frequently negotiated the price of their salt and were allowed to sell their share to carters on land, but not to transport it by ship or sell it by sea. It was also prohibited to leave salt in the pools overnight, so it was to be transported every day to public warehouses. If this was not possible, they had to store it temporarily at salt maker's houses. If necessary, they were also allowed to work on the basins on Sundays and holidays free from ecclesiastical prosecution, as this would have harmed the economic interests of

We categorise them as traditional salt-pans, based on the exploitation of natural characteristics e.g. seawater, sun, wind and the tides.

The Maritime Museum organises international student camps.



Photo: Archives of the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum

The local people lived well from the salt-pans. They had a sure and steady source of income. If you had a good season at the salt-pans, it wasn't too bad, if you had a poor harvest in the field.

the Venetian Republic. The salt contracts contained many articles; they were relatively extensive and, above all, strictly binding.

In general, salt making was beneficial for the local people. Did no one go hungry?

The salt-making season began at the end of May and lasted until the end of August. They did not always work all day on the salt-pans. The hardest task was carrying salt to the salt maker's houses (warehouses) five or six kilometres a day. This was usually done by the younger men.

The people living in the surrounding area of Piran did not lack food. They lived relatively well. This can also be observed in people's wills; they left their heirs gold and furs, objects of high value. Frost or other natural disasters hit them once or twice in one hundred years, but the losses could be replaced. The owners were noblemen, religious dignitaries and townspeople, who were, of course, wealthier than the peasant population in the countryside. The colonus system did not permit personal serfdom, so the salt makers were able to move and resettle freely.

What are the guidelines for conserving the cultural heritage of the salt-pans?

The main objective is to preserve the original image and content of the salt-pans as much as possible. Three goals have to be mentioned in this regard: firstly, preserving the ground plan structure (channels with cavanas, embankments, buildings on walled platforms and salt fields with all water flows).

The second goal is to preserve as much of the original physical remains of all the facilities within the salt-pans: the salt maker's houses, with the surrounding salt fields and the remains of levees, pumps, gates, channels and embankments, supporting walls, steps and sluices. The third goal derives from the idea of actively protecting the salt-pans with the revitalisation method and anticipates the restoration and renovation of houses, channels, salt fields and relevant water flows.

How did the idea of the Museum of Salt-making come about?

The idea dates back to the 1960s. The first planner of the museum was Miroslav Pahor, the then Head of the Maritime Museum. His vision was to link the museum with local tourist businesses in order to achieve greater value in the tourist experience. While vacillating between locations in Lucija and Strunjan, the expert staff of the museum decided on Fontanigge, due to its preservation after the death of Pahor.

So, the Salt Worker's Festival celebrated every year in Piran doesn't have much to do with tradition?

No, it's more about tourism. It used to be a celebration of Piran's patron saint, St. George.

Are there any customs and traditions, perhaps a costume from the period?

The salt makers were always hot in the sun, so the rule "more is less" was applied, and there was no defined costume. But there were traditional work clothes. The

guideline was practicality, not aesthetics. And that was all. However, the tradition also includes several sayings, cuisine and similar things.

What about tourism?

There is great interest and there are several initiatives. The Maritime Museum organises student camps (students from all around the world come for a certain period and work at the salt-pans), we conduct tours of the salt-pans and the like. We also organise seminars and lectures for various audiences. If I focus on tourism only, then I have to stress the application of soft forms of tourism, particularly in the sense of expert guided tours. Developing stationary tourism can become a double-edged sword. Uncultured tourists can do more harm than good, so a more conservative approach is more appropriate. The student camps I mentioned are a good example of appropriate tourism; they're about reviving the salt maker's activities. Fango (salt-pan mud) and brine are already being used for therapeutic purposes. Several facilities with surroundings would have to be arranged for health tourism.

And the final question: what projects await you and the museum in the near future?

With further research of the archive material, we will be able to upgrade the existing museum collections. It is important to continue to take care of the infrastructure of a monument of national significance.

Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida

As if time had stopped here a long time ago

Photo: Archive of Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida



In an area with a unique position and long-standing tradition of harvesting salt with plenty of positive energy, which has inspired many artists, painters, poets and, last but not least, entrepreneurs, Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida was opened a month ago. This is undoubtedly an original and unique health tourism idea. The spa is situated in the heart of the disused section of Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, and is reviving the tradition of health tourism in this way.

The new facility, extending over four thousand square metres, is located in an area of disused salt pools in the section called Lera, where salt is still produced. The Sečovlje salt-pans are the northernmost salt-pans in the Mediterranean that are still working and one of the few in the world where salt is still produced with methods dating back at least to the 14th century. Petola, a bio-sediment base cultivated at the bottom of crystallisation pools, is a special feature of the salt-pans; it prevents mud from mixing with the salt and gives the salt numerous micro-elements and minerals essential for the human body. The petola is grown with completely natural crystallisation, by hand and with tools and methods passed down from generation to generation.

“The 700-year tradition of salt making in this area is also related to the 700-year tradition of using mud or so-called fango and brine for various purposes, which denotes a long history and rich tradition. This served as the starting point over almost ten years when we were contemplating the idea that a spa should be set up here. We have been actively involved in the project for the last four years, after we’d completed all the activities needed to really bring the spa to life,” said Klavdij Godnič, director of the company Soline, which manages Sečovlje Salina Nature Park.

NATURAL SUBSTANCES WHICH BEAR THE REFLECTION OF THE SEA

At the new spa, under the gentle lee of the salt fields, gifts of the sea are on offer which have a refreshing and balancing effect on the body, restore energy, and nourish and renew the skin. Guests have a choice of treatments with natural products obtained from the Sečovlje salt-pans. Salt-pan mud and brine-mother liquor, water, salt and seawater are the main agents in the thalassotherapy at the salt-pans. Salt-pan mud and brine-mother liquor have been acknowledged by the Ministry of health as natural health agents. The word thalassotherapy comes from the Greek word thalassa

meaning sea, which yields numerous products that can be exploited: sea climate, seawater, sea peloid (sea mud – fango), salt-pan peloid (salt-pan mud – fango), brine-mother liquor (acqua madre), sea salt, sand, algae, sea sponges, plankton, fish and shellfish. All these products can be used for health and therapeutic purposes and are widely used in relaxation and cosmetic treatments. The seaside climate also plays an important role, as it contributes to better physical relaxation and quicker recovery. So, real thalassotherapy can only develop and be carried out on the coast.

CHALLENGING CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the spa began at the end of 2011 and was finished this spring after intensive works last year. The opening had been anticipated earlier, but Godnič says the delay was caused by bad weather conditions – the wet and cold autumn and long and cold winter – which interrupted the construction works, and also the fact that no comparable facility exists in the world. “We have to bear in mind that the construction of the spa was very complex, because everything was being built on mud, so we were dependent on days with no rain. All the buildings around the spa are constructed on pylons mea-

The new facility, extending over four thousand square metres, is located in an area of disused salt pools in the section called Lera, where salt is still produced.

The spa includes five swimming pools (the largest is 20 metres long and 8.5 metres wide, it is relatively shallow and has a soft bottom) and accompanying facilities, such as an engine house, cloakrooms, massage areas, showers, a restaurant and a reception desk; deckchairs have been set up and pathways laid, etc.



Photo: Archive of Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida

The spa is a part of a protected nature park which is included in the Natura 2000 programme and as such cannot offer overnight accommodation. The objective of the spa is to cooperate with surrounding hoteliers and providers of overnight accommodation.



Photo: Archive of Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida

Generally speaking, it may be said that Lepa Vida Spa is a combination of natural, indigenous environment and high technology; for example, the large swimming pool is regulated via the Internet using technology provided by a German company.

suring between four and seven metres. More than two thousand were used,” explains Godnič.

The spa includes five swimming pools (the largest is 20 metres long and 8.5 metres wide, it is relatively shallow and has a soft bottom) and accompanying facilities, such as an engine house, cloakrooms, massage areas, showers, a restaurant and a reception desk; deckchairs have been set up and pathways laid, etc.

During the construction, the highest ecological standards were observed and only natural materials used for the most part. Most of the buildings are made

of Siberian larch, without varnish or coatings. The wood becomes harder over the years due to the sun and salt. The swimming pool equipment does not use chemicals; all the showers, with the exception of the sanitary facilities, use only seawater. All sanitary waste is discharged by push pumps away from the park. The infrastructure, sewage system, water and optic connections and access paths on the salt-pans were also upgraded during the construction of the spa.

The value of the entire investment in Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida thermal complex amounted to

one and a half million euros. Godnič is proud that they did some things themselves, such as various earth, construction and maintenance works, and estimates that the value of this work amounted to about three hundred thousand euros. The contractors were hired only for more detailed work on the wooden construction, swimming pool equipment and similar.

MEDICAL AND BATHING SECTIONS OF THE SPA

Lepa Vida thermal complex is divided into two sections, medical and therapeutic, which can

Photo: Archive of Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida



Photo: Archive of Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida



Health tourism is also an opportunity for Slovenia because of the well-developed health system. With such projects, Portorož will regain its place on the map of important health destinations.

The sea is a real treasury of natural substances. Salt-pan mud and brine-mother liquor, water, salt and seawater are the main agents in the thalassotherapy at the salt-pans.

be accessed after a medical examination at the spa, along with the section intended for relaxed bathing and Kneipping in the seawater pools. The smaller therapeutic pools contain brine, saturated seawater, used in the preparation of salt. Mud collected at the mouth of the Dragonja River in the section of the park known as Fontanigge, where the mud is exceptionally clean and free of effluent, is used for the fango therapies. This mud, into which brine from the salt fields flows, matures for an additional three years at Lera.

Generally speaking, it may be said that Lepa Vida Spa is a combination of natural, indigenous environment and high technology; for example, the large

swimming pool is regulated via the Internet using technology provided by a German company.

THE SPA ACCOMMODATES UP TO 55 PEOPLE AT THE SAME TIME

The concession agreement concluded between the company Soline and the state enables tourist activities which pose no threat to the natural balance in the park. Thus, for spatial and functional reasons and the desire to maintain peace, comfort and satisfaction of guests, the complex is designed to simultaneously accommodate a maximum of 55 people. It is estimated that up to one hundred people will visit the spa daily.

Lepa Vida Spa will be open only

during the daytime and only in fair weather, if there is no rain or bad weather. Lepa Vida can be accessed by boat from the sea, for which a special pier has been built, or along a hardened path by electric car.

Portorož has been known as a health resort since the 13th century, when the monks of the St. Lawrence Monastery treated people with seawater and brine. The healing effects on rheumatism, dropsy, scrofula, obesity and wounds were known far and wide. Health tourism is also an opportunity for Slovenia because of the well-developed health system. With such projects, Portorož will regain its place on the map of important health destinations.

A brand is the Biggest Asset – also in Tourism

The success of a country's tourist industry is measured not only in the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists or income from tourism. It is also measured by the 'power' of the tourism brand, especially the image that a tourist destination enjoys at home and abroad.

Green represents the pristine countryside of Slovenia. Besides green, the characteristic colours are blue and white, which also represent the unspoiled landscape. All three colours represent a genuine and intact state – the core of the Slovenian brand – and are reflected in the selected motifs and substance of the marketing and communicational tools of Slovenian tourism.



Photo: Archives of SPIRIT

Boosting the recognisability and success of the 'I feel Slovenia' tourism brand remains a priority of the Tourism Division of SPIRIT Slovenia, while the agency also includes among its main tasks and activities the promotion of the brand in the other economic fields it covers: entrepreneurship, innovation, technological development and investments.

"... we believe that the future is created one decision at a time....And those decisions are often informed by brands. As a result, brands are among the most important drivers of the future. The same is true for national brands, but on a larger scale."

FutureBrand, Country Brand Index 2012-13

All around the world, countries eagerly await the annual publication of the lists which rank countries in terms of their national brands. A place on these lists is confirmation of a country's success in the strategic management of the national brand, while the highest placing also means a better reputation in the eyes of the foreign and domestic public. Tourism is no exception in this respect.

The competition for a share of the global tourism cake is also growing stronger. Slovenia is relatively small compared to large countries or established destinations, but it is a diverse and authentic country. In this situation, Slovenia and Slovenian tourism face the following problems: how to boost the country's presence on the global tourism map, place as high as possible on lists of respectable national brands and their competitiveness and successfully compete with already established competitors. The answer lies in concentrating and combining efforts and assets and presenting the country under the 'I feel Slovenia' national and tourism brand.

The former Slovenian Tourism Board (currently the Tourism Division as part of the SPIRIT Slove-

nia Public Agency) has long been aware of the great importance and role of the national brand in the desired positioning of Slovenian tourism on the global tourist map. As the umbrella national tourism organisation, immediately after the adoption of the new national brand 'I feel Slovenia', it included the promotion and further development of the brand in the field of tourism. With the new Slovenian brand seven years ago came a new Slovenian tourism brand. Boosting the recognisability and success of the 'I feel Slovenia' tourism brand remains a priority of the Tourism Division of SPIRIT Slovenia, while the agency also includes among its main tasks and activities the promotion of the brand in the other economic fields it covers: entrepreneurship, innovation, technological development and investments.

TOURISM HAS USED THE BRAND MORE THAN OTHER INDUSTRIES

The promotion of the 'I feel Slovenia brand', adopted in 2007, has been most intensive and consistent in tourism. In all of its marketing and communication activities and tools since it was adopted, the then Slovenian Tourism Board consistently took into account the guidelines, visual identity and

substance of the brand. At the very core of the 'I feel Slovenia' tourism brand is pristine countryside, which is reflected in the 'Slovenian green' colour. In Slovenian tourism, green is more than a colour from the brand's handbook; green is the greatest advantage of Slovenia and Slovenian tourism: pristine countryside. Communicating this feature, combined with our forward-looking approach, led to the next step in developing and promoting the brand: Slovenian tourism has focused on sustainable development, i.e. the protection of the 'green diversity' of the country.

Stemming from this concept is the story of a green, active and healthy Slovenia under the SLOVENIA. Green. Active. Healthy. topic, which in all of its elements stems from the 'I feel Slovenia' brand and is actively communicated to selected target groups. The story has run through all the projects and activities of the Slovenian Tourism Board in the last two years and is based on the pristine countryside and the natural beauties of the country, which are its key competitive advantages.

The results of numerous surveys prove that it was right to make the countryside the key competitive advantage at the core of Slovenia's

Photo: Archives of SPIRIT



A green, active and healthy Slovenia. The three elements which communicate the tourism brand of Slovenia and which are in harmony with the sustainable development of the country.

tourist brand. For example, in last year's survey on the image of Slovenia, in which among other things we checked the image of our country in the eyes of selected respondents in the Italian, Austrian, German, British and Japanese markets, we were also interested in which features first come to the respondents' minds when they hear the word Slovenia. The majority of the respondents' answers included words related to the pristine landscape and genuineness of the country and its people. Most Austrians connect Slovenia with the 'sea' and 'kindness', Italians with 'nature' and 'spas', Britons and Germans with 'mountains' and 'kindness of people', and the Japanese with 'Lake Bled' and 'Ljubljana'.

The pristine countryside also turned out to be a key competitive advantage over other tourist destinations in the results of a survey by the market research company Attentics, which analysed over 5.5 million opinions about Slovenia and its tourist offer published on-line (on blogs, forums, Twitter and Facebook). The survey shows that Slovenia is most frequently connected with pristine countryside and is considered a destina-

tion that is yet to be discovered. The survey also shows that Slovenia is most frequently regarded as a green destination by active individuals (in sport and recreation) who want to relax and be in touch with nature.

THE SECRET OF THE BRAND'S SUCCESS – CONSISTENT USE

The secret of the success of any brand, including national and tourism brands, is in consistent use over a long period.

The marketing and communicational activities and tools of the Slovenian Tourism Board consistently used the guidelines of the 'I feel Slovenia' brand, which has not gone unnoticed by the foreign expert public. This is why, for example, the Slovenian tourism stand, which completely matches the excellent promotion of the brand in terms of appearance and content, has received numerous awards for best stand, best appearance and most sustainable stand. The award for the most sustainable stand at the MITT Moscow fair in 2012 in particular, the latest in a series of awards, proves that this method of communicating is more than

an excellent tool for conveying the substance of the brand.

TWO NATIONAL TOURISM BRANDS HAND IN HAND

The motto 'To participate, not to compete' is an old one. However, participation instead of pure competition when it comes to the tourism or national brands of two countries is more the exception than the rule at the moment. The Slovenian national and tourism brand is breaking new ground in this respect. The Tourism Division of SPIRIT Slovenia (previously the Slovenian Tourism Board) joined forces with the Croatian National Tourist Board (HTZ) in 2010, 2011, 2012 and this year to present the two countries abroad under the joint slogan 'Experience Croatia, Feel Slovenia'. These are joint presentations of the tourist offer in remote markets, where Slovenia and Croatia together can offer attractive and competitive products suited to a particular market. The joint presentation under a single slogan resulted in the Chinese Tourists Welcoming Award in the Product Innovation category at the COTTM fair in Beijing, in 2011.

The Tourism Division of SPIRIT Slovenia joined forces with the Croatian National Tourist Board (HTZ) in 2010, 2011, 2012 and this year to present the two countries abroad under the joint slogan 'Experience Croatia, Feel Slovenia'. These are joint presentations of the tourist offer in remote markets, where Slovenia and Croatia together can offer attractive and competitive products suited to a particular market.

The Slovenian tourism industry has recognised the importance of using the brand in positioning in foreign markets. As many as 84% of the respondents from the Slovenian tourism industry think that the use of the 'I feel Slovenia' brand in positioning in foreign markets is important, and 37% of these think it is absolutely important. Only 9% of respondents think that the use of the brand in foreign markets is not important. Representatives of the Slovenian tourism industry also think that the use of the brand enables them to raise their prices in foreign markets: 38% of respondents think they can raise prices if they use the 'I feel Slovenia' logo or slogan, of whom 8% completely agree with this.

Source: Perception of the 'I feel Slovenia' brand survey, 2012.

Laško - the Confluence of Good

The European Destinations of Excellence project, or EDEN, was designed by the European Commission in accordance with the guidelines of European tourist policy. The objective of the project is to focus on value, diversity and the joint characteristics of European tourist destinations and the promotion of these destinations, where the goal of economic growth is social, cultural and environmental sustainability.



Photo: Archive of Thermana d.d.

The theme of this year's EDEN competition run by the European Commission was accessible tourism, which facilitates independent, fair and dignified use of tourist services for people with various physical and psychological limitations and special needs.

Within the European EDEN project (European Destinations of Excellence), SPIRIT Slovenia, the Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Development, Investment and Tourism, published a call to select the European Destination of Excellence 2013 in Slovenia. This year's European destination of excellence is the tourist destination of Laško - the Confluence of Good.

The theme of this year's EDEN competition run by the European Commission was accessible tourism, which facilitates independent, fair and dignified use of tourist services for people with various physical and psychological limitations and special needs. From among three Slovenian finalists competing for the title of European Destination of Excellence in 2013, the expert committee chose Laško - the Confluence of Good. STIK Laško, as the applicant, prepared the project Laško -

the Confluence of Good in cooperation with Thermana Laško d.d. and the Municipality of Laško. The project received the highest number of points from the committee after an on-site viewing, thereby becoming the fifth winner of the Slovenian competition for European Destination of Excellence after the Soča Valley, Solčavsko, the Kolpa River and Idrija. The title of European Destination of Excellence was officially conferred nationally on 5 June 2013. At the European level, the destination



Photo: Archive of Thermana d.d.

As this year's winner, Laško - the Confluence of Good will join the international network of European Destinations of Excellence comprised of twenty-two European regions.



In the photograph: Boštjan Skalar, Acting Director of SPIRIT Slovenia, Tomaž Majcen, representative of STIK Laško and Marjan Hribar, Director General at the Tourism and Internationalisation Directorate at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

will be presented for the first time in Brussels in autumn, when the title will also be awarded by the European Commission.

Janez Bogataj, the chairman of the expert committee and ambassador of the EDEN project, summarised the committee's findings by saying that the winning destination "prides itself on a venerable 160-year tradition of health and 60-year tradition of medical rehabilitation in Laško on the Savinja River and its tributaries. However, the committee was pleasantly surprised that not all the current activity related to various offers of accessible tourism was narrowly based and focused on the health resort, but that the resort served as the basis for a varied network of activities taking place in the municipality. The STIK municipal Sports, Tourism, Information and Cultural Centre thus successfully connects all providers and operators of programmes intended for various types of accessible tourism. In 2008, the Municipality of Laško drafted a Strategic Development Plan for Tourism for the Disabled, and in 2009, Thermana Laško d.d. - Hotel Zdravilišče Laško acquired a gold certificate for being

a 'Disabled-Friendly Company'. The same company also received an EU Eco-daisy. The accessible tourism activity is spread throughout the municipality and includes various societies, individuals and tourist service providers. Thus the word 'good' in the motto of the project or destination must be understood in its literal as well as in its figurative meaning. Such 'good' is comprised of natural features, everything that stems from the local brewing tradition and the content related to regional beekeeping, gardens and nectar-bearing plants. 'Good' also stands for a variety of programmes for differently impaired persons and versatile (physical and spiritual) accessibility to tourist activities. The town has rich experience in organising events in sports tourism for impaired and disabled persons. Laško hosts preparation trainings for sportspeople with disabilities. Thus, various groups of impaired persons have access to all aspects of the tourist activities in the municipality. Physical accessibility has not only been achieved at individual tourist facilities, but also in the town of Laško and in the offer of specialised tourist programmes e.g. tourist farms, presentations of

cultural and natural heritage and events. This also gives the destination of Laško - the Confluence of Good the compassion of good and an excellent example for other Slovenian regions and elsewhere".

Tomaž Majcen, Acting Director of STIK - Sports, Tourism, Information and Cultural Centre, added that the title of European Destination of Excellence 2013 confirms that their efforts to establish conditions for friendly, diverse and accessible tourism for all groups visiting the destination had paid off. "Simultaneously, the title imposes a great responsibility to continue the work and ensure equal opportunities for participation, a relaxed experience and enjoyment for all guests who seek tourism, culture and sport," he continued.

As this year's winner, Laško - the Confluence of Good will join the international network of European Destinations of Excellence comprised of twenty-two European regions. By signing the Brussels Declaration, members commit to mutual cooperation, and exchanging information and knowledge on tourist development.

Simultaneously, the title imposes a great responsibility to continue the work and ensure equal opportunities for participation, a relaxed experience and enjoyment for all guests who seek tourism, culture and sport.

Katarina Karlovšek, a Bridge between Slovenia and India

Such is India, the Wonderland

She is excited about the Indians' way of thinking and their hardworking attitude. When they are shooting, they work from morning until evening; they never complain and are always cheerful and smiling.



Photo: Personal archive

In Hyderabad, Katarina visited the Annapurna Studios owned by Akkineni Nagarjuna, the actor who has a leading role in the film shot in Slovenia this May. The film, entitled *Bhat*, which features two songs with footage from Slovenia, is currently being finalised. Katarina visited the crew during shooting of the final scenes in the studio.

She manages the RTA agency, which coordinates the visits of a film crew from India's Bollywood. They shot their fourth film in Slovenia this May, and Katarina was happy to hear the decision from Mumbai that Rambo Rajkumar will be filmed in Slovenia in August, with Shahid Kapoor, a major Bollywood star, in the leading role. Since the leading actor is the greatest attraction of the film, the decision to film in Slovenia is a great opportunity to promote the country.

The Indian film industry, which is the largest in the world, has discovered Slovenia as its new shooting location. When Indian audiences see new locations, the interest of Indian tourists in the beauty and sights of our country will also increase. In May, the Indian film crew filmed for seven days in Ljubljana, Piran, Bled, Ptuj, at Celje and Predjama castles, and on the Solkan Bridge. They were excited about Slovenia; the Celje Castle charmed them in particular. And the excitement is mutual.

Katarina was also impressed by the Indian film crew: "They don't complain and make a fuss if it's not necessary. They know all too well that thousands of other people are waiting in line to take their job if they don't want it. They're never in a bad mood. Normally, they work 12 hours a day, and don't find that unusual. The leading actors are also very hardworking and friendly and they love travelling to Europe, they are very knowledgeable, educated and charismatic. They are also used to being rational and careful when they rent equipment, because additional costs are not tolerated."

The production, which is shooting in Slovenia for eight days in August, is managed by the Indian production company Eros. This will be a huge film, because the main role is being played by a major Indian star. His family is well known in India, and a film of this scale undoubtedly attracts a lot of attention in the Indian film industry, and the costs involved are also mind-blowing. Millions of people

will see the film, whose setting will present Slovenia. They will see places and towns which later usually become very popular with Indian tourists. But the film will not contribute only to the tourist trade; it will also strengthen economic ties. The numerous Slovenian companies, technical teams, catering companies, extras, private entrepreneurs who let their locations and aircraft will profit from the shooting. At present, India is undergoing a transformation. A new middle class of about 300 million people is appearing who find Europe interesting and within their reach.

In this way, Slovenia is becoming an attractive and interesting tourist destination. Their producers are looking for new locations to shoot films, and they see Slovenia, or Europe in general, as exotic. They are thrilled about the fact that there is a country where so much diversity can be found in one spot, from the Alps to the sea, with everything in such a small area.

In May, the Indian film crew filmed for seven days in Ljubljana, Piran, Bled, Ptuj, at Celje and Predjama castles, and on the Solkan Bridge. They were excited about Slovenia; the Celje Castle charmed them in particular.

Photo: Archive of RTA



The Indian film industry, which is the largest in the world, has discovered Slovenia as its new shooting location. When Indian audiences see new locations, the interest of Indian tourists in the beauty and sights of our country will also increase.

Photo: Archive of RTA



The first one to introduce Slovenia, this Adriatic jewel, to Indian cinema is Telugu film Nayak.

Filmmaker V.V. Vinayak, along with lead actors Ram Charan and Kajal Agrawal, shot song sequences in the postcard locales of Slovenia. The stunning underground environs of Postojna caves, the medieval coastal town of Piran and the alpine resort town of Bled played the perfect backdrops for the duo's dance moves.

What business visions and goals do you have?

I would like Slovenia to become the first country, an entry point for Europe in a way, for Indian filmmakers in the EU. I believe in this, and I don't see any obstacles. They like to go to Switzerland, but we can offer them more diversity because, in addition to the Alps,

we also have the sea. I would like Slovenia to become the centre of the film industry from Asia, for Indian film production and tourism to be directed towards Slovenia. TV production is becoming stronger in India. We recently filmed the first Indian soap opera in Europe and thus promoted the country. It will be broadcast

on Indian TV for three months, which is wonderful promotion for us.

How are the agreements on shooting made?

In cooperation with our business partner, we convince them to send a producer to Slovenia and view the location. Then we

She manages the RTA agency, which coordinates the visits of a film crew from India's Bollywood.

Katarina also viewed the sequence that was shot in Slovenia. She said that it was marvellous, a true picture postcard of Slovenia, with Celje Castle, Ljubljana castle, Bled, Piran, Predjama Castle; the scenes beside Solkan Bridge and the Soča River were also beautiful. A 100-member crew will come to Slovenia in August, where they will be shooting for eight days.



Photo: Archive of RTA

Shooting in Celje, movie Bhat, in may this year. In the photo: Petra Strban, RTA Agency, famous indian superstar Akkineni Nagarjuna, Nagarjuna's wife, Amala Akkineni, actress and social activist and dance director of the movie Brinda Parameswar.



Photo: Personal archive

“I would like Slovenia to become the first country, an entry point for Europe in a way, for Indian film-makers in the EU. I don't see any obstacles. They like to go to Switzerland, but we can offer them more diversity because, in addition to the Alps, we also have the sea.

prepare all the necessary documentation relating to visas, plane tickets, transportation, additional requests.

And how do they see us once they are here?

They are very surprised about how well we speak English, and they say that we are friendly. I think that Slovenians display our negative qualities to each other rather than to foreigners. We are more positively disposed towards them. I've also noticed that when in contact with foreigners we're very proud of Slovenia, of our young jewel in Central Europe, which en-

compasses Scottish highlands, Spanish beaches, Swiss Alps, French castles, and the exceptionally safe and clean country, with a lot of greenery, clean air and good atmosphere.

What opportunities are there for Slovenians in India in this business?

Indians are looking for Caucasian actors for their films. I know a Slovenian woman who has an acting school in New Delhi. There are many opportunities, also for dancers. Kissing scenes are replaced with dancing and singing. Song and dance scenes are important parts of a film. I also enjoy

the luxury one can experience in hotels in India; nowhere else one can see such things. And across the street, there are dilapidated buildings and very poor people. But that's India. Wonderland, really.

Katarina sees major obstacles in Slovenian visa procedures. Acquiring visas for Indian citizens should be simplified; also the lack of direct airline connections between Ljubljana and India, and last but not least, the VAT refund for Indian citizens are problematic. After all, important financial projects and the promotion of Slovenia are involved.

‘Welcome Home’ gathering

“We carry Slovenian Identity in our Blood and Soul”

The third ‘Welcome Home’ gathering took place between 4 and 6 July, featuring various events, workshops and exhibitions in Ljubljana, Maribor and Mojstrana. The central theme this year for young people in Slovenia and abroad revolved around the challenges that come with the new acquaintances and opportunities that can spring from the friendship network of Slovenians around the world.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



The meeting was sponsored by the Government’s Office for Slovenians Abroad. Four non-governmental organisations – the Emigration Association ‘Slovenian Around the World’ (SVS), the Slovenian World Congress, the Rafael Society and the Slovene Emigrant Association (SIM) – participated in designing the programme, the organisation and the strengthening of recognition among all the participants. Over three hundred young people from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Macedonia and Argentina together with their Slovenian counterparts took part in over thirty events, including concerts, ethnography workshops, exhibitions, sports activities, science workshops, hiking and a film projection. The central event of ‘Welcome Home’ in Congress Square in Ljubljana featured numerous musicians, singers and dancers, including renowned and popular Slovenian performers such as Trkaj, Janez Dovč, Vesna Zornik, the Big Band of the Slovenian Armed Forces Orchestra and

others “who create original musical performances of harmony and affiliation which know no boundaries between hearts in various countries of the world”.

THE ‘WELCOME HOME’ GATHERING REFLECTED IN VARIOUS EVENTS

The traditional annual Pan-Slovenian Meeting was held at the National Assembly, which brings together representatives of Slovenians from neighbouring and other countries. The central topic of this year’s 13th meeting was ‘Odslikave slovenstva’ (Reflections of Slovenian Identity). The participants at this year’s meeting were initially greeted by Janko Veber, the President of the National Assembly, Tina Komel, Minister for Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and the Autochthonous Slovenian National Community in Neighbouring Countries and Slovenians, and Danijel Krivec, the Chair of the Commission for Relations

with Slovenes in Neighbouring and Other Countries. President Veber stressed that, regardless of where Slovenians live, they are inherently connected to Slovenia as their homeland, and preserving the language and culture is of the utmost importance. All those who live beyond the borders of Slovenia are its invaluable ambassadors and promoters around the world, the President added. Minister Komel highlighted that “Slovenia has always been and always will be the homeland of all Slovenians from neighbouring and other countries, and their loyalty and consciousness could serve as an example to all in Slovenia”. Others also spoke about their experience and role in preserving Slovenian identity. Luigia Negro stressed that education in Slovenian is vital for preserving Slovenian identity. Joe Valencic of Cleveland briefly presented his personal experience of a Slovenian community in the USA, which he said is experiencing a revival in certain fields.

Over three hundred young people from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Macedonia and Argentina together with their Slovenian counterparts took part in over thirty events, including concerts, ethnography workshops, exhibitions, sports activities, science workshops, hiking and a film projection.

Minister Komel emphasised the cooperation and connections between various youth organisations active in Slovenia and the communities of Slovenians and their descendants who live in neighbouring and other countries around the world. She said that the purpose of the 'Welcome Home' gathering was to create a positive attitude to other cultures and simultaneously highlight the wealth of Slovenian cultural heritage.



Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

Love is the criterion of Slovenian identity. During the gathering, many young people dressed in grey T-shirts with the 'Welcome Home' logo could be seen on the streets of Ljubljana. Their faces radiated with great expectations. They all told us similar things, "It's great to be a Slovenian", "This is my first time in Slovenia and I like it here" and "I have two homelands and I love them both."

IN THE EMBRACE OF TWO WORLDS

As part of 'Welcome Home', an exhibition 'In the Embrace of Two Worlds: Slovenes in Argentina' was opened at the National and University Library. Helena Janežič, who curated the exhibition with Veronika Potočnik, said that material such as invitations to events, theatre flyers and brochures would be on display. The exhibition features all three waves of migration. Less material survived from the first migration wave of the 1870s than from the others. This first wave was part of an agreement between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Argentina allowing numerous individuals and families from

Friuli, the Goriška and Notranjska regions to emigrate to Argentina. More material survived from between the wars, when the majority of Slovenian emigrants, about 25,000 individuals mostly from the Prekmurje and Primorska regions, moved to Argentina. According to Janežič, the material from the periods between 1947 and 1948 and 1954 and 1955 is the most abundant.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Love is the criterion of Slovenian identity. During the gathering, many young people dressed in grey T-shirts with the 'Welcome Home' logo could be seen on the streets of Ljubljana. Their faces radiated with great expectations.

They all told us similar things, "It's great to be a Slovenian", "This is my first time in Slovenia and I like it here" and "I have two homelands and I love them both." The young contemplate their Slovenian identity and discover that it "has to be taught". Nadia, a descendant of Argentinean Slovenians said: "A fascinating discovery for me was that emigrants or their descendants learn to be Slovenians. We search on the Internet for what and where Slovenia is and we learn Slovenian, which is very important for the preservation of national identity. The Slovene Emigrant Association is a very important institution for me. My parents were closely connected to it and I am also very proud of it."



Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

Performance singer Vesna Zornik and a combined choir of Slovenian pupils from Banja Luka.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



Performance by Zlatorock, a Slovenian rock group from Buenos Aires.

Laura, also a descendant of Slovenian emigrants to Argentina, came to Slovenia a year ago in order to learn the language. She says that Slovenians are much more positive than she expected. Laura is already fluent in Slovenian. She says that she is happy with her linguistic progress, but sometimes the language still presents a barrier. She never participated in the activities of the Slovenian community as a child, starting only later. She says that her motivation to learn Slovenian and live in Slovenia is personal and also related to curiosity

and is not merely a matter of her affiliation with a community.

The stories of young people are positive and intertwined with curiosity and optimism. They do not see Slovenia in grey, but as a homeland with beautiful mountains, sea, lakes, green hills and forests and friendly people.

SLOVENIAN IDENTITY IS A PATRIOTIC EMOTION

To feel Slovenian is superior to feeling European. We carry Slovenian identity in our blood and

soul. The Slovenian identity is a patriotic emotion placed in the crib at birth. To feel Slovenian equals the smell of home soil at the awakening of the spring. It is like the singing of cicadas on summer nights, the rustling of leaves in the trees, the murmuring of streams and roaring of the Slovenian sea. And this is the feeling of the young people who came to Slovenia for the 'Welcome Home' gathering in July. No matter how they encountered their Slovenian identity, they cannot escape it.

To feel Slovenian is superior to feeling European. We carry Slovenian identity in our blood. The Slovenian identity is a patriotic emotion placed in the crib at birth. To feel Slovenian equals the smell of home soil at the awakening of the spring.

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



'Tržičan', swing performance.

Casa del Sal – the House of Salt

With a View of the Salt-pans

Darko Maršič, a culinary virtuoso brimming with Istrian culinary wisdom, a lover of all that is local and authentic, the chef at the Casa del Sal homestead and a master of hospitality in Parecag near Sečovlje is well aware that the local fields produce and the beauty of the landscape park in the salt-pans are priceless.

From the house where he has lived all his life, Darko has observed the salt-pans every morning since he was a boy. But he appreciates them more now than he used to. He says that this space means a lot to him, that it has a special healing energy.

In the nineteenth century, Casa del Sal was the home of salt-pan workers. Darko's parents, the first private hoteliers in Portorož, bought the house and opened it to guests almost half a century ago. The house expanded from two to four rooms with ensembles and two apartments.

It is in an almost ideal spot, about 10 metres above the Sečovlje salt-pans, with a view of the exceptional salt fields and the landscape park.



Photo: Mateja Jordovič Potočnik

The small homestead, which after renovation and extensions now measures 24x8m – it measured 4x7m when he was a small boy – is a part of the renowned consortium Europe of Traditions and specialises in traditional, local and fresh food prepared in the most authentic way. It is in an almost ideal spot, about 10 me-

tres above the Sečovlje salt-pans, with a view of the exceptional salt fields and the landscape park. In the nineteenth century, Casa del Sal was the home of salt-pan workers. Darko's parents, the first private hoteliers in Portorož, bought the house and opened it to guests almost half a century ago. The house expanded from

two to four rooms with ensembles and two apartments. An Istrian chef, Darko Maršič makes food in the spirit of the Istrian tradition, which means that he uses organically grown vegetables and fruit and typical Istrian home produce, such as jams, olive oil and wine. Naturally, the stress is on fish dishes and seafood specialities

Photo: Mateja Jordovič Potočnik



The name Casa del Sal was chosen because they have salt-pans practically on their plate, as they say.

Darko Maršič is an Istrian chef who prepares dishes in the spirit of the Istrian tradition.

In Casa del Sal cuisine only the sea salt from Piran salt-pans is used.

Photo: Mateja Jordovič Potočnik



prepared in the traditional Istrian style. Today, seafood is considered an elite ingredient, but this is not true; it has always been eaten in Istria, regardless of the social status. Seafood in lasagnes, broths with polenta, Istrian soup, etc. has always been everyday food for the people of Istria.

The appetiser is a true pleasure for the soul and stomach, consisting of Istrian prosciutto, fresh cheese and olives, sardines marinated in lemon juice and oil and two kinds of fish pâté. Smoked fish is prepared with olives and Fonda sea bass serves as the basis for the second pâté; the Fonda fish farm is nearby.

The broth is served simply with polenta. It is made with cuttlefish, flying fish and shrimp, with a lot of onion and Malvazija wine, which must be present not only

on the table, but also in the broth. Dessert includes pastries and pumpkin, cherry and apple with pine-nut rolls.

The growth in home catering and farmhouse offer in Istria is very encouraging. More than ten years ago, Casa del Sal was renovated and four stylistically decorated double bedrooms were constructed above the cosy dining room with a fireplace. The garden overlooks the salt-pans.

From the house where he has lived all his life, Darko has observed the salt-pans every morning since he was a boy. But he appreciates them more now than he used to. He says that this space means a lot to him, that it has a special healing energy. He fishes and relaxes there. The area offers so much beauty, it only has to be felt, he likes to emphasise. Even

if you are not there for therapy, simply being there gives you a lot. A small thing, but at the same time so great – the salt-pans. “If we offer them to tourists in the right way and attract tourists to visit them, it will really enrich our tourist offer,” stresses Darko. The local people would also have to appreciate this natural beauty more. Plans to develop the 650-hectare area are limited; the construction of a hotel next to the airport is part of a medium-term plan, while the rest of the area is supposed to remain a nature-friendly protected zone. The name Casa del Sal was chosen because they have salt-pans practically on their plate, as they say. They are rewarded by the guests who return time and time again. “I like it when my guests are nice to me, when they are grateful. And that is my motivation to do better and make even more effort for them.”

An Istrian chef, Darko Maršič makes food in the spirit of the Istrian tradition, which means that he uses organically grown vegetables and fruit and typical Istrian home produce, such as jams, olive oil and wine. Naturally, the stress is on fish dishes and seafood specialities prepared in the traditional Istrian style.

The Accessibility of Parliament as the Foundation of the House of Democracy

Around the world, people have rather little trust in their governing bodies. This is also because many citizens are not well informed about how the institutions of the political system function. One of the foundations of direct democracy is direct contact between citizens and their representatives in the latter's workplace i.e. the premises of the National Assembly in the case of Slovenia.

We are thus promoting active citizenship; the National Assembly is distinguished by its exceptional openness and frequency of visitors: it has some 14,000 Slovenians and foreign visitors annually, and almost 160,000 people have visited it in the twenty years since its establishment.

Children learning Slovenian History from the mural.



Photo: Archives of National Assembly

With planned and organised visits to the National Assembly, we thus develop awareness of national identity, understanding of the democratic structure of the state, and particularly comprehension and acknowledgement of the role of the National Assembly in the political system.

With planned and organised visits to the National Assembly, we thus develop awareness of national identity, understanding of the democratic structure of the state, and particularly comprehension and acknowledgement of the role of the National Assembly in the political system. We believe that we can contribute to citizens' trust in national institutions and that this makes the work of Parliament more transparent, open and comprehensible. We wish to help visitors to the National Assembly understand the elements of democracy and their own role in it through active participation in democratic processes and procedures. We are thus promoting active

citizenship; the National Assembly is distinguished by its exceptional openness and frequency of visitors: it has some 14,000 Slovenians and foreign visitors annually, and almost 160,000 people have visited it in the twenty years since its establishment. In addition to the daily guided tours for organised and planned groups, individual visitors can view the parliament building on Open Door days. The Slovenian house of democracy also hosts the highest state and protocol events. The constant care devoted to maintaining the building, its equipment and movable property is at the same time care for an important part of the Slovenian national cultural heritage.

VISIT US: VIEWING PARLIAMENT AND DEBATING SESSIONS

Open Door days have been organised at the National Assembly for many years now. They take place once a month, on second Saturday in the month, except in August. Free guided tours start at 9, 10 and 11 am. Visitors are conducted to the large entrance hall on the first floor, where they can view Slavko Pengov's fresco 'The History of the Slovenians from the Settlement of the Slavs to the Present Day' and the exhibition of glass 'The History of Slovenian Parliamentarianism' by Joško Šavli and Janko Prunk. The Large Hall, which was renovated in 2000, can be viewed from the

Photo: Archives of National Assembly



Traditional Slovenian folk dancers.

gallery. The hall is circular (in the tradition of folk assemblies under a village lime tree). The centre of the circle symbolises the centre of democracy. During the viewing, which usually takes 45 minutes, guides inform the visitors about the legislative procedure, jurisdictions and work of the National Assembly. Visits are possible every working day for groups that are booked in advance. The tours are conducted in Slovenian, English and Serbian.

A PLACE OF CREATIVE DISPUTE

Many citizens are not familiar with how democracy works.

The mechanism of the Slovenian political system may also be a process with many unknowns to many citizens. Thus, in the working of parliamentary democracies, we frequently consider the activities of parliament or the party system as unproductive or even harmful 'disputes' and this is one of the reasons for the poor public reputation of the parliament. This perception is based on a fundamental misapprehension; the disputes, as fully-informed debate or a confrontation of different opinions, serve as the basis for democratic parliamentary procedure.

Our experience has shown that we are on the right path. Although our contribution is only a small piece in a mosaic characterised by low turnouts in elections, a reduction in the interest of the public and political participation and a general lack of trust in the democratic institutions of representative democracy, the positive responses of visitors are encouraging. The National Assembly remains an open house which you are invited to visit.

Our experience has shown that we are on the right path. Although our contribution is only a small piece in a mosaic characterised by low turnouts in elections, a reduction in the interest of the public and political participation and a general lack of trust in the democratic institutions of representative democracy, the positive responses of visitors are encouraging.

Photo: Archives of National Assembly



Young public - once per year National Youth Parliament is organised in the National Assembly.

INFORMATION ON VISITING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

To plan a visit, contact the Public Relations Service and consult on the planned date. Arrange your visit by calling 01 478 97 88 (Gordana Vrabec) or send an e-mail to obiski@dz-rs.si.

‘Yugoslavia, My Country’ by Goran Vojnović Best Novel of Last Year

Publisher Delo awards the Kresnik Prize
for the best Slovenian novel in the last year



Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA

The winner received a cheque for 5,000 euros before lighting the traditional bonfire at the top of Rožnik Hill accompanied by a procession.

Between 100 and 130 novels in Slovenian are published every year. Since 1991, the best of them have been awarded the Kresnik Prize (Kresnik was one of the most important Slavic deities in former Carantania and Carniola).

Goran Vojnović achieved a special record in the world of literature on 23 June when he received an award for his novel ‘Yugoslavia, My Country’ on Ljubljana’s Rožnik Hill. The author of two novels has also won two Kresnik Awards, but this was the first time he was able to light the traditional bonfire, as he was not in Slovenia in 2009 when he was awarded for his first novel, ‘Čefurji raus!’. His second novel also deals with a quest for roots, this time in a story about a search for a father who turns out to be a war criminal. In the award-winning novel, Vojnović asks big and difficult questions in what is anything but a happy Balkan story,

which does not play the Yugo-nostalgia card, but the ‘Yugo-justice’ and ‘Yugo-reality’ cards, and also asks what and how Slovenian nationalism has anything to do with the complexity of Yugoslavia and what children have to do with the bloody stories of their parents. He touches the reader with dilemmas of the greatest universality. No relativism enters the son’s search for his father. He faces questions such as: is it possible to forgive; is it possible to understand madness and desperation; what is punishment and how it can be explained; why did a world which seemed unchangeable for so long fall to pieces?

“I used to be an underdog, now I’m not, and I admit to myself that I’m an author. We obviously find in literature what this new world does not give us. I urge all of you to read as many books as possible and find your favourites and answers to your questions.” He explained that his writing was based on a world with which he is still rather familiar, but which is not as close to him as the world he described in his debut novel. While writing the book, he was aware that it opens up difficult topics, but he nevertheless wanted it to draw in and hold the reader. This was confirmed by the award jury in its citation. “Vojnović’s novel does not allow the reader to stop,”

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



"I grew up in Ljubljana, actually in a suburb called Fužine, which is one of the biggest neighbourhoods in Slovenia. Quite small if you compare it to suburbs in big cities abroad, but for Slovenia 15,000 people is a large number. In Fužine there are a lot of people from other ex-republics of Yugoslavia: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia. A multi-cultural suburb, which makes it interesting, a good place for me to find my stories, to learn about different aspects of life in a society which is not as simple as the rest of Slovenia."

Photo: Nebojša Tejić / STA



Also nominated for the Kresnik prize were 'Raclette' by Borut Golob, 'That I Am Afraid?' by the recently deceased Maruša Krese, 'The Downfall of the Cave' by Peter Rezman and 'You Who Come Close from Afar' by Marko Sosič. In the photo: The nominees (except the deceased Maruša Krese) Peter Rozman, Marko Sosič, Goran Vojnović and Borut Golob.

they wrote. But who are his readers? "I'm becoming less and less interested in this, because it is very hard to guess what people will like. I'm simply trying to write as best as I can."

He felt relieved when he finished the novel, because the writing alone took almost a year, while the research work for the story took three more years. As he said, he spent some difficult nights when he was trying to understand the mindset of a man who "commits such atrocities". "It's not really pleasant living with a war criminal character. It is intriguing, but unpleasant," he added.

Mitja Čander, the editor of the Beletrina literary collection, in which the novel was published,

is convinced that Vojnović has managed something almost unimaginable. "Slovenians don't like successful or outstanding people. Goran has already had numerous successes in his relatively short career, and I was almost certain that he would not get a Kresnik – as if he has been praised enough for a decade or two...Now the pressure will be even greater, but he has already proven that this doesn't affect him much."

Among approximately 130 novels published last year, the other nominees for the prize awarded by the publisher Delo were 'Raclette' by Borut Golob, 'That I Am Afraid?' by the recently deceased Maruša Krese, 'The Downfall of the Cave' by Peter Rezman and 'You Who Come

Close from Afar' by Marko Sosič. The Kresnik Prize winner was selected at the award ceremony by the four-member jury presided by Miran Hladnik. The jury also included literary historian and professor, Alojzija Zupan Sosič, the Slovenian language expert Urška Perenič, and Delo journalist and literary critic Igor Bratož.

According to the jury, Vojnović is certainly a literary star among the contestants, as his debut novel 'Čefurji raus!' brought him a series of awards, including the Kresnik Prize in 2009. In his second novel, 'Yugoslavia, My Country', he deals with people looking for their roots, this time in a more serious story about a quest for a father who turns out to be a war criminal.

"I used to be an underdog, now I'm not, and I admit to myself that I'm an author. We obviously find in literature what this new world does not give us. I urge all of you to read as many books as possible and find your favourites and answers to your questions."

From Uriah Heep to Wagner

On the Stages of Diverse Summer Festivals

The two largest Slovenian towns are hosting two of the largest international festivals in Europe this year. The 61st Ljubljana Festival will again offer performances by some of the best Slovenian and international artists. The 21st Festival Lent in Maribor has come to a close; its rich multicultural programme of various events covered a wide range of cultural tastes.

During Festival Lent, Maribor is transformed into a happy, lively, colourful, sociable and relaxed town for 16 days and 16 nights, which bathes in the spirit of music, dance, street theatre, comedy and creative experience. This year's 21st Festival Lent brought artists from 38 countries to Maribor; some 1,500 events took place at more than 40 venues.



Photo: Archive of Festival Lent



Photo: Archive of Festival Lent

Due to its multicultural character, Festival Lent is always a special experience, which, say the organisers, can best be summed up in one word – 'lenting'.

FESTIVAL LENT – THE PRIDE OF MARIBOR

Festival Lent is the largest Slovenian open-air festival and one of the largest in Europe. It has an important symbolic role in the image of the second largest town in Slovenia. Its beginnings date back to 1993, when it developed from Folkart, the international folklore festival. During Festival Lent, Maribor is transformed into a happy, lively, colourful, sociable and relaxed town for 16 days and 16 nights, which bathes in the spirit of music, dance, street theatre, comedy and creative experience. This year's 21st Festival Lent brought artists from 38 countries to Maribor; some 1,500 events took place at more than 40

venues. The diverse festival programme was divided into various parts i.e. the Folkart international folklore festival, the Ana Desetnica, international street theatre festival, Jazzlent festival and Sl-adolent, a street food festival. Art Camp and Adventure Park in the town park were devoted to children and youth.

Vladimir Rukavina, the Director of Festival Lent, said that it is difficult to highlight certain events among so many different genres, because this all depends on the individual visitor's taste. He added that he personally enjoyed the concerts by Uriah Heep, Osibisa, Medeski, Martin & Wood, Tony Allen, Bill Evans' Soulgrass, OPM, Mnozil Brass, Che Sudaka, Edo

Maajka, Stefanovski & Spasov, TBF, and viewed the colourful folk traditions at the 25th international Folkart festival as well as enjoyed the street theatre performances... In short, he 'lented' at this year's Festival.

According to the organiser, Narodni dom Maribor, the largest Slovenian open-air festival has been visited by every fourth Slovenian at least once. For 21 years, between the end of June and the beginning of July, the festival has attracted altogether more than half a million visitors to its many venues. Due to its multicultural character, Festival Lent is always a special experience, which, say the organisers, can best be summed up in one word – 'lenting'.

Photo: N. Razina



Since 1953, the town has been an annual venue for the Ljubljana Festival, where Slovenian and international authors and performers of music, opera, classic and modern ballet, musical, theatre and visual arts present their work.

Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky orchestra will perform 'The Rhine Gold' and 'The Valkyr' at the Ljubljana Festival in September. In the photo: scene from Richard Wagner's 'Das Rheingold'.

LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL – CENTRE OF ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE

With its cosmopolitan spirit, Ljubljana Festival makes a great contribution to the diversity of life in the Slovenian capital. Since 1953, the town has been an annual venue for the Ljubljana Festival, where Slovenian and international authors and performers of music, opera, classic and modern ballet, musical, theatre and visual arts present their work. Over the years, the festival has developed, changed, grown and influenced cultural life in Ljubljana. In recent years, the summer festival has generally featured between 70 and 80 events of various genres, which are seen by about 80,000 Slovenian and foreign visitors.

With its programme focusing on Wagner and Verdi, the 61st Ljubljana Festival joins the music world this year in commemorating their bicentennials. Russian culture is also specially featured this year due to the long-standing excellent cooperation with their artists and the richness of the Rus-

sian musical and dance tradition. This year's festival opened at the picturesque Congress Square with a project that combined several artistic genres. The exceptional musical performance was conducted by Ivan Repušič, accompanied by breathtaking visual effects provided by the Ars Electronica company. Currently the most popular duet in the world, 2Cellos, performed in Congress Square on the following day.

Among the dance performances, Darko Brlek, Director of Festival Ljubljana, mentions Romeo and Juliet by Opera and Ballet SNG Maribor, the ballet evening with the famous ensemble Béjart Ballet, and The Brothers Karamazov by choreographer Boris Eifman from St. Petersburg, which is also the home of the Mariinsky Theatre, which will première part of Wagner's famous Ring Cycle. Due to the length of the piece, which lasts about 15 hours, the performers from St. Petersburg will perform The Rhinegold on 2 September and the second part, The Valkyrie, on the following day. The remain-

ing Siegfried and Twilight of the Gods will be performed in 2014. Brlek also noted the visit by one of the oldest symphonic orchestras in the world, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the soloists of the Teatro alla Scala Academy and the queen of flamenco, María Pagés. Grease, the musical, will be coming to the Križanke stage from London's West End. The Festival Director particularly mentioned the choir of the Foundation Opera Giuseppe Verdi from Trieste, whose performance of Rossini's Stabat Mater is a gift from Trieste to Ljubljana and thus enhances the friendship between the towns.

The 61st Ljubljana Festival offers more than 80 events with 3,000 artists from 30 countries. It continues to promote tradition and experience, but also freshness and novelty. It brings exquisite crème de la crème performances from around the world to Slovenian stages in the hope that many foreign visitors join the Slovenian audiences and enjoy them.

With its programme focusing on Wagner and Verdi, the 61st Ljubljana Festival joins the music world this year in commemorating their bicentennials. Russian culture is also specially featured this year due to the long-standing excellent cooperation with their artists and the richness of the Russian musical and dance tradition.

Photo: Marta Tiberiu



Ballet performance Romeo and Juliet by Slovenian National Theatre Maribor

Simona Lampe – Recycled

At the beginning of June, the Slovenian designer Simona Lampe addressed businesswomen for the third time and invited them to participate in the fashion show 'Recycled III'. This time, she has created the so-called 'Check-mate' collection, using more than a hundred used clothes, thereby making an allusion to our unreasonable competition with the nature. The world is not black and white and there are no winners or losers in the competition between human vs. nature: balance and sustainable cooperation must win.



Photo: Simona Lampe archive

Designer Simona Lampe believes that ecology is also important in fashion.

Designer Simona Lampe believes that ecology is also important in fashion. The Recycling project began in 2009 and is based on recycling clothes donated by the Slovenian woman managers. It is primarily about spreading environmental awareness in business fashion, but also about economising. "Recycling clothes is very demanding and time-consuming, a real work of art, since the clothes are completely remade. But that is the point and fascination," says Lampe. The collection of recycled clothes includes clothes which observe the concept of rationality by being multifunctional. Lampe firmly believes that recycled and multifunctional clothing will also become fashion guidelines.

SIMONA LAMPE, HER HISTORY AND HER FASHION DESIGN

Simona Lampe is a self-taught woman in fashion design. She has an MA in Economics. Seven years ago, the former banker who, as head of investor relations, regularly came into contact with international credit rating agencies, was stimulated by her passion for design and fashion into turning her hobby into a job, despite the initial uncertainty and doubt. At first, she designed under the trademark 'Gospodična', while today she is prepared to be at the forefront and has no reservations about presenting her name and work under the 'Simona Lampe' trademark.

She wants to give a new face to fashion design, which will clearly speak of her mission: to dress an active woman aged over 30. In every woman, she wants to emphasise her youthfulness and maintain her elegance. She says that she wants to "design rational, glamorous business fashion and spread awareness about the rational use of clothes among businesswomen through recycling and multi-use."

She tries to find inspiration for her work everywhere, including during sleep, and always wants to present her work through a concrete message or story. So, for the Slovenian Fashion Week autumn/winter 2013, she prepared a collection that was a compli-

Photo: Simona Lampe archive



Where recycling and multi-use meet.

ment to the detective film style, particularly the English icon Sherlock Holmes. Sixty per cent of the collection was made from recycled clothes. The recycled items even included a dress made from a Macedonian blanket with a big floral pattern which Lampe had noticed at her neighbour's when it was drying on the balcony.

WHY RECYCLE CLOTHES?

Sustainable development is a process, a certain consciousness and a new system of values. The fashion industry and all labour-

intensive industries can contribute considerably to reducing environmental pollution: fashion may contribute by using eco-friendly materials and recycling old clothes.

With her projects Recycled I-III, Simona Lampe wanted to show businesswomen the usefulness of recycling with a real example of their old clothes. The participating managers donated their old clothes, Lampe redesigned them and the managers could buy them back if they wanted. Through this type of creative process, the designer is building a

new, sustainable aspect of fashion, clothes which are inclined towards rationality, but still preserve certain glamour.

"The aim was to raise awareness among businesswomen about consumerism in fashion and to fill them with enthusiasm for recycling old clothes. Because the response to 'Recycled I' was unexpectedly positive, I decided to pursue the idea," Lampe says. Can we look forward to Recycled IV? Despite the success of the project, the designer has some reservations, since she believes that a similar project could only

With her projects Recycled I-III Simona Lampe wanted to show businesswomen the usefulness of recycling with a real example of their old clothes.

Photo: Simona Lampe archive (both photographs)



Dress code – check pattern on a check pattern, flowers, lines and hat.

Slovenian Fashion Week autumn / winter 2013



Photo: Simona Lampe archive (both photographs)

be done somewhere abroad. She has also considered recycling men's clothes, but fears that it would be more difficult to find buyers for her redesigned creations among managers, because men's business fashion

is rather conservative. So what will Lampe's next challenge be? She says she would be delighted to recycle the clothes of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other visible female politicians or businesswomen. Perhaps next

time you might read about Simona Lampe in a foreign fashion magazine. Who knows? Her portfolio has already attracted the attention of the editor of the French Runway Magazine ...

Dr Janez Potočnik:
 "The recycling initiative, even in the world of high-fashion and prestige, which is fundamentally consumer-oriented, is welcome. It proves that the desires that drive our activity, our actions and way of life can be combined with a sustainable concept of development. It is proof that it is possible to do this in a different way. And it will not be possible to do it except differently. "



DR JANEZ POTOČNIK, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Buying and accumulating clothes is a characteristic of modern consumer society and of us, consumers. It is one of the symbols of consumerism. Open your wardrobes (in your room, in the basement or in the attic) and ask yourself how many items of clothing you have not worn in the last year or two. Even if you are someone who tries to help people in need and tries to act responsibly, I am afraid that the answer is still worrying.

The recycling initiative, even in the world of high-fashion and prestige, which is fundamentally consumer-oriented, is welcome. It proves that the desires that drive our activity, our actions and way of life can be combined with a sustainable concept of development. It is proof that it is possible to do this in a different way. And it will not be possible to do it except differently.

Photo Taminio Petelinšek / STA

Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia

Photo: Dunja Wedam / SPIRIT (both photographs)



As the last city where matches in the European Basketball Championship will be played, we present Ljubljana, the capital. The qualifiers in group A (with Ukraine, Great Britain, France, Germany, Israel and Belgium playing) will be played in the legendary Tivoli Hall, while the elimination matches will be in the modern new Stožice Arena.

Ljubljana and basketball are closely connected. After all, Ljubljana is the home base of Union Olimpija, which was one of the best clubs in Europe in the 1990s. Four decades ago, Ljubljana hosted the best world basketball players, where Yugoslavia was placed among the three best teams in the world in front of its own supporters. Ivo Daneu, the legend of Slovenian basketball and ambassador of EuroBasket 2013, was in the team in that time.

Tivoli Hall, where the qualifiers for group A will be played, hosted the tournament then. For years, Tivoli was the home base of Union Olimpija, the Ljubljana basketball club, which has won fifteen Slovenian national championships since 1992. After

Stožice Arena was built, the club moved there. Stožice Arena officially opened in July 2010 with a basketball match between Slovenia and Spain. Star players such as Erazem Lorbek, Goran Dragić, Marc Gasol and Juan Carlos Navarro were the first to perform in this impressive hall.

Also numerous renowned basketball players, including EuroBasket 2013 ambassador Rašo Nesterović, Beno Udrih and the Lithuanian playmaker Šarunas Jasikevičius, started their success stories in Ljubljana with Union Olimpija.

ABOUT LJUBLJANA

Ljubljana is home to 280 thousand people. It is the capital of Slovenia and covers more than 275 square kilometres. The average temperature in September is 21.5 Celsius. It may seem small for a capital, but this means that everything is accessible and within reach. It has an excellent public transport network which allows visitors to travel from one end of Ljubljana to another on just one bus. Points where bicycles can be rented are located on streets around the city.

HISTORY AND TOURIST SIGHTS

After the First World War and secession from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the region became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. In 1929, Ljubljana became the capital of the Drava Banate, a province of Yugoslavia. During the Second World War, it was occupied and surrounded by more than thirty kilometres of barbed wire to prevent cooperation between the resistance movement in the city and outside. Since 1985, there has been a memorial path along the route of the wire. Since 1991, Ljubljana has been the capital of independent Slovenia. It is a small, but very beautiful city, with many sights to interest visitors.

Ljubljana Castle, situated on Castle Hill above the old city centre, is hard to miss. It is a 12th century medieval castle with Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance elements. The observation tower was added in 1848; it once housed a guard whose duty was to alert the city to any fires, important visits and other events. The Castle still has a function. It hosts many cultural events and

Ljubljana and basketball are closely connected. After all, Ljubljana is the home base of Union Olimpija, which was one of the best clubs in Europe in the 1990s. Four decades ago, Ljubljana hosted the best world basketball players, where Yugoslavia was placed among the three best teams in the world in front of its own supporters. Ivo Daneu, the legend of Slovenian basketball and ambassador of EuroBasket 2013, was in the team in that time.

The preliminary round of the tournament starting on 4 September will feature 24 teams competing in four groups of six playing in Celje, Jesenice, Koper and Ljubljana. The best three teams from each group will then proceed to the second round that will get underway in Stožice Arena in Ljubljana on 11 September. per and Ljubljana.



Photo: Taminio Petelinšek / STA

Ljubljana is home to 280 thousand people. It is the capital of Slovenia and covers more than 275 square kilometres. It may seem small for a capital, but this means that everything is accessible and within reach.

weddings. In 2006, a funicular was opened which connects the Castle with the city centre.

City Hall, situated in Town Square, is the headquarters of Ljubljana City Administration. The original building was built in the Gothic style in 1484. It was renovated between 1717 and 1719 in the Baroque style, with elements of the Venetian style under the vigilant eye of architect Gregor Maček. In front of it, in Town Square, is the famous Robba Fountain, created by Francesco Robba, who also designed many other Baroque monuments in the city. The original can be seen in the National Gallery.

Ljubljana Cathedral or the Cathedral of St. Nicholas serves the Archdiocese of Ljubljana. The building, which can be easily recognised by its green dome and twin towers, is on Cyril and Methodius Square, next to Ljubljana Central Market and near the City Hall. The Archdiocese of Ljubljana was established in 1461. Between 1701 and 1706, the Jesuit architect Andrea Pozzo designed a Baroque church with two lateral chapels in the form of a Roman cross. A dome was built in the centre of the church in 1841. The interior is decorated with Baroque frescoes painted by Giulio Quaglio between 1703 and 1706, and between 1721 and 1723.

The Franciscan Church is situated on Prešeren Square. It is a Ljubljana parish church. It was built between 1646 and 1660, and replaced the older Gothic church which had stood in the same place. It is designed in the style of an early Baroque basilica. A statue of France Prešeren and his muse stand opposite the church in Prešeren Square. Prešeren is considered the greatest Slovenian poet, and his poem 'Zdravljica' (A Toast) is the Slovenian national anthem. With its 70.35 m, Nebotičnik, a thirteen-storey building, used to be the tallest building far and wide. Today, it serves mainly business purposes, with a café, bar and observation

The National and University Library, established in 1774, is one of the most important national educational and cultural institutions of Slovenia. It is located in the centre of Ljubljana, in a building designed by the architect Jože Plečnik in the years 1930–31 and constructed between 1936–41. The building is considered one of the greatest achievements by Plečnik.

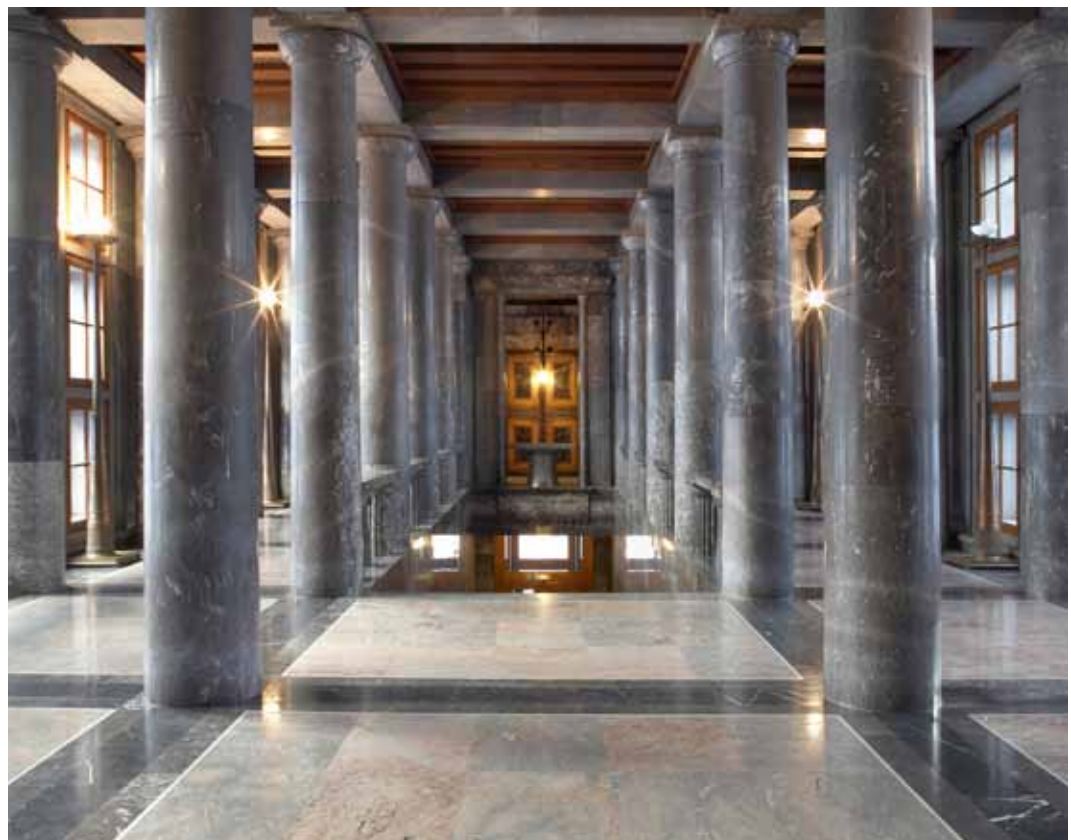


Photo: Jakše Jeršič / SPIRIT

Photo: Stanko Grudeln / STA



The final round featuring the top eight teams will start with quarter-finals on 18 September and culminate with the final on 22 September. The organisers have also teamed up with Slovenian municipalities and partners to provide free broadcasts in front of the arenas for fans who will be unable to get a hold of the tickets.

deck on the top floor. It was designed by the Slovenian architect Vladimir Šubic. The building opened in 1933 and it was for some time the highest residential building in Europe.

Tivoli Park is another big attraction in Ljubljana. It was designed by the French engineer Jean

Blanchard in 1813 and today covers approximately five square kilometres. The park was set up during the French occupation in 1813 and was named after a park in Paris, Jardin de Tivoli. It was redesigned between 1921 and 1939 by the Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik, who created the central promenade named after

the renowned Slovenian impressionist painter Rihard Jakopič. The park contains many species of trees, flower gardens, statues and fountains, and several famous buildings, including Tivoli Castle, the National Museum of Contemporary History in Cekin Castle and the Tivoli Hall.

Jože Plečnik was a Slovene architect that had most impacted the modern identity of the capital of Slovenia, the city of Ljubljana, by renovating it, designing most notably the iconic Triple Bridge and the Slovene National and University Library building, banks along the Ljubljanica River, the Ljubljana open market buildings, the Ljubljana cemetery, parks, plazas etc.

Photo: Jakše_Jeršič / SPIRIT (left), Kase / SPIRIT (right)



Left / Plečnik's Žale cemetery in Ljubljana. Cemetery is modeled on the basis of various architectural styles from classical Greek and Byzantine to Oriental.

Right / Ljubljana Castle with Kamnik-Savinja Alps in the background.

A City Sports Supporter Zone will be set up for the championship: visitors will be able to watch games on a big screen in Congress Square. Numerous events will be held in the Square and on Breg (the embankment of the River Ljubljanica), including shows by the Dunking Devils acrobatic basketball team, Kazina dance troupe, Ana Monro Theatre, and the Pustotnik accordion ensemble. Visitors will be frequently surprised by a special show, so-called 'video mapping', with a projection onto the building of the Slovene Philharmonic. An information point will also be set up in Congress

Square where sports fans and other visitors to the City Sports Supporter Zone can find complete tourist and general information. The Square will also feature food stalls.

On the embankment of the River Ljubljanica, forty concession stands will offer a selection of food with tastings and the option of buying protected Slovenian products, homemade food and characteristic Slovenian wines. The Ljubljana Wine Route will be offering another form of entertainment from 14 September until the end of the championship.

I Feel Slovenia and the European Basketball Championship

On its two-month tour promoting Slovenia, its brand and EuroBasket, the Government Communication Office visited capitals in the Balkans. In cooperation with Slovenian diplomatic missions, the Office set up special 'I Feel Slovenia' basketball courts in the central squares of the cities to inform passers-by of the forthcoming European Basketball Championship. This spectacular event, which will be a real treat for basketball fans, will be held in Slovenia between 4 and 22 September.

Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Podgorica and Skopje are capitals of Balkan countries that were once united in a common state, whereas today they are all anxiously awaiting this sporting gathering.



Many visitors had their first encounter with a basketball on the 'I Feel Slovenia' court.



Photo: Archive of GCO (all three photographs)



Until then, all that remains is to warmly invite everyone to come to Slovenia in September where you will be able to feel Slovenia in the bouncing rhythms of basket ball. Welcome!

Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Podgorica and Skopje are capitals of Balkan countries that were once united in a common state, whereas today they are all anxiously awaiting this sporting gathering. The Ban Jelačić Square, Republic Square, Children of Sarajevo Square, Roman Square and Macedonia Square all 'felt' Slovenia, and the local residents were given a chance to try their hand at numerous ball skills and win attractive prizes. They could also enjoy

shows by the Dunk Kings and Dunking Devils acrobatic teams, who entertained the Slovenian President, Borut Pahor, and the Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, in Zagreb.

The appealing layout of the court inspired a passion for basketball even in the shiest visitors and passers-by, attracting them to join in the entertainment programme. Many visitors had their first encounter with a basketball on the 'I

Feel Slovenia' court. This was also the aim of the entire promotion of Slovenia, the host of EuroBasket 2013. Once again we have shown ourselves to be a hospitable nation, which we are certain to demonstrate in September during the European championship. Until then, all that remains is to warmly invite everyone to come to Slovenia in September where you will be able to feel Slovenia in the bouncing rhythms of basket ball. Welcome!

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA



Prize for Boris Pahor

Boris Pahor, a writer from Trieste, has been awarded the 2013 European Citizen's Prize by the European Parliament. The Prize is awarded to individuals or groups who have shown remarkable commitment to encourage mutual understanding and closer connections between the nations of the European Union.

Pahor will receive the award in Slovenia at the end of August, on his 100th birthday. At the initiative of MEP Mojca Kleva Kekuš, all Slovenian MEPs proposed Pahor for the award. His candidature was justified with the statement that he has invaluable influenced Slovenian language and the cultural development of the area between Italy and Slovenia as a critical writer and great intellectual.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek / STA



TS startup Winner

Telekom Slovenije announced the second generation winner of the TSstartup business accelerator. An expert committee of Telekom Slovenije selected Confidly as the winner and Tee.LT as the runner-up from among eleven teams.

Tee.LT developed a mobile application for learning multiplication tables easily and received an award of ten thousand euros. Confidly developed an application which assists users to submit questions and receive advice anonymously. The award was twenty thousand euros. Other teams participating in the second generation of the business accelerator were Beezing, Callwith.Me, Dropmedia, Facility, FAST, Food IO, Naymit, ShowMeAround and Wellioo.

Photo: Staniko Gruden / STA



Lenarčič declared the World's Pilot of the Year in Paris

At the Flightglobal Achievement Awards in the category of the world's pilot of the year, Matevž Lenarčič received the highest number of votes and won despite strong competition. The ceremony took place on Tuesday in Paris at the Paris Air Show.

The nominees included Felix Baumgartner, who parachuted from space; a helicopter crew who ditched in the North Sea and whose fourteen passengers were all rescued, and a team of air traffic controllers, the NATS Olympics Team, who managed air traffic at airports during the London Olympics. Thus the victory of the Slovenian pilot is that more important.

Photo: Aljoša Rehar / STA



Slovenian Xlab wins the NASA Prize

The Xlab company, which is a member of the Ljubljana Technology Park, has won the first NASA World Wind Europa Challenge. The jury of the competition, which took place in Florence, chose Xlab for their improvements to the NASA World Wind open source platform which enables the visualisation and processing of geographic data.

The team that developed the tools to upgrade NASA's platform comprised Jure Polutnik, Marko Praprotnik, Gregor Berginc, Marjan Šterk and Vito Čuček. According to Vito Čuček, Xlab's programmers improved the platform with effects such as a display of the atmosphere and shading, as well as a colour display of relief; they further accelerated the display of vectors and data transfers and reduced Internet connection and server loading. NASA was primarily impressed by the universal nature of their improvements.

Photo: DANIEL NOVAKOVIČ / STA



Trnfest

30 July – 1 September 2013

KUD France Prešeren, Karunova ulica 14, Ljubljana

Since 1991, the Trnfest international summer festival has been offering a versatile programme, featuring music, theatre, dance, film, fine and visual arts and photography by Slovenian and international artists. The Emona Promenade Festival in Eipprova Street will run parallel to the activities of Trnfest at the end of August, with performances, creative workshops and other events for all ages.

Photo: Bajželj / SPIRIT



Trenta Fair

24 July – 2 September 2013, Trenta

The people of Trenta once celebrated two important holidays: St. Anne's Day on 26 July, the patron saint of Trenta, and the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 8 September, when a large cattle breeding fair was held. Today, the holidays are combined into a series of events called Trenta Fair (Trentarski senjem). Numerous events take place during Trenta Fair: concerts, an organic produce market, children's workshops, Alpine cinematography and the opening of an exhibition at Trenta Lodge.

Programme at <http://www.tnp.si/prireditve/termin/1288>

Photo: DANIEL NOVAKOVIČ / STA



Photo: RASTO BOŽIČ / STA

Seviq Brežice Festival

22 June – 7 September 2013, different venues in Slovenia

At the Seviq Brežice Festival 2013, you will be able to hear the best in early music, with the best artists from around the world. The events are taking place at cultural heritage sites around Slovenia. For more on the Festival programme, go to www.seviq-brezice.si/

Photo: Ubald Trnkec / SPIRIT



Presentations of Authentic Varieties of Slovenian Wine

Every Thursday in July, August and September
Triglav Bled Hotel

The varied climatic conditions, types of soil, terrain and inexhaustible inspiration of wine-makers give Slovenian wines their variety and diversity. So each Slovenian wine-growing region and each area within these regions has its own unique characteristics which are imparted to the wine. Wines such as Rebula, Zelen, Pinela, Vitovska and yes, also Cviček, are produced only in Slovenia. We can be justifiably proud of them, although we frequently do not know enough about them. Join us at the presentation, where you will be re-introduced to these wines in the company of traditional Gorenjska snacks.

Fishermen's Fest

23 August – 24 August 2013, Izola

The Fishermen's Fest is an event with a 40-year tradition. The festival of fish and fishermen is a genuine Mediterranean party, famous for its versatile culinary offer, especially of fish dishes, performances of known musicians, numerous fun games and sports and cultural events. More at www.izola.eu

Tanja Glogovčan

Matjaž Krivic **Urbanistan is the Story from the Other Side**

To mark Krivic's fifteen years as a photographer, the 'Urbanistan' photography exhibition will be showcased at the platform of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum until 1 September. Another purpose of the exhibition is to collect humanitarian contributions to support the Sechen school for orphans near the city of Dega in Eastern Tibet.

'Urbanistan' is an international art project by Matjaž Krivic, who explores the urban environment of third world countries through the medium of photography. The message of the project is that 'urban' in third world countries does not necessarily mean modern. Krivic draws the attention of broader public to social values that are slowly disappearing, giving way to the ever-increasing pressure of modernisation. Thus the main focus of the exhibition is the search for, and exploration of points where communities and people connect and develop into the urbanisation of humankind. In this context, it may be said that 'Urbanistan' is a sensitive photographic essay about the primacy of people and human values.

'Urbanistan' directs our thoughts to the mayhem of traffic in Calcutta, the tawdry neon sex nightlife of Bangkok, the unbelievable orderliness of chaotic Tokyo, the suffocating and dusty streets of Cairo, decaying and barely alive, the aggressive and hedonistic whirl of Rio, incessantly narcissistic Manhattan, the global supermarket of turbo consumerism.

However, 'Urbanistan' by Matjaž Krivic is a miraculous antithesis to all the above. It is a story from the other side – a story of the quiet loudness on the margins of total existential, religious, economic and geopolitical chaos, a story of the indestructible spirit and eternal search for inspiration that makes survival possible. It is a story of individuals and social groups who are seeking the essence of existence in different places and times in spite of the noise and general urban anxiety. It is a story of survival through play, prayer, tradition, rituals, travels, socialising, and above all, a special illumination that is so well perceived and recorded by the photographer. 'Urbanistan' is a place that offers a break from the city, any city.

Matjaž Krivic is a world-renowned photographer, someone with a sensitive feeling for art, recognised particularly for his panoramic photographs and photographs of impoverished parts of the world which are rich in tradition and the mystery of their beliefs. He has received numerous international commendations and prestigious awards. He has been cooperating with the Sipa Press photo agency since 2000, and recently joined the world's largest photography agency, Getty Images. He received the prestigious Royal Geographical Society – Photographer of the Year award in 2002 and 2003.

More information is available at www.urbanistan.net.

