INTERVIEW: BOŠTJAN ŽEKŠ
WORTHY OF INVESTOR’S CONFIDENCE
THE REGION OF MANY FACES
The value of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Slovenia totalled EUR 5,069.7 million at the end of 2003, up EUR 1,101.8 million from the previous year.

EU member-states are prevalent among the investor countries. The proportion of all FDIs they account for in Slovenia fell from 87.6% to 81.9% in 2002, and had further fallen to 68.5% by the end of 2003. The reason for this was a major investment by Switzerland in the chemicals industry in 2002, and the change in ownership of this investment in 2003, with a consequent rise in the book value of the equity covered by FDI direct affiliates. Switzerland thus held investments of EUR 1,106.1 million in Slovenia at the end of 2003, making it the second-largest investor country after Austria, with a 21.8% share of all FDIs in Slovenia. At the end of 2003, most Swiss investments were made in Slovenian companies dealing in:

- intermediation and wholesale, vehicles excluded (EUR 1,023.9 million);
- production of engines and appliances (EUR 32.0 million).

Throughout the period Austria has remained the most important investor country for Slovenia. At the end of 2003 Austria accounted for just under one-quarter of all FDIs in Slovenia (EUR 1,175.5 million). Most investments were made in companies in the following lines of business:

- other business services (EUR 278.5 million);
- other financial intermediaries excluding the insurance sector (EUR 265.8 million);
- production of pulp and paper (EUR 107.9 million);
- automotive trade and repairs and fuel trade (EUR 81.8 million).

The third-most-important investor country at the end of 2003 was Germany, with investments of EUR 395.6 million, equivalent to 7.8% of all FDIs in Slovenia. At the end of 2003 it held most investments in Slovenian companies in the following lines of business:

- production of engines and appliances (EUR 64.1 million);
- production of communications equipment (EUR 49.5 million);
- production of other non-metallic mineral products (EUR 48.5 million);
- intermediation and wholesale, vehicles excluded (EUR 38.4 million).

The structure of FDIs by activity at the end of 2003 shows the highest concentration of FDIs in intermediation and wholesale, vehicles excluded (25.8%), followed by financial intermediation (15.4%) and other business activities (10.2%). A major change from 2002 was the position of intermediation and wholesale, vehicles excluded, as the leading area of investment, which before the change in ownership in the previous year belonged to chemicals processing companies.

In the breakdown of FDIs by statistical regions, the highest concentration in total value over the entire period examined was in the region of Central Slovenia (61.2% at the end of 2003). Gorenjska accounted for 77% of the total value of FDIs, Podravje 70% and the Coastal/Karst region 6.5%. Together the remaining regions account for 17.7% of all FDIs. Since 1994 there has been no significant change in the regional distribution of FDIs, with Central Slovenia and Gorenjska seeing the fastest growth. Faster growth in FDIs has also been seen in Zasavje since 2001, with a simultaneous slowdown in FDIs in Goriska.
It is true - another month is coming to an end. It seems that in May, the most beautiful spring month, life suddenly comes out into the open and becomes more vibrant. City streets are bustling, numerous open-air events attract more and more participants and visitors every year, there are more tourists to be seen in the streets... in short, the pulse of life intensifies.

This is the case in Ljubljana as well. This year's march around the wire, which proceeds along the ways of occupied and wire-enclosed Ljubljana during World War II, is 49th in a row and was characterised by high turnout, which is traditional of the event. The graduation parade or quadrille, which is performed by Slovenian secondary school graduates in the streets of Ljubljana and other Slovenian cities each year and which is credited with being the largest synchronous dance in the world, is also a unique event. We will largely focus on Ljubljana this time as it was exactly 100 years ago that the city bought the castle, which features exuberantly on almost every postcard of Ljubljana, from Austrian authorities.

In the interview, we talked with Boštjan Žekš, President of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which is the highest national scientific and artistic institution. We are also presenting the field of investments. Slovenia proves to be very interesting for foreign investors - traditionally from the EU countries - whose demand has grown rapidly in the last few years. We have also visited Idrija, where two Slovenian multinationals have their registered offices, and which shape global trends with their production programmes.

Join us on a trip to Kozjanski Park in Styria, Olimje, and the open-air museum in Rogatec, or try your hand at preparing one of many Styrian dishes.
Hungarian President Ferenc Madl Visits Slovenia
Ljubljana, 19 April

The Hungarian President, Ferenc Madl, met the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša during his visit to Slovenia. The two leaders agreed that their two countries are linked by numerous common interests that have been given a new quality by the accession of both countries to the European Union. Prime Minister Janša pressed for an increase in the volume of trade in goods and the development of higher forms of economic cooperation between the two countries and has in doing so drawn attention to the importance of the Port of Koper.

The two speakers exchanged views on the protection of minorities’ rights, especially in the areas of education and the media. In this regard, the Prime Minister expressed his expectation that the Hungarian side will consistently fulfill its obligations arising from the Agreement on Ensuring the Special Rights of the Slovenian National Minority in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia, which was signed in 1992 and that a mixed commission for minority issues will be convened as soon as possible.

Slovenia Prepares for the Adoption of the Euro
Ljubljana, 28 April

Prime Minister Janez Janša met the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Joaquin Almunia, and presented him with Slovenia’s preparations for the adoption of the euro and the appropriate Government measures which should, in accordance with the Bank of Slovenia’s policy, ensure the adoption of the euro on 1 January 2007. Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said that Slovenia is on the right track as regards preparations for the adoption of the euro. He made assurances that the European Commission will do everything for the Convergence Report and the European Council’s derogation decision to be adopted in timely fashion so that Slovenia, Estonia and Lithuania will have enough time for the actual introduction of the euro.

Prime Minister Janez Janša on the First Anniversary of Slovenia’s EU Entry
Ljubljana, 29 April

At the press conference dedicated to the first year of Slovenia’s EU membership, the Prime Minister Janez Janša emphasised that on becoming an EU member, Slovenia did not experience any drastic breaks or changes but that it continued to function normally and was heading in a positive direction. Slovenes returned to the historical, cultural and geographic environment that they belong to. The Slovenian PM also said that in its first year of EU membership, Slovenia has continued to harmonise its legislation with the acquis communautaire, prepared for joining the European Monetary Union and for external border implementation. According to the Prime Minister, Slovenia has taken an important step forward in the adoption of the Euro, which is targeted for 2007 by joining ERM II in June 2004. Within administrative terms, Slovenia was effectively included in the operations of EU institutions and policy-making. Slovenia shares common problems of unfavourable demographic trends, increasing global competitive pressures and lagging behind the US in terms of technology with the other European countries. Slovenia has taken the goals of the Lisbon Strategy seriously. Negotiations regarding future financial perspectives will present a major challenge in the coming period.

PM Janša reiterated the fact that Slovenia was one of the first member States to ratify the European Constitution. He also drew attention to dilemmas that other member states face. He also said that there is a possibility of one of the countries to reject the constitution. This will slightly hinder the process of European integration, although he believes that it will not be a catastrophe that could jeopardise EU existence.

60 Years Later
Ljubljana, 9 May

Slovenian citizens and the Government commemorated the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. Because 9 May is also the day of the liberation of the city of Ljubljana, the central event was held in honour of the victory over Nazism and Fascism and the liberation of Ljubljana at the Congress Square in Ljubljana. The event was interspersed with numerous appearances by folk and pop music groups. The Italian army occupied Ljubljana on 11 April 1941. In February 1942 the Italians fenced the city with a 34 kilometre-long barbed wire ring, which was illuminated with searchlights at night, guarded by 69 bunkers and had a few crossings, which required special identification in order to grant passage. On 9 May 1945, units of the Slovenian Partisan Army liberated Ljubljana. Already by 5 a.m., the siren on the main railway station and a large flag on the Ljubljana Castle announced the end of the four-year-long occupation and later on, the cuckoo of the Radio Svobodna Ljubljana (Free Ljubljana Radio) sounded for the first time. The Central State celebration for the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II was held in the Cankarjev Dom (Cultural and Congress Centre), where the principal speaker was Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Janez Janša. The Prime Minister underlined the fact that the foreign occupation and everything that happened during the war years on Slovenian soil had had a significant impact on Slovenes. The national socialist project of the ‘New Order’ would be remembered by history by its atrocious act - the genocide of nations. It declared Slovenes to be inferior and put them down for annihilation. Our countrymen have entirely legitimately taken up arms against fascism and national socialism. The first to take up arms against the brutal fascist policy of destroying our nationhood were the
members of the TIGR national defence organisation. The bulk of the engagement with the occupying forces was done in Slovenia by the Partisans, who were formally recognised as being part of the Allied Forces even before the end of the war with the Tito-Šubašić Agreement.

At least 90,000 people are believed to have perished on Slovenian territory during the four-year war and its aftermath. The war started on 6 April 1941, when Germany, aided by its allies, invaded Yugoslavia, of which Slovenia was a part at the time. The ethnically-divided kingdom capitulated only 11 days later. The foremost resistance movement to emerge in Slovenia was the “Anti-Imperialist Front”, later known as the “Slovenian Liberation Front”. It was established in Ljubljana as early as on 26 April 1941 with the liberation and unification of all Slovenes laid down as its two main goals. The Front joined the Yugoslav Partisans led by Tito.

### Three Weeks of Sport and Fun for Students

**Ljubljana, 9 May**

The traditional days of the spring student sport and entertainment event, Majske igre (May Games), have begun. The games are held for the 22nd time. The ParaOlympic Games gold medal winner, Mateja Pintar, and ski jumper, Jernej Damjan, opened the May Games. After the official opening, a concert prepared by the organisers entertained the crowd. In the three weeks of May Games, fifty-nine different events and numerous sporting disciplines were prepared for students to compete in against one another. Free workshops were a novelty at this year's event.

Students could try their skills in various disciplines such as golf, baseball, climbing, diving and fencing. Events in twenty-one disciplines were prepared but the majority of students traditionally favour the soccer events. The May Games are prepared by the Student Council of the residents of the Student Dormitory in Ljubljana, the Student Sports Institute with SOU of Ljubljana (Student Organisation of the University of Ljubljana), and the University Sports Association of Slovenia.

### Members of the Government on a Working Visit to Podravje

**Ljubljana, 11 May**

Within the framework of visits to several Slovenian regions aimed at contributing to the polycentric development and decentralisation of Slovenia, Prime Minister Janez Janša's ministerial team visited Maribor and its surroundings. After meetings with representatives of the political, economic and social groups in the region, the Government team concluded that despite the improving statistics measuring unemployment and economic growth in Maribor and Podravje, the problems in the region are still considerable. Prime Minister Janša pointed out three potential key drivers of development in the region - the University, the airport and bank Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor (NKBM), which will form the so-called second financial pillar.

In order to achieve the goals set in relation to NKBM, additional capital will have to be raised; with this in mind, the government has already concluded preliminary agreements with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which will be implemented as soon as possible. It is the government's long-term goal to make NKBM, as the second financial pillar, play its crucial role. In the planned privatisation, the government intends to retain its decisive say in setting the future business plans of this financial institution as is the case with the first financial pillar, i.e. bank Nova Ljubljanska Banka and Triglav insurance Company. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation of the fact that the number of new jobs in Podravje had increased faster than the average in the country. The number of unemployed has also decreased at
Economic Trends in Slovenia in the Year Following Accession to the EU

Ljubljana, 12 May

The Government has read the Spring Report 2005, which among other things contains an analysis of the impact of Slovenia's accession to the EU on economic trends in the EU and on macroeconomic policies in the period prior to the adoption of the euro.

Accession to the EU did not bring about any major economic changes in Slovenia, as the majority of trade had adapted to the competitive situation in the common market during the pre-accession period. The most obvious change was undoubtedly the adoption of the Common EU Trading Policy, which abolished the remaining customs barriers for the import of sensitive agricultural and food products from the EU and - by removing customs formalities in trade with the EU - simplified business conditions, although it also introduced some new trade barriers in trading with countries in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, as EU accession terminated the free-trade agreements with Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For successful exporting industries (chemical, metal and paper industries, electrical and optical equipment production, production of machinery and equipment, cars and vessels), which adapted to the situation in the common market as early as the 1990's, EU accession - along with increased demand as a result of rejuvenated economic growth - provided a positive impetus and an opportunity for increased sales to certain less-traditional markets in the twenty-five member states.

Expectations concerning economic trends in the period prior to the adoption of the euro are relatively good. Until mid-2006, the highest priority should be given to meeting the inflation criterion; this can be achieved through fiscal policy primarily by maintaining a stable exchange rate for the Tolar, and through other macroeconomic policies by supporting the reduced inflation rates. In order to fulfill the Maastricht criterion, the Government will have to continue implementation of the already adopted policies, above all the restrictive policies in the sphere of regulated prices, and acyclic adjustment of excise duties on liquid fuels. At the same time, in the period before the adoption of the euro, the Bank of Slovenia must bring the level of interest rates in line with the interest rates in the euro area, paying particular attention to retaining the balance between reduced inflation and interest rates, and ensuring stable real interest rates.

On the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Austrian National Treaty

Ljubljana, 15 May 2005

Austria has marked the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Austrian National Treaty, which was signed ten years after World War II in order to regulate, in terms of international law, the status of Austria with norms regarding its legal status and constitution. Some of the articles of the Austrian National Treaty are of key importance to Slovenia as well. Among other things, it defines the national border, liability issues and binds Austria to equal treatment of all citizens with Austrian citizenship. Article 7 of the Treaty is the fundamental provision that provides comprehensive protection for the Slovenian minority in Austria. Because of these elements, the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia acceded to the Treaty pursuant to Article 37 of the Treaty in 1955. Article 7 of the Austrian National Treaty ensures Austrian citizens of the Slovenian minority in Carinthia and Styria the same rights under the same conditions as the other Austrian citizens enjoy. These include the right to their own organisations, meetings and newspapers in their own language, the right to basic education, topographic signs and the use of the Slovene language in those administrative and judicial districts in Carinthia and Styria, which have a mixed population.

Slovenia, as the legal successor of the former Yugoslavia, continues its role of the protector-state of the Slovenian minority in Austria. Numerous issues were recorded as positive in the last few years. These issues include: representation of Carinthian Slovenes in the Chancellor's Panel, the 24-hour radio programme in the Slovenian language, the financing of bilingual kindergartens in
Parade 2005. The event has earned them a place in the Guinness Book of Records. The dance began simultaneously in 27 towns in Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Hungary. The total number of dancers was estimated to be 18,268.

At 12.00 pm precisely national radio station Val 202 began broadcasting Strauss’s Fledermaus-Quadrille and the dancers began dancing. For some of the dancers beyond the borders of Slovenia the Val 202 signal was carried by satellite.

The first mass quadrille for the Guinness record - an annual event - was held in Ljubljana in May 2001 and involved 3,128 dancers. In May 2002 8,512 dancers took part in the event in eight towns across Slovenia. By May 2003 the number of dancers had grown to 11,956 and the number of locations to 14. Last year a record-breaking 14,564 dancers took to the streets of Murska Sobota, Maribor, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec, Velenje, Celje, Nova Mesto, Brežice, Trbovlje, Škofja Loka, Kranj, Postojna, Sežana, Nova Gorica, Koper, Ljubljana, Pula and Trieste.

The Spring Session of the Nato Parliamentary Assembly in Ljubljana
Ljubljana, 26 May

From 27 May to 31 May 2005, a Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly will be held in the Grand Hotel Union in Ljubljana at the invitation of the previous members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. Among 700 participants, we are expecting NATO PA member State and observer State parliamentarians, NATO Secretary-General and other NATO representatives, representatives of the Council of Europe, of the Western European Union, of the European Parliament, of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), distinguished guest speakers from numerous countries and the representatives of the Parliament and Government of the Republic of Slovenia to attend the Session.

The NATO PA Ljubljana Session programme will comprise the meetings of five NATO PA Committees: Political Committee, Defence and Security Committee, Science and Technology Committee, Civil Dimension of Security Committee and Economics and Security Committee, which will be held on Saturday 28 May and Sunday 29 May 2005. The Plenary Session to be held on Tuesday 31 May will feature addresses by: President of the NATO PA, Perre Lellouche, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, France Cukjati, PhD, MD, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Janez Janša, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Dimitrij Rupel, and NATO Secretary-General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. The Plenary Session will also feature an interactive presentation of “Black Dawn”, which involves the simulation of a nuclear terrorist attack.

18.268 Secondary School Graduates Set New Open-air Quadrille World Record
Ljubljana, 20 May

At the stroke of noon, secondary school graduates across Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe began dancing a quadrille as part of the Secondary School Graduates Parade 2005. The event has earned them a place in the Guinness Book of Records. The dance began simultaneously in 27 towns in Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Hungary. The total number of dancers was estimated to be 18,268.

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On 1 May our country, along with another nine countries, celebrated the first anniversary since it became a member of the European Union. During its first year of EU membership, Slovenia took part in numerous important processes - adoption of the European Constitutional Treaty, elections to the European Parliament, negotiations on the future EU financial perspective, reform of the Lisbon Strategy - and started preparations for three key projects to be implemented over the next few years: the adoption of the euro and the establishment of the Schengen border regime, which are expected to be completed in 2007, as well as for the presidency of the EU in 2008. It has been generally acknowledged that Slovenia has taken a good position within this big European family, and that the advantages of being an EU member State outweigh the disadvantages.

Slovenia's top officials - President Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister Janez Janša and Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel - describe Slovenia's first year in the European Union as a positive experience, and point out that the country has done a good job with the new role that it has assumed. Their opinion is shared by Slovenia's first European Commissioner, Janez Potočnik. According to Slovenia's senior officials, the country's main priorities in the near future include negotiations on the future EU financial perspective in the period between 2007 and 2013, where their wish is for Slovenia to remain a net receiver of the EU funds; they also point to Slovenia's need to take advantage of the EU-budget funds more effectively. Slovenia's top officials are also convinced that Slovenia should focus on helping the EU to continue improving. An important step towards this goal will be the enforcement of the European Constitution, which Slovenia ratified as one of the first EU member States, indeed third among the EU member States, on 1 February 2005.

Thus, less than one and a half months after Slovenia's accession to the EU, Slovenian voters had their first opportunity, in June 2004, to elect seven Members of the European Parliament from Slovenia. The elections were marked by the victory of New Slovenia (NSi) and the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), which at the time were still opposition parties and are members of the largest European party, the EPP. With the election of two of its MEP candidates - Alojz Peterle and Ljudmila Novak - it was especially New Slovenia that experienced a major, unexpected success. The SDS officials, who went to Brussels and Strasburg, were Romana Jordan Cizelj and...
Mihael Brejc, and the other Slovenian officials to become members of the European Parliament were Borut Pahor (ZLSD/PES), and Mojca Drčar Murko and Jelko Kacin (both LDS/ALDE). After entering the EU, Slovenia did not become a member of the euro area nor of the Schengen zone, so the Tolar remained the national currency after 1 May, and police control is still active on Slovenia's borders with Austria, Italy and Hungary.

**Many tasks on the way**

So, Slovenia still has plenty of tasks that are related to its fully-fledged EU membership to fulfil, the main priority and the one task that will possibly most affect Slovenians' everyday lives being the introduction of the euro in 2007. However, there are certain standards to meet before the euro is adopted. One of these is a minimum of two years in the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM II), which Slovenia entered on 28 June 2004. Even though Slovenia's inflation dropped in 2004, it is still too high to allow Slovenia's inclusion in the euro area; on the other hand, Slovenia does meet two Maastricht criteria, with which most other new EU members, as well as several euro-area members seem to have problems. Slovenia's deficit stands below 3% of its gross domestic product, and its public debt is significantly below the allowed limit. According to the Ministry of Finance, in the first months of its EU membership up to the end of 2004, Slovenia was a net receiver of EU budget funds, and the Government is confident that this may remain the case at least until 2013. Slovenia will be the very first of the EU newcomers to be challenged with EU presidency, which Slovenia is to take up alongside Germany and Portugal as part of the troika that will preside over the Union from the beginning of 2007 up until mid-2008. Should the European Constitution fail to be adopted, Slovenia will preside over the EU alone in the first half of 2008. Janez Janša's Government started preparations for the EU presidency immediately after its establishment at the end of 2004, and a special working body headed by the Prime Minister himself was formed for this very purpose. One of the most recurring questions to occupy the Union over the past year has been how to bring the Lisbon Strategy back to life, and how to make Europe's economy more competitive. The EU member states are therefore expected to be more active in the future implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. In this respect, the Slovenian Government is planning the set-up of a relevant ministry for the Lisbon Strategy.

The lives of Slovenian people have not seen any notable changes in the first year of the country's EU membership. As expected, there have been no mass migrations of people looking for better job opportunities in the older EU member states. In fact, there was a general feeling of discontentment among Slovenians due to the fact that most old member states decided to take advantage of the possibility to introduce a transitional period of several years for the free movement of workers from the eight newcomers, including Slovenia (the exceptions were Malta and Cyprus), as it eventually turned out that all fears of a possible exodus of Slovenians to the West had been completely unjustified. Furthermore, some people's predictions that Slovenia would be flooded with workers from the other new EU members, to which protective measures do not apply, also failed to come true. There were also fears of massive sales of Slovenian real estate to foreigners. The number of foreign citizens buying real estate in Slovenia did register an increase over the past year, but the Government believes there is absolutely no reason to be worried. In case of major disturbances on the real-estate market, Slovenia would still have the possibility to introduce special protective clauses. Generally speaking, Slovenia's EU integration brought no major changes business-wise, at least not to the major companies, which already had to adapt to the EU standards and to their competitiveness over the past few years, when the loss of the markets of the former Yugoslavia made them turn their attention to the EU markets. The main challenges of Slovenian companies thus remain quite similar to those faced by most European companies - ensuring adequate investments in modern technology and opening new jobs with high added value, whereby Slovenia could keep up with the most successful EU member states and meet the new goals of the Lisbon Strategy.

After one year of EU membership, euro-scepticism is not particularly pronounced in Slovenia, but neither is there particular enthusiasm about the EU. Suggesting these are also the results of the latest half-year Eurobarometer poll, according to which Slovenia's EU membership is supported by 52% of its citizens.
Slovenes clearly love Offenbach! After somewhat more than a month following the magnificent premiere of his the Rheinnixen (The Rhein Nymphs) opera in the Cankarjev Dom Cultural and Congress Centre, which we presented in the January issue of our magazine, the Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor presented his most famous opera, Les Contes d'Hoffmann (The Tales of Hoffmann). This can be considered to be the largest project of the Maribor Opera thus far. It was realised with the help of numerous guests from Slovenia and abroad. The project also stirred up a lot of attention with the audience and the Slovenian public in general. As regards opera in Slovenia, this year is undoubtedly Offenbach's year!

The renovated Maribor Opera, which is the largest opera theatre in Slovenia in terms of space and probably the most modern as well, has rightfully been the pride and joy of the city for years. The old Provincial Theatre, built at the beginning of the 20th century according to the established construction pattern of Austrian provincial theatres, such as the edifices of the Slovenian National Theatre Opera and Ballet and the Slovenian National Theatre Drama in Ljubljana, has been enlarged with a spacious extension, which houses a large opera and drama auditorium that seats around 1200, modern theatre premises and depots. In addition to the large hall that can without doubt compare with the Gallus Hall of Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana, the Theatre boasts the eminent classical old theatre, which was renovated some years ago and was the centre of dramatic and operatic creativity even prior to its restoration, the splendid Casino Hall, which is especially appropriate for the staging of chamber music concerts and whose Biedermaier style makes it undisputedly the most beautiful hall of its size in this country. Such spacious conditions have made it possible for the theatre to include in its repertoire this technically extremely challenging project, which

A Feast for the Eyes and Ears
Offenbach's Tales of Hoffmann in the Maribor Opera

Jože Osterman, photo: SNG Maribor Archives
demanded a lot of practice and time, without jeopardizing the performance of other activities. And it has certainly been worth it!

Excellent Team of Artists
The Maribor production of Offenbach's famous opera shows evidence of having been created by extraordinary artists in suitable conditions that were provided for by the capable theatre employees. This is how a genuine operatic spectacle was born - recognizable as regards staging and extraordinary as regards the artistic cast. The team of performers comprising the conductor, Lorenzo Castriota Skanderbeg, the director Plamen Kartaloff, art director Lubimir Jordanov, costume designer Daniela Jordanova and lighting designer Andrej Hajdinjak have worked convincingly and in concert despite their national differences. The star of the show is the Slovenian tenor Janez Lotrič, one of the most prominent opera names in Europe and an old friend to the Maribor Theatre. A large part of the magnificent artistic team came to Maribor from different European countries, predominantly from those of Eastern Europe. The foreign soloists, who gave guest appearances, such as Motoaki Cyozaki, Petya Ivanova, Viktorija Chenska, Irena Petkova have blended splendidly with the permanent Maribor team of opera singers composed of Miro Solman, Andreja Žakonšek, Zorica Fatur, Dušan Topolovec, Valentin Pivovarov and others, most of whom are members of the opera orchestra, the choir and ballet and have delivered a musical experience to the audience the likes of which Maribor Opera has never seen.

Offenbach's popular opera is, of course, well-suited to please the audiences that have always filled the large hall to the brim. The story of the ill-fated poet Hoffmann and his three great loves offers a range of possibilities to the core of the team of artists, as well as to the large number of operatic soloists to demonstrate their abilities. Already from the raising of the curtain when the stage flares up from an obscure darkness into a rustic reddish hue, the audience is treated to musical and visual effects that can only be produced by the finest artists and modern stage technology of which there is obviously no shortage in Maribor. The size of the stage, which enables extensive movement of the performers and is at the same time equally appropriate for solo scenes, introduces the public to sensory pleasures, especially those of sight and hearing. In short, the show is truly captivating and provocative.

As ever, it was with the Tales of Hoffmann performance that the importance of staff and technical conditions for contemporary creativity that enable the production of an opera piece and which Maribor possesses, became evident. Without the new large hall the people of Maribor would have never had the opportunity to enjoy Offenbach's opera. In favourable conditions where creative ambition and economic considerations come together, the theatre becomes a centre of social activity; and this has certainly come true in Maribor. In March and April, buses and trains full of people wanting to see the Tales of Hoffmann rolled into Maribor. This fact is a good reason for us to offer congratulations to Danilo Rošker, Theatre Director, and Stane Jurgec, Opera and Ballet Art Director. We wish these two esteemed gentlemen many more such accomplishments!

This period is the time frame of the film protagonist's Oton growing up, his first love with Marjana and tests the two have to deal with because of the wartime influences on their fragile relationship; he joins the resistance and she falls in love with Giorgio, the Italian officer. There are many other figures entering this love plot; permanent and “temporary” Ljubljana inhabitants who meet in the night bar Purgatory (Vice), the only place where the increasing war violence cannot be felt and where the visitors, locals and
occupying armies’ members can meet free from burden of the war, and to forget the stress and fears they daily meet.

MATJAŽ KLOPČIČ, THE DOYEN OF THE SLOVENIAN FILM

The plot of the film origins in its author’s Matjaž Klopčič’s autobiographical experience. He was born in that stirring year of the mentioned assassination. He is one of the most prominent Slovenian filmmakers, whose work from 1959 includes ten full-length films, six television films and serials, and fifteen short films and documentaries. Among, the most successful, considering audience and critics, were the full-length films Funeral Feast (Sedmina, 1969), Blossoms in Autumn (Cvetje v jeseni, 1973), which was firstly made as a television serial; Fear (Strah, 1974), The Widowhood of Karolina Zašler (Vdovstvo Karoline Zašler, 1976), and My Dad the Socialist Kulak (Moja socialistični kulak, 1987). Klopčič was also the scriptwriter, or co-scriptwriter of most of his films, as well as the author of dialogues and the film story in some of them. Screenings of the prose of Slovenian writers are especially significant in his opus; of Ivan Tavčar, Izidor Cankar, Edvard Kocbek, Filip Kumbatovič - Kalan, Rudi Seligo and others.

Klopčič’s basic occupation is architecture, he perfected film directing in Paris between the years 1962 and 1965. For many years, he was the professor of film directing at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana, where he was a mentor to many generations of students; the majority of today’s Slovenian film directors. In 1995, he received the most significant national recognition for his work, the Prešeren Prize.

FILM, DEDICATED TO IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARIES AND MEMORIAL EVENTS

In his latest project "Ljubljana is Loved", which is still in production, and with which he rounds-up his work so far, Klopčič makes a motif and thematic connection with his short film of the same title made in 1965, and also with several of his previous films, in which he returned to the times and places of his youth, which especially includes his already mentioned film "Sedmina" from 1969. "Ljubljana is Loved" - the film title is a play on words, because name of Slovene capital originates from the root of Slovene word for loving - will be homage to his hometown and its long gone residents from stormy times to which he is bound by nostalgic memories of the past.

"Ljubljana is Loved" in production of Arsmedia production company* and additional three co-producers** is the biggest and most demanding Slovenian film project of the last few decades. 62-member film crew is involved in its production, around 60 actors appear in it (Kristijan Gueček has a leading role, and is accompanied in most important roles by excellent actresses and actors Iva Krajnc, Igor Samobor, Nataša Barbara Gračnar, Ivanka Mežan, Polde Bibič and numerous others), as well as approximately 1,000 extras. Financial support’s major part for this art,
organizational and financial demanding project has been provided by the National Film Fund***, while shooting took place in city exteriors and Viba film studios****. Author's latest artwork has already been filmed completely, with final cut to be made this autumn, followed by this November's premiere in Ljubljana International Film Festival (LIFFE). The author has dedicated his last creation to this year's 100th anniversary of Slovenian film; 60th anniversary of deliberation of Ljubljana; and to his late friend - writer, playwright and also former Slovenian Minister of Culture - Mr Rudi Šeligo, who passed away last year. Before taking on this latest project, it was namely Mr Šeligo's novel Triptych of Agata Schwarzkobler (Triptih Agate Schwarzkobler) that the author based his last television film upon, which was released in 1996.

* Producer: Arsmedia d.o.o.; contact: . 
**Coproducers: Municipality of Ljubljana, RTV Slovenija, Jadran film Zagreb 
***Financing: Slovenian Film Fund 
****Technical and other services: Film Studio Viba film

Ljubljana Castle
- when a 100-Year-Old Vision Blooms over the City

Up the slope of a hill a three-year-old boy is staggering next to his grandmother. In the winter evenings they looked up over the city to its walls as they changed colours, and they promised themselves a trip up towards the sky, where there was a special theatre. The castle hill turned green in the spring and in the toddler's imagination the images of fairytale heroes, knights, and captured princesses began to take shape. Does the big dragon live up there? Will the knights allow them to pass through the heavy castle door? The grandmother promised they would. And they will see the puppets. The steep path is a test of endurance for the little boy, but grandma says the castle is near. They turn back and look over the bright orange rooftops of the old town and keep counting the steps, and are hurrying to get two tickets for the show. Gritting their teeth they struggle up the steep hill and after two turns of the path they stand under the stone wall which looks even higher than in the pictures in his book. The path straightens and around the wall they come to the bridge in front of the arched castle entrance. High on the wall towering over the wondering toddler stands a black dragon and he exhaustedly stares up at it. A wide smile flashes across his face and his eyes light up when his grandmother points to the dragon and exclaims that the dragon is just a small boy like himself!

Something for our Young Ones...

Across the castle courtyard his curious eyes are wandering over the walls and towers expecting something to happen at any moment. The puppet show starts an hour late! The boy's disappointment is so intense he is almost crying, but in the next moment a small fist clutches a ticket as if it were the greatest treasure on earth. His small feet suddenly acquire new energy and run across the paved courtyard to the imposing door to the hall. "Grandma, look - trains!" It is true: in a spacious hall are displayed the models of real trains and finally the little train driver wrestles his way to the models which are running on the tracks under his control.

The hour passes all too quickly, and the puppet show begins. Past the castle fountain a few steps lead to the basement hall with coat hangers at the entrance and rows of benches in front of a small stage. Something so warm and cozy emanates from inside this theatre that makes you want to put on slippers. And then, before his round eyes, the show starts: The Wonderful Adventures of the Young Apprentice Hlapič.

The story on the stage is twofold: a play about the voyage of the little hero of the amazing puppet success story is played by the "castle apprentice" Robert Waltl, whom everyone thought was just a dreamer seven years before. His dreams are really much older, but six years ago they miraculously started to come true. As a student of theatre, Robert said to his colleagues that he would set up his magical theatre in Ljubljana Castle. Today, the visitor cannot imagine how far-fetched his declaration sounded. The castle building was neglected; the spaces could attract only a complete fool. Without financial means and with the sceptical consent of the city officials, Robert started on the restoration of the space and designed it for a puppet theatre. He opened with Cinderella, played by Bulgarian puppet masters; Cinderella seemed ironic, as if someone was looking at Robert from above during the cleaning and restoration of the hall, when he, a dreamer without a penny in his pocket, was taken by two construction workers to lunch to the dragon and exclaims that the dragon is just a small boy like himself!

- Across the castle courtyard his curious eyes are wandering over the walls and towers expecting something to happen at any moment. The puppet show starts an hour late! The boy's disappointment is so intense he is almost crying, but in the next moment a small fist clutches a ticket as if it were the greatest treasure on earth. His small feet suddenly acquire new energy and run across the paved courtyard to the imposing door to the hall. "Grandma, look - trains!" It is true: in a spacious hall are displayed the models of real trains and finally the little train driver wrestles his way to the models which are running on the tracks under his control.

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bringers of huge changes, which have developed in the castle in the past six years.

...and lovers of Art and History
The castle’s renaissance came at a curious moment, for in the coming year the 100th anniversary of one of the greatest moments in the castle’s past will be celebrated; on 16 May 1905 the city, at the time when Ivan Hribar was its Mayor, bought the castle from the Austrian authorities with a vision of turning it into a house of culture of national importance, which was largely a dream shared by the Mayor and cultural elite, especially the poet Anton Aškerc. On the castle hill there would be a space for a central Slovenian national museum, a Slovenian library, galleries, art studios, meteorological station and a planetarium.

For these plans to come to life almost 100 years had to pass and the period in between has, as in the long periods of the past, painted the castle rooms in the grey colour of prison cells.

One of the early "cultural events" following the exceptional enterprise by Hribar, took place over a month and a half in the autumn of 1914, when Ivan Cankar, a free-spirited writer, served a sentence “in distinguished company” in the castle's jails, for as he himself put it, "a kind word about Serbs after the incitement of some wrong-headed woman”. And he was even not the only famous Slovene who experienced the cold and damp of the would-be Acropolis of Ljubljana. The tower of Erasmus, for example, was named after Erasmus Predjamski, who was put in jail by the provincial ruler, after Erasmus slapped him on the same night, and stabbed General Pappenheim in the stomach. Erasmus escaped from jail, Ivan Cankar was released, the stone walls kept the character of a jail for the people of Carniola, whom Caesar deemed dangerous.

In general, the stories told by the tenants of the castle are not fairytales. From the beginning of the 17th century the castle was decaying, and was mostly inhabited by soldiers and guards, the gentlefolk were fonder of staying in the city. They used the fortress on the hill for defence and sound fire alarms. It is ironic that in the time of the Turkish raids the castle was a threat to the city, for it was the royal and regional gunpowder store. Whenever there was a big thunderstorm the people were just waiting for lightening to strike one of the towers full of gunpowder. In the middle of the 17th century one of the gun powder stores actually exploded and the door to the tower was found more than a mile from the castle hill, by the Sava river in Črnuče!

At the end of the 18th century, just before Napoleon’s troops conquered Ljubljana in 1797, the Austrians wanted to pull down the castle and sell the material for building houses in the city, but the country council and representatives of social classes were opposed to it. The arrival of the French quieted the controversy and during the period of the Illyrian Provinces the castle housed army barracks and the army hospital.

Rich Archaeological Legacy
Due to numerous renovations, the archaeologists and historians have a hard time piecing together the image of the castle's history, so its story is now told by some rather isolated and random findings. The exception is the artesian well, today preserved in the shed outside the castle walls. It was renovated at the beginning of 19th century, when the castle was once again turned into a jail. Then they took down the mound Lipnik made in the Middle Ages, and came across a well with a crown. By excavating they also found Roman altars with statues of the goddess Aequoruna, which suggests that a Roman temple once stood on the castle hill.

The prisoners erected a wheel on the same spot, in which two prisoners with blindfolds turned the mechanism, raising the groundwater from a depth of 104 metres: it was still operational 50 years ago! The only preserved love-legend mirrors the inconsistent past of the place. The master’s daughter, Elvira, attracted a young girdler for only one night, with her long locks and sweet perfume. After that night she made no more moves and the desperate youth found out that Elvira intended to marry a pale-faced nobleman. He also heard rumours from the widows of the town, but he could not bear the thought that the young woman, whose image was more beautiful than that of the mother of God in the St. Florian’s chapel, would marry someone else. He made a heart within which he hid a viper and gave her this as a gift on her wedding day.

In the eighties of the previous century brighter times came - the castle was occupied by love; two wedding halls brought newlyweds every Wednesday and Saturday to the castle hill to console the ghost of the lovesick girdler. Love was followed by art and culture. Since 2000, when the castle management was taken over by the Ljubljana Festival, Ivan Hribar’s vision has actually been coming true - the renovation has offered exceptional exhibition and concert spaces, the Rustika gallery opened its doors with Slovenian arts and crafts, the castle courtyard can host larger events and concerts, the virtual museum revivifies the historical image of the city below, and above all, instead of a dangerous dragon, the spirit of childhood cheerfulness and imagination, which found a home in the Mini theatre, and which started the whole process of rejuvenation of the castle hill, watches over the visitors.

In these days we are celebrating 100th anniversary of the time when the castle was bought by the city for cultural purposes, although until 1964 it accommodated only lodgings. Today, the Castle hosts regular performances, exhibitions, State affairs, social events and weddings. You can go up to the castle with a tourist train from Prešeren Square or ascend the hill on foot from the old town in about twenty minutes. In the middle of the 15th century the castle was seen as a symbol of the city in a silver city seal, and later in the city’s coat of arms.
Nataša Marvin

Slovenian Publishers at the Bologna Children's Book Fair

Every year in April the north-Italian city of Bologna becomes a meeting point for authors, illustrators, printers and other contributors, connected with production of books for children and youth and the 42nd annual book fair took place between April 13th and April 16th. Three Slovenian publishing houses also introduced their activities to the world, under the guidance of the Publishing, Media and Printing Association of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce. The publishing houses Mladinska knjiga and Prešernova družba exhibited original children’s literature and picture books, while the publishing house Rokus, together with the European Association of School Textbooks, represented textbooks. The contribution of Slovenian exhibitors in Bologna was this year supported by the Ministry of Culture, which donated a million Tolars.

The main star of the publishing house, Mladinska knjiga, which sold 57 copyrights to foreign markets in 2004, was Lila Prap, whose full name is Lilijana Praprotnik Zupančič, who won the 2005 competition for an original Slovenian picture book with her work, Mednarodni živalski slovar (International Animal Dictionary). At the front of the exhibition area were original picture books, which also included the picture book ZAKAJ? (WHY?), which was published last year by the Swiss publishing house, Bajazzo Verlag. With this book the author earned a nomination for the most important German award for children and youth books, the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis 2005. The publishing house Mladinska knjiga especially stressed the importance of the Autumn publication of the picture book called 1001 pravljica (1001 Fairytales). Special place was given to Andersen’s works, PRAVLIJE (Fairy Tales) with illustrations by Marija Lucija Stupica, Pačica (Thumbelina) with illustrations by Marlenka Stupica, and a brand-new picture book called Bedak Jurček (Jack the Dullard) with illustrations by Zvonko Čoh. All these works have been translated by Silvana Orel Kos. Children’s literature is also represented by works from Mojca Osojnik and Anja Štefan.

The publishing house Prešernova družba has given pride of place in Bologna to the multiple prize-winning youth novel, Luža (A Puddle) by Matjaž Pikalo. However, the following books have also been given special attention: the trilingual, English-German-Slovenian publication of Fran Levstik’s Martin Krpan z Vrha (Martin Krpan from Vrh) with illustrations by Hinko Smrekar, the collection Sedmerica velikih (The Great Seven), and a fairy story, Žabji kralj in zvesti Henrik (The Frog King and Iron Henry) by the Brothers Grimm with illustrations by Andreja Peklar. The publishing house Rokus, in cooperation with Greek, Ukrainian and Danish publishing houses, presented 11 original sets of textbooks, while the special attention was given to the history set for the 9th year of elementary school, entitled Raziskujem preteklost 9 (I investigate history 9), an interesting feature of which is an exercise book with a DVD.

The fair also introduced the tactile picture book, Snežna roža (Snow Flower) by Aksinja Kermauner. The Slovenian section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) chose this picture book for 2005 and sent it to the Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People, which works within the IBBY and is seated in Norway. They described the picture book as an extraordinary achievement and placed it among the “best of books for young people with disabilities”, which were exhibited at the Bologna book fair for the first time. The picture book was also chosen for publication in the catalogue.
“We do not recognise completely those Slovenes, who do not or did not live in Slovenia.”
A Brief Historical Outline of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts

The Academia operosorum, a forerunner of the modern Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA), was founded over three hundred years ago - in 1693 - which makes it a couple of decades younger than the Académie française, the Royal Society in London and the Academy of Natural Sciences Leopoldina in Schweinfurt.

The Academy sadly suspended its activities in 1725. It was renovated during the Enlightenment period but was, nevertheless, dissolved in 1787. The Slovenian people were thus left without their elite science and arts institution for a long period of time but have nonetheless continued with their scientific and artistic endeavours. The desire and thought of having the Academy have never died out. They were most prominent during the turning points in history - during the era of Napoleon's Illyria, in 1848 and later on when they were primarily governed by aspirations of having a Slovenian university. The second half of the 19th century saw the establishment of expert societies, which were mostly humanist in orientation and which led to the establishment of the Slovenska matica. In 1919, Slovenes get their University but the thought of an Academy is not pushed aside. The preparations took a lot of time and were successfully concluded on 12 November 1938 with the first Meeting of the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana.

During the World War II, the Academy engaged in publishing activities and was renamed the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1943. It experienced a universal revival after 1945, was renamed the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts again in 1948 but was unable to avoid social changes during the post-war period. It received autonomy again in the independent Slovenia as the "leading national science and arts institution" as its primary aim was to encourage, nurture and promote sciences and arts. The Academy is active in international circles as well. The Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences has concluded cooperation agreements with thirty-four science academies throughout Europe and beyond. It is a member of important international bodies such as the All-European Academies (ALLEA), the International Union of Academies, the European Science Foundation, the Inter-Academy Panel of International Issues and the Network of Mediterranean Academies, etc.

The Academy has 103 members (regular and extraordinary) and 84 associate members. As the leading national institution, the Academy pools together top-level scientific researchers and artistic creators.
that it was our culture that enabled our survival as a nation over the centuries, which is true in part; however, had we not had the technical knowledge, we would also not have survived. One cannot live on culture alone. Our attitude toward these Slovenes is amiss.

Would you agree that science in Slovenia is neither popular nor popularised. There are but a few achievements that reach the levels of prominence of a popular music performance. We have a number of successful scientists abroad of which we know very little. What are the reasons behind this?

We have touched upon this subject already. If you take a look around the world - in France, for example, the evening news will focus on politics and culture but will also present a thing or two about French science. The French take pride in their science and know that they could not live as well as they do if they did not have their science. This is not the case in our country; there are no reports about science in the basic news. There are special science shows where scientists can watch each other. The Delo newspaper does have a science supplement but, on the other hand, they could, for example, write about the developments in science as well. The leading newspaper in our country deals with different issues from the newspapers around the world. It seems that we have not yet grasped what is important and what is not.

You were always an advocate of science and knowledge being open to the world, of an exchange of higher education teachers and students - but, save for the odd guest professors, there is not much of this to speak of. Could I be mistaken?

Unfortunately, you are not mistaken. We have extremely closed higher education and scientific systems, though the latter may be somewhat more open. If you were to visit a university in France or Germany, you would find that half of every department is made up of foreigners. The Russian system has sadly changed so much that the middle generation of scientists has left. You will not find any Russians in Slovenia; at least not as far as I am aware. There are also no lecturers from the former Yugoslavia; they also left their country even though some of them held important positions. We would like to solve this on our own. But this is not going to work. There are many foreigners even in neighbouring Austria. We do not like foreigners in reality and things are made even more complicated by unforthcoming legislation. In addition, we insist on lectures being given in Slovene, which is necessary to some extent due to professional terminology. A foreigner giving a lecture in English or German is probably not that bad a thing. This lets the students acquire terminology in English and German and they are well aware of this. It would seem that they are much further ahead in Zagreb as regards this issue. Their Faculty of Economics has introduced parallel lectures, they have foreign students and foreign lecturers. The lectures are given in their national language as well as in foreign languages and the students get to choose which lectures they are going to attend. Croatian students usually attend lectures given in foreign languages in order to simultaneously acquire foreign language competence. This would be considered a sin in Slovenia, even though we are not going to defend our language at some postgraduate study attended by ten students.

How would you rate the various national programmes and topical issues that have occupied our thoughts lately and which we have been and will be confronted with? At issue here are the Scientific and Research Activities Development Strategy, the Slovenian Science Foundation, Krka's awards for young researchers, talks with the President of the Republic regarding Slovenia's future, the Council on Culture, Science and Sport, the response to the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process to name but a few. Would you say that we are trying to make up for lost time and are rushing to bite off more than we can chew?

I am afraid we are not. Most of the campaigns you have mentioned are mere words. It is all well and good that we are talking about what should be done, in what direction we would like to proceed and what we want to achieve, but what we need is action. There has not been much action for now. An opportunity to do something has presented itself with the change of Government and I hope that the new Government will do something about this state of affairs. We have already talked about the University where the leadership needs to lead and rule and the same is true of the Government, authority and the Ministers, all of whom need to give an order here or there. In Slovenia, however, we prefer to wait and let people decide to do something, provided we talk about the issue long enough. Unfortunately, nothing ever happens.

Do you think that humanity will renounce its unwavering belief in science or will it be forced to do so by the "destructive" accomplishments of science? Even your colleague, the German physicist and Nobel Prize winner Werner Heisenberg, has expressed concerns in his book "Der Teil und das Ganz" (The Part and the Whole) that humanity will lose its moral bearings and depart from the principle of good versus evil. The scientific ethic is becoming increasingly important and scientific ethics chairs are established. What is the situation in that regard in Slovenia?

We have lagged slightly behind, but the situation is not critical as yet. Even prior to political changes, ideas arose of science not being left to its own devices but rather for the scientists to have to be aware of the consequences of their actions. Ethical and moral considerations are becoming increasingly important around the world. In Slovenia, a commission for ethics in the field of biomedicine has been in existence for years. It is lead by the academician Jože Trontelj, Vice-President of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The commission follows the research carried out in the field of biomedicine, drafts and presents the State's views on cloning and new methods, which might prove dangerous. Some time ago we appointed a group within the Academy that is lead by Trontelj, which is supposed to establish certain criteria regarding ethics in scientific research in general. Some are of the opinion that such a small nation has no need for such a commission as there are already European commissions that deal with the issue, but everyone has to clean up first their own doorstep and only then we can start thinking of cleaning the whole courtyard. I believe that scientists are also aware of ethical considerations being increasingly important. Science is part of society and not something that others use for good or bad purposes. Scientists bring this to the attention of important politicians; even in America. Politicians represent the wider and short-term interests while science requires a longer period for achieving something. To believe that science is the source of all problems and to renounce it would be erroneous. The world is going to become increasingly scientific, but not in the sense of mass technology but rather in the sense that people are going to become more and more aware of the consequences of scientific practices.

We have not spoken about the part where you introduced your mission for the higher education teacher and have together with your supporters, scientists, organisers and managers successfully introduced the model you came across with from around the world into the Slovenian milieu.

That's right; and despite the problems. The institution I am part of is the Politehnik Nova Gorica, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. We started with a single postgraduate workshop on the environment with foreign lecturers, who came predominantly from the United States. We were of the opinion that higher education along the Slovenian-Italian border needed to be consolidated; environmental issues were also urgent. We then
expanded our activities to those dealing with technology and partially to those of natural and social sciences. We also have a postgraduate humanist programme, which is carried out by the Scientific Research Centre of SASA. This year, we began a programme in the Slovenian language studies, which is important for the border region, and next year an architectural conservation programme is due to be opened in co-operation with the University of Venice. The programme also includes viniculture studies; in short, things have developed quite well. We expect to have a thousand students in a couple of years’ time. Our ambition is to have somewhere around fifteen hundred to two thousand students, but not more. We are a non-governmental university. The State does offer assistance in some programmes by granting charters for the programmes. The founding members are: the Jožef Stefan Institute, the Scientific Research Centre of the SASA and the Municipalities of Nova Gorica and Ajdovščina.

Things have run smoothly. As we have already mentioned, the Board of Management appoints a president and then they appoint the members together. People come to work in order to work and not to self-govern. I see this as a phenomenon that shows that change is possible even in Slovenia. The number of such institutions is small, but if there were five, six or seven such institutions, things would change for the better.

We intend to submit an application with the Scientific Research Centre of the SASA for receiving the status of a university at the next senate meeting, which we think would be appropriate. Some are against the idea because of the belief that the State is unable to finance even the existing universities. We have tried to get across the point that we are going to remain a private non-governmental institution. This is part of the pleasure I enjoy, aside from the SASA.

**During your term in office as President of the SASA, you were able to realise some of the goals you have set for yourself. What is the most important thing that lies ahead for you?**

I would prefer to ask what I have not done. We cannot say that we have realised all goals even though things have started moving in the right direction, but this is not enough. I hope that members will have enough understanding of the matter and that they will realise what is needed. One of the ideas we would like to realise is the establishment of committees, which would open up the Academy to people with the help of academicians and outside members. We do have an Environment Committee, Sustainable Development Committee, Committee for Energy Studies, and Slovenian Language Studies Committee, which are not producing significant results as yet, but we have succeeded in getting the Slovenian language experts to sit at the same table.

If you were to ask me whether I was pleased with the three years of work I have performed, I would have to say no. A lot of administration overcomes a man. On the good side, I do meet a lot of different people who are interesting each in their own way and I am learning new things along the way. As regards relations with foreign institutions, we have established contacts with around thirty academies, which I believe is enough, as we are too small to collaborate with all of them. There are European associations with which we collaborate to the best of our abilities. We are generally well connected with Europe.
Staff Changes in Slovenian Companies

Consolidation processes have speeded up among Slovenian companies. Between 1999 and 2004, the number of shareholders in individual companies registered a significant drop, and ownership is mainly consolidated among national non-financial companies, major such owners frequently including formal successors of Slovenian authorised investment companies, according to a study carried out by the Ljubljana Faculty of Economics. Thus, the average number of shareholders has dropped from 931 to 662 over the past five years, and the stock held by the major owner among Slovenian non-financial companies increased by an average 14 percentage points, i.e. from 38.6% to 52%. Relatively more scattered is the ownership of the companies that are quoted on the Ljubljana Stock Exchange. Nevertheless, the state, usually meaning the state-owned funds Kapitalska družba and Slovenska odškodninska družba, remains one of the major owners of most companies. That is why the new Government has introduced many staff changes in some supervisory boards over the past month, as well as in some management boards where the state has major stakes.

New Supervisors, But No Chair for Triglav

At the beginning of April, Slovenia’s leading insurance company, Zavarovalnica Triglav, got a new supervisory board. Its chairman is Damjan Mihevc. His first task was to accept the resignation of Jože Lenič, who had been the chairman of the management board for a little over two years. His successor will be known after 22 May, when the applications for the post have to be submitted.

Brand New Management for Telekom

Telekom Slovenije, whose major owner is the state, got a completely new management team. At the end of April, the telecommunications company got six new supervisors - who replaced the old five. The term of the previous supervisory board was going to expire in autumn, but all five supervisors were removed before the end of the term. In mid-May, Bojan Dremelj was named chairman of Telekom’s management board. Dremelj came to Telekom directly from the supervisory board of the rival mobile telephony provider Simobil (where he had also been chairman of the board); Telekom Slovenije is in fact the owner of mobile telephone operator Mobilte.

NKB to Be Privatized?

Slovenia’s second largest bank, Nova kreditna banka Maribor (NKB), also saw a management reshuffle in the past month. The bank’s supervisory board is now chaired by Finance Ministry State Secretary Bogomir Špiletič, while former member of the management board Matjaž Kovačič was appointed chairman of the management board. Some controversy was made around Črnomir Mesarčič leaving the bank after having spent many years as chairman of the management board. The bank’s management team is now facing a very important challenge - privatization. All appears to be set for this big step, which allegedly involves KD Group (mainly known for managing mutual funds) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The privatization of NKB is expected to generate the long-awaited second Slovenian financial pillar, which has been under discussion for several years. The first pillar is formed by Slovenia’s leading bank, Nova Ljubljanska banka (NLB), or rather, its major owner, Belgian KBC, while the third one should be made up of the insurance company Zavarovalnica Triglav and the bank Abanka.

New Boss for Slovenian Railways

The new chairman of Slovenian Railways is also expected to be known by the end of May. Since December 2004, Slovenian Railways have been headed by acting director Borislav Živec, the former chairman of supervisory board. Živec took place of the former director general Blaž Miklavčič, who was dismissed by supervisory board due to culpable conduct. The Government appointed new supervisors in early February, raising their number from six to nine in order to make sure that they protect the interests of the company’s founder with more effectiveness.

Slovenian Railways are expecting new chairman. Photo: Arsen Perič
Slovenian Post Gets New CEO

The new general manager of Slovenian Post is Aleš Hauc, former manager of the Maribor branch of bank Banka Koper. Hauc is also one of the new supervisors of the insurance company Zavarovalnica Triglav. He was named by the supervisory board that was appointed by Janez Janša’s Government.

Motorway Company and Power Distributor Still Looking for New Boss

The national motorway company DARS remains without a chairman of the management board after the former chair Janez Božič took office as Minister of Transport. The supervisory board has already sent its proposal on the next chairman to the Government. The management board of the company currently includes only two members: vice-chairman Jožef Zimšek, and Stanislav Debeljak. Despite the missing chairman, the company says that direct motorway transport from Maribor to Koper will be enabled around the end of August. All works on the motorway section between Trojane and Blagovica, the last unfinished section of the almost 233-kilometre long motorway Maribor-Koper, are in fact expected to be completed by that time.

Power distributor Elektro Ljubljana is also waiting for a new chief. The vice-chairman of Elektro Ljubljana is currently Vitoslav Türk. Türk replaced Vincenc Janša, who offered a compromise termination of the individual employment contract back in early December 2004.

Iztok Bricl Becomes Žito’s Boss

Iztok Bricl, the former chairman of food company Kolinska, was appointed chair of the Ljubljana-based food company Žito (ZTOG on the Ljubljana Stock Exchange) at the end of April. Kolinska had in fact merged with the Izola-based food processing company Droga. Bricl took office on 17 May, upon the termination of the term of Božidar Linhart, who had been the company’s head for twenty months.

Droga Kolinska to Go Public in July

Droga Kolinska, which will be headed by the former Droga chairman Robert Ferko, officially started operating on 3 May upon its entry in the national register of companies. The shares of Droga Kolinska are expected to be available on the Stock Exchange in July, while the shares of the two former single operating companies were removed from it in mid-May. Ferko will be assisted by six executive directors, including Slobodan Vučičević, the owner of Serbian company Grand Prom, which is to merge with Droga Kolinska within the next few months.

Capital Injections Another Topical Issue

Among the issues to have agitated the market recently are some announced capital injections of companies that are mostly quoted on the Ljubljana Stock Exchange. The supervisory board of technical goods retailer Merkur (MER), for example, announced an injection of SIT 16 billion (almost 67 million euros). Given its market opportunities, the company will be able to issue 400,000 new shares over the next five years, thus financing the enlargement of its operations in Slovenia, as well as abroad. Merkur in fact intends to complete, by the end of the year, the construction of a hardware megastore. Merkur furthermore plans to expand to Croatia, where some Merkur shopping centres have already been present. Merkur’s shareholders are to discuss this plan on 26 May.

Slovenia’s Deficit Expected to Be Lower This Year

Slovenia’s budget deficit is expected to amount to SIT 92.7 billion this year, which is SIT 19.4 billion less than the deficit that was expected in the 2005 budget. The budget deficit should amount to 1.4% of GDP, the Government said in mid-May. The reduction of the deficit is one of the necessary criteria for the adoption of the euro, Finance Minister Andrej Bajuk explained at a news conference. He added that this goal can be reached especially through strong saving measures and through restructuring budget lines.

Unior and DaimlerChrysler to Set Up Joint Venture

In mid-April, the Žreče-based tool company Unior and the German-Austrian group DaimlerChrysler set up a joint venture with its seat in Maribor. DaimlerChrysler holds a 51% stake in the
new company, and Unior holds the remaining 49%. The new company will manufacture steering mechanisms, elements and spare parts for the S and E series of Mercedes’ cars. The company is in the process of registration, while all the necessary works should be completed for starting the production in summer. The start-up capital for the production, which will be employing eighty persons at first, is estimated at EUR 4.5 million, with partners’ investments depending on their respective stakes in the company. Further investments will increase depending on the situation on the market. For now, the company is expected to generate annual revenues of around EUR 10 million.

NLB Acquires Two Balkan Banks in One Month

Nova Ljubljanska banka (NLB) became the owner of an 80.29% stock in Montenegro’s Euromarket bank in mid-April. The remaining 19.71% of the stock is owned by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). At the end of the month, it started the merging process with Montenegrobanka. At the end of May, NLB also won the bid for the acquisition of Continental banka from Serbia’s Novi Sad. This was the second bank that NLB acquired in Serbia, as some years ago its controlled company LHB Frankfurt acquired bank Prva preduzernička banka, renaming it LHB Beograd. NLB is also interested in Serbia’s bank Niška banka and Macedonia’s bank Poštenska banka. NLB already has the bank Tutunska banka in Macedonia.

Prevent to Get Majority Stake in Styrian Spirit

The Slovenian company Prevent and Hypo Alpe-Adria-Bank plan a capital injection into Austria’s Styrian Spirit airline, in which they would become the owners of over 50% of the company. Prevent, which currently holds a 26% stake in Styrian Spirit, is to contribute EUR 4.35 million. The injection will enable the acquisition of two new airplanes. Prevent is also the majority owner of the Maribor airport, where the Austrian company already operates.

Tough Times for Stock Exchange

Slovenia’s benchmark SBI 20 index lost almost 6% between 1 April and 18 May due to constant poor trading at the Ljubljana Stock Exchange. Aside from the staff changes in many Slovenian companies, the atmosphere became even more pessimistic due to the ruling of the Constitutional Court that there is nothing disputable about the trade act. This means that shops, with the exception of filling stations and small shops selling necessary goods (which products exactly would rank in this category is yet to be known) will be closed on Sundays as of 1 January 2006. The news had the strongest impact on Mercator’s shares, which hit the lowest price in year only two days after the news was made public. In one month and a half Mercator’s shares lost almost 9% of their value.

Six New Boats Presented at Internautica

Happier faces could be seen among the owners of brand new yachts and motor boats that were presented at the Internautica boat fair, which took place in the coastal city of Portorož from 10 to 15 May. Visitors could choose among more than 300 different types of boats, from small canoes, rubber boats, sailing boats and sporting boats, to over 20-metre-long super yachts. The fair is estimated to have been visited by 35,000 to 38,000 people.

Last year, three Slovenian ports with a total capacity of 1,365 berths and 183 square kilometres of sea, registered 6,737 vessels. Of all the vessels to use the berths, 27% had a Slovenian flag, 26% had an Italian flag, 20% had a German flag, and 13% had an Austrian flag. The number of boats carrying flags of other countries was significantly lower, 2% having a Croatian or French flag, and about 1% of the boats having the flags of the Netherlands, the U.K., or Scandinavian countries.

The number of persons to visit Slovenia’s tourist destinations and famous sights is generally on the increase, particularly when it comes to foreign visitors. According to the data of the national Statistics Office, Slovenia was visited by 148,537 persons, which is 12% more than in the same period last year. In the first three months of the year, Slovenia was visited by 404,328 tourists, meaning a 5% increase over the same period last year.
FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE DEEPENING THEIR PRESENCE AS THE NEW MEMBER STATES ARE EXPECTING TO GAIN FROM THE FURTHER INTEGRATION OF THEIR ECONOMIES WITH THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, NOTABLY THROUGH TRADE. SLOVENIA IS BY NO MEANS A STRANGER TO "OFFSHORED" SERVICES. ITS EXCELLENT SOURCING CAPABILITIES WERE RECOGNISED BY BAYER, RENAULT, SOLVAY AND OTHERS AS EARLY AS 25 YEARS AGO. A LONG INDUSTRIAL TRADITION, SCHOOL CURRICULA THAT GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A CHANCE TO ACQUIRE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND BUSINESS SKILLS, INNOVATIVE SPIRIT AND A READINESS TO EMBRACE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ARE THE QUALITIES APPRECIATED IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

Traditionally strong business ties with investors from the neighbouring countries have led them to land a number of business projects in Slovenia. Blue-chip investors such as Alusuisse Lonza Group, Bosch, Siemens, Danfoss, Goodyear, Gruppo Bonazzi, IBM, KBC, Microsoft, Mobilkom, Novartis, Oracle, SanPaolo IMI, and others have encouraged many smaller investors and underpin investors’ confidence.

The fact that Slovenia boasts clusters of related industries and a ready-made network of suppliers is behind many investment choices. Thanks to its central position in Europe and excellent logistics, Slovenia makes an ideal hub for trade networks of externally-owned companies. Opening a business in Slovenia is simple, labour laws are flexible allowing business to adapt to changing circumstances, taxation is geared toward sustainable growth based on sound strategic principles and not short-term gain.

Fully aware of the fact that entrepreneurship drives innovation, competitiveness, job creation and growth, Slovenia has attracted investors by offering grants that reduce the start-up costs of new projects with focus on strategic services and R & D, which provide quality jobs and boost knowledge economy. Training incentives and regional assistance are available, subject to incentive policy priorities.
FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

After the record year of 2002, when as a result of major takeovers in the pharmaceutical industry (Novartis) and the financial sector (Société Générale, San Paolo IMI, KBC) inflows from foreign direct investments amounted to almost EUR 1,800 million, the trend in 2003 and 2004 slowed down. The highest inflows were due to the sale of Istraben's petrol stations to the Austrian ÖMV, Goodyear's purchase of Sava and the sale of the State's minority stake in Revoz to the French company, Renault. The latter plans an extensive expansion of production in Novo mesto in 2006. The investment, worth SIT 400 million and bringing 700 new jobs, will also be one of the largest foreign investment projects in Slovenia.

The interest of foreign investors has been greatly increasing over the last few years, mostly on account of last year's enlargement of the European Union, which is traditionally the main source of investments. The investors displayed greatest interest in the production of parts for the car industry, real estate and tourism, the chemical industry and logistics.

MAJOR FOREIGN INVESTORS IN SLOVENIA

Production
- Novartis - Sandoz, Danfoss, Bosch, Gruppo Bonazzi, Meyr Melnhof, Brüg and Bergmeister, EGO, Hella, Henkel, Goodyear, Johnson Controls, Lafarge Perlmooser, Pfleiderer, Renault, Safilo Group, Securidev, Siemens, Sun Roller

Trade
- Leclerc, Spar, Rutar, ÖMV, MOL

Financial services
- Société Generale, Bank Austria CA, SanPaolo IMI, Hypo-Alpe-Adria-Bank, KBC, Raiffeisen Bank

Other services
- Ernst&Young, DHL, Deloitte&Touche, KPMG, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, AC Nielsen, GfK, Sodexho Alliance Western Wireless International, Debitel, Mobilkom, McDonald's, ISS Servisystem, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle

Source: TIPO, 2005.

QUALITY IN FOUR AREAS

Various factors are important for success in the business environment. Slovenia presents itself to other countries by its potential in quality human resources, quality connections with regional and other markets, quality infrastructure and the quality of life.

In Slovenia, human resources are a link in the business chain with important missions. More than half of the workforce (53.1%) is employed in services and slightly more...
mostly to Western markets. Today, Slovenia's foreign trade contributed a quarter of the GDP and a third of exports, accounting for 8% of the total of the mutual state, had before Slovenia became independent in 1991, its population, successor countries of Yugoslavia is also not insignificant. Products marked "Made in Slovenia". Trading with the region, resulting particularly in investments in pharmacy, entertainment electronics, food, textile and leather products marked "Made in Slovenia". Trading with the successor countries of Yugoslavia is also not insignificant. Before Slovenia became independent in 1991, its population, accounting for 8% of the total of the mutual state, had contributed a quarter of the GDP and a third of exports, mostly to Western markets. Today, Slovenia's foreign trade in this area represents 19%. The economic presence of Slovenia enables long-term co-operation.

Quality infrastructure is a precondition for establishing and maintaining good business connections with past, new and the future EU member states. In this respect Slovenia has a great advantage, since it has very well developed transport and telecommunications connections with administrative, trading and industrial centres. Motorway connections correspond to the Fifth and Tenth European Corridor. A well-developed railway infrastructure enables fast movement of people and goods and competes with low-cost airlines. It is connected with the Port of Koper, the sea terminal and warehouses on the coast. Slovenia also boasts well-developed information and telecommunication technology, which is proved by the number of personal computers, access to the World Wide Web, online communication, call centres and, last but not least, corporate preference for e-administration. Industrial and craft zones are going up next to the main traffic hubs. Its favourable geo-strategic position gives Slovenia all the advantages essential for creating competitive logistic centres.

Slovenia is located at an important geo-strategic crossroads, which is why it has traditional quality connections with regional and other markets. Its welfare and stability are based on free trade, compliance with the legislation and support to the corporate sector. Foreign trade is of high importance for Slovenia, since annual imports and exports exceed 100% of GDP. Because of its economic and political stability, Slovenia has earned the reputation of being the country best prepared for accession to the EU, and following its accession ranked among the top ten. Following the decades of trading with Western countries, today the member states account for 66% of the Slovenian market share. Market share in the countries of Southern and South-Eastern Europe, other than the EU members, is currently 24%. Knowledge of the language, habits and business customs has strengthened traditionally good business relations with the countries from the region, resulting particularly in investments in pharmacy, entertainment electronics, food, textile and leather products marked "Made in Slovenia". Trading with the successor countries of Yugoslavia is also not insignificant. Before Slovenia became independent in 1991, its population, accounting for 8% of the total of the mutual state, had contributed a quarter of the GDP and a third of exports, mostly to Western markets. Today, Slovenia's foreign trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP per Employee (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>29,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>29,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>20,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Czech Republic</td>
<td>18,093</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>14,874</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>14,093</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>13,707</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: IMD - World Competitiveness Yearbook, 2004

A quality business environment and quality living conditions considerably contribute to business success. Abroad, Slovenia is known for its natural and cultural wealth as well as for a 3000-year history, which makes it an attractive tourist destination. It differs from other countries in diversity, since although covering a small area, it combines Alpine and marine regions, the underground attractions of Karst, the lowlands of Pannonia with thermal springs and vineyards. The Mediterranean coast offers diving, sailing and surfing opportunities. In terms of dense forest areas, Slovenia ranks third in Europe, preceded by Finland and Sweden. The living conditions are favourable also for foreign individuals and families. Ljubljana has two international kindergartens, three primary schools and one secondary school. In bilingual regions, on the Coast and in Prekmurje region, there are schools for minorities in which the language used is Italian or Hungarian. Foreigners are welcome in Slovenia as investors, employees, students or pensioners. The study "Perceptions of Living Conditions in an Enlarged Europe" from 2004 classifies Slovenia among the top countries as regards all criteria of quality living conditions. The capital, Ljubljana, has a cosmopolitan character, including the old castle, baroque churches, attractive buildings and market squares. It also offers a rich cultural programme, being the home of two symphony orchestras, an opera and ballet, theatres, museums and art exhibitions.

Thus, when companies plan a business future in Slovenia, the Slovenian Trade & Investment Promotion Agency provides them services free of charge. An experienced and qualified team helps them find the solutions most suitable to companies' requirements.
In the car industry the reduction of the global costs and the deadline for its implementation, calculation of return on capital are investment of operations and productivity. Essential for the earnings (the latter is related mainly to the volume placement of new products or new possibilities for rational criteria: the opening of a new market, the a well-thought-out action based on several "The company's decision for a major investment is Board of Revoz.

Marcel Brouiller, President of the Management Board of Revoz. Photo: Revoz Archives

"The company’s decision for a major investment is a well-thought-out action based on several rational criteria: the opening of a new market, the placement of new products or new possibilities for earnings (the latter is related mainly to the volume of operations and productivity). Essential for the calculation of return on capital are investment costs and the deadline for its implementation. In the car industry the reduction of the global costs of an individual project depends on the possibility of choosing from among different technical solutions and potential suppliers. The selection of a supplier is always based on technical and economic indicators and never depends on the country of origin of the supplier. Particularly in this respect, it is important that the market is open and promotes competitiveness. A very good example is financing (i.e. bank loans), which can be encouraged by interest rates brought closer to those elsewhere in Europe and lower loan expenses.

When a decision on investment is made, the time of its implementation and of its becoming productive is essential for its success. All that which can facilitate administrative procedures results in fewer confirmations that are required and enables particular answers to be obtained faster, which contributes to new production equipment becoming functional sooner, so that a new product can be launched on the market even before schedule.

Currently, the works carried out in Revoz in connection with the largest investment ever - the project of new Renault production in Slovenia - are in full swing. The investment is estimated at EUR 400 million, comprising mainly investments in new production equipment: a new line of very heavy presses, a new line for surface and anticorrosion treatment, new equipment for laser welding, new test runs, etc. This project, which will create at least 700 new jobs in Revoz and almost as many with suppliers, enjoys the support of the Slovenian government. It will bring about a significant increase in Slovenian exports to other European countries, which will definitely benefit the Slovenian economy.

Even though all the procedures related to this - on a Slovenian scale - really extensive investment in Revoz were not fast and simple, it is estimated that at this point we managed to achieve an acceptable balance. Naturally, we consider the willingness of the Slovenian government to support the project as very positive. However, the weaknesses related to our geographical position have not yet been fully eliminated: difficulties as regards employment due to a lack of available labour force in the region, a difficult and dangerous road connection between Trebnje and Novo mesto.*

Andreas Niegsch, CEO ad President of the Management Board of Sava Tires.

"The management of the Goodyear group decided to invest in Slovenia in 1998 also because of the advantages offered by its business environment over other competitors in the region: its strategic location, its qualified and motivated staff, an 80-year tradition in tyre production in Kranj, established domestic brands and access to the markets of the former Yugoslavia. In six years, Sava Tyres has become one of the most successful factories in the Goodyear group, which proves that the investment in Slovenia was a good business decision."

Andreas Niegsch, CEO ad President of the Management Board of Sava Tires. Photo: Sava Tires Archives

SLOVENIAN TRADE & INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY - TIPO (AGPTI)

This is a governmental national agency operating mainly as an advisory institution engaged in the promotion of internationalisation for Slovenian companies and foreign direct investments. Its work is focused on actual services rendered free of charge both to domestic companies wanting to penetrate foreign markets as well as to foreign companies, which seek suppliers or wish to invest in Slovenia.

Within the scope of promoting foreign direct investment, TIPO implements a range of supporting activities helping foreign companies in the process of making investment decisions and carrying out projects. TIPO offers free services and business information to potential and existing foreign investors, promotes the image of Slovenia as a location for foreign direct investments, through annual tenders implements the system of non-refundable financial incentives allocated to foreign investors and co-operates in the preparation of proposals and solutions for systemic measures aimed at improving the competitiveness of Slovenia as a location for foreign direct investments. On the web portal www.investslovenia.si potential foreign investors and buyers can access data about Slovenia as a location for foreign direct investments.

* In 2003 Slovenia recorded 77% of the EU-25 average GDP per capita, PPS.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMIC INDICATORS</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004 estimate</th>
<th>2005 forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real growth rate in %</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflation in %</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate in %</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered unemployment rate in % (ILO)</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<td>Export (share in GDP in %)</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance (share in GDP in %)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus / deficit (share in comp. to GDP in %)</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploiting the Potential of FDI

Internationalisation of operations is a critical factor for creating competitiveness in a small economy. For Slovenia, the need for intensive internationalisation is additionally strengthened by the final stage of the transition process and integration into the EU, meaning the final opening-up of the economy and its integration into the global economy. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and corporate networking, with its backward and forward links to home and host economies, seem to remain the most efficient integration tool among all internationalisation modes. FDI and multinational enterprises (MNEs) in fact represent an increasingly important element of global commerce and the factor of mobility and trade within MNEs is expected to become an increasingly important method of international exchange.

Links with other economies, whether on the supply or the demand side, are often critical from the outset for creating strong firms and a strong economy, as measured by sustainable production volume and employment per capita (sustainability implies the absence of government shelter as a critical factor explaining observed success). Both inward and outward FDI may be important tools to gain access to external resources that can complement national resources, and lead to higher sustainable domestic production, employment, and economic growth. FDI should therefore be viewed not simply as an outcome of domestic economic success, but as critical inputs to achieve such success. For example, inward FDI by MNEs may imply an infusion of technological and managerial knowledge, and therefore productivity improvements in the domestic economy, increased trade and competitive position. FDI is particularly important in industries offering products that are innovative, sophisticated, and differentiated. These industries display high levels of R&D relative to sales, show high value of intangible assets relative to firm market value, a higher major share of professional and technical workers, and engage in high levels of product/service advertising. Sharing these assets through FDI could give an important advantage.

The review of empirical findings from various studies examining the impact of FDI in Slovenia proved that FDI has influenced its competitive ability in the global economy. Several direct and indirect impacts (spill-over effects) have been recognised in trade, restructuring, technology and knowledge transfer, functional upgrading and development.

The penetration of FDI in the Slovenian economy is low (EUR 5.0697 million in stock or 20.7% of GDP at the end of 2003). Foreign investment enterprises (enterprises with a foreign equity share of over 10%, FIEs) accounted for only about 5.1% of the total population of Slovenian enterprises, but they have considerably higher shares in terms of employees (12.6%), assets (18.9%), sales (20.9%) and especially exports (33.4%, 2003 data). FIEs are relevant for financial brokerage, trade and manufacturing. In other industries, their involvement is much less important, if not marginal. Similarly to the other new EU member states, the level of foreign penetration is the highest in high-tech industries, followed by medium-high, medium-low and low-tech industries.

Though penetration is relatively smaller than in the vast majority of the other EU-25 countries (and especially the new EU member countries), statistical data, existing analysis and case studies show that FDI has had an important impact on the upgrading of the economic capabilities of Slovenia. FDI has been one of the main proponents of the restructuring and productivity upgrading in the Slovenian economy and it has been an important source of foreign technology and of access to export markets. FDI in the Slovenian manufacturing sector has been a factor in seeking cost-advantages and the export-oriented type, while in the service sector it has been distinctively local market-oriented. This has speeded up internationalisation of the manufacturing sector and has brought about a broader and better supply of services for companies and the public at large. As far as the impact of inward FDI on the development of local-related and supporting industries is concerned, the fact is that foreign subsidiaries import most of their inputs and that they are distinctively more import-oriented than domestic companies. It seems, however, that in the recent period foreign subsidiaries have tended to slow down their import propensity. Positive but modest vertical spill-overs confirm such a pattern. Horizontal spill-overs of FDI in Slovenia are very small but in any case neutral, which is due to a low level of foreign penetration in the economy. The impact of FDI is similar in terms of the type of subsidiaries. Foreign investors keep strategic and marketing control in their hands and leave everyday operational functions to subsidiaries, which seem to be relatively independent only in the framework of their existing production mandate. Foreign investors have brought mostly positive changes in the companies in which they have invested, i.e. companies increased their volume and scope of operation, productivity increased, new technology and various improvements have been introduced, etc. Still, the impact of FDI in the manufacturing sector is less encouraging in Slovenia than in other Central European Countries (CECs).

Despite numerous qualitative changes and effects that have been identified through restructuring and productivity upgrading, increasing innovation activity and impacts on local suppliers and spill-overs, FDI in Slovenia could still be regarded as having an underexploited development potential. Primarily, this is due to the low penetration of foreign investment, which persists in spite of a number of factors making Slovenia an attractive and friendly environment for investment and in spite of the fact that Slovenia fully applies the national treatment principle for foreign investors and foreign-controlled enterprises.
DURING A COMFORTABLE DRIVE IN YOUR CAR, YOU PROBABLY RARELY STOP TO THINK ABOUT WHERE IN THE WORLD THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS OF YOUR CAR WERE Manufactured. YOU WOULD PROBABLY BE SURPRISED IF I TOLD YOU THAT THERE IS A HIGH STATISTICAL PROBABILITY THAT ONE OF THE SEVEN MILLION SPARK PLUGS MANUFACTURED BY THE HIDRIA GROUP COMPANY WAS INSTALLED IN THE DIESEL ENGINE OF YOUR PEUGEOT OR RENAULT, OR THAT A COMMUTATOR FOR THE ELECTRIC MOTOR THAT POWERS WINDSCREEN VIPERS WAS MOST PROBABLY MADE BY THE KOLEKTOR GROUP COMPANY. BOTH MULTINATIONALS, WHICH SHAPE GLOBAL TRENDS WITH THEIR PRODUCTION PROGRAMMES, ARE BASED IN IDRIJA - A TOWN WITH THE LONGEST MINING TRADITION IN SLOVENIA, A FACT THAT HAS LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE LOCAL POPULATION.

THE HIDRIA CORPORATION
Hidria is one of the fastest-growing Slovenian economic groups. It unites thirty companies and 2,600 employees in Slovenian and around the world. Its basic programmes encompass development, production and marketing of automotive industry systems, air-conditioning, heating and ventilation systems, and a two-wheels and electrical tools programme. The president of Hidria, Edvard Svetlik, said in one of his interviews that the company generated profits in the amount of SIT 40.7 billion in the previous year. The major part of the generated profit is allocated to their own development and research activities; in doing so, they closely cooperate with numerous established experts from Slovenian faculties and institutes. For the same reason, they build their own development and technology centres in various locations around Slovenia - Godovič, Koper, Tolmin, Spodnja Idrija, Kranj - which will focus primarily on searching for new solutions in the field of air-conditioning, heating and ventilation, ignition systems and electronics. One such centre is the National Institute for Air-conditioning, Heating and Ventilation d.o.o., which is aimed at establishing Slovenian products from the field of air-conditioning, heating and ventilation on world markets. Hidria is already present in the United States, South America (Ecuador, Columbia, Peru), Australia, Hong Kong, Russia, EU members (the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal) and, of course, in the countries of the former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia) with its own sales and distribution network.

STRONG CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT
Because people employed in Hidria are in the forefront of the company's success, help to the environment in which the company operates is of enormous importance to the company; sponsor and donation funds represent a minor part of the funds that Hidria invests in the development of the environment in accordance with its policy of social responsibility. It contributes to the elevation of the standard of living by direct investments, encouragement of the development of high-end tourism and encouragement of sporting, cultural and social activities. One of the larger projects that were realised recently was the arrangement of a sports park in Spodnja Idrija and the equipping of computer studies classrooms in the primary schools of Godovič and Bovec. Additionally, the company is known for lending a helping hand to employees, who find themselves in financial difficulties for various reasons. Last but not
least, close co-operation with local suppliers contributes to the raising of economic vitality of the area in which they operate.

**KOLEKTOR**

The Kolektor consortium also belongs to the group of Slovenian companies that evolve into global niche multinationals. In the chosen market niche - production of commutators - the company takes first place in the global community of suppliers and this makes it one of the exceptional Slovenian companies that are recognised by the economic environment as belonging to the global elite.

Since its establishment in 1963 - it was called the Tovarna kolektorjev Idrija (Collector Factory Idrija) at the time - and presently, the Kolektor Group consortium continues to experience constant growth and development. It has evolved from a supplier of commutators for the domestic market into a global strategic supplier to partners all over the world. Taking the yearly sales, the amount of commutators produced and the scope of the production programme into account, the Kolektor consortium is the largest producer of commutators in the world today.

The establishment of the Tovarna kolektorjev Idrija (Collector Factory Idrija) and undertaking commutator production were induced by the many hundreds of years of mercury extraction in the area, which has led to the processing of another precious metal - copper - in the 1960s.

The Consortium employs 2,400 people, 1,000 of which are based beyond Slovenian borders - in Germany, the United States, Brazil, China and South Korea. Twenty companies, whose activities involve the production of commutators, electronics, ferrite cores and coils, plastic components, development of products for future production, and even activities in the fields of finances and banking, marketing and retailing, are all joined under its roof.

The goal of the Kolektor Group is to reach an annual turnover of euro 250 million within the next five to eight years. Only a half of the revenue will be generated by the primary programme, which covers commutator production, while the rest will come from the new programmes, from additional added value, products that have taken shape in the Kolektor development centre, as well as organic growth of the Consortium and company takeovers.

Development is based on continuous education of employees, who remain the primary value of company policy despite the global and multinational character of the company. Employees are included on various levels in the improvement processes aimed at facilitating team work. Their number is not expected to significantly increase by 2010, while their structure is supposed to change due to increased hiring in new production programmes. They expect to have over two hundred university-level engineering graduates working on new projects. Employee education, in general, planned with careful consideration; they pay a lot of attention to working with young people. To this end, Kolektor actively collaborates with the Idrija Grammar School and also with faculties and institutes. The president of the Kolektor Group, Stojan Petrič, is one of the initiators for the introduction of the Consortium MBA postgraduate study programme, which is carried out in cooperation with the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana (the first generation of students is due to complete their studies). Kolektor is also a co-founder of the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School which has operated within the Jožef Stefan Institute since May 2004. The Consortium also collaborates with the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Ljubljana for which it has renovated the ‘Mechatronics Research and Development Centre’ laboratory. Laboratory premises were opened for use on the day of the publishing of the magazine in your hands.

Geographical characteristics, position and accessibility of the Īdrijsko - Cerkliansko area mean that there are numerous elements that limit economic and social development. This is a high-altitude mountainous region of the sub-alpine area, which is predominantly characterised by agricultural production. Undulating terrain is the reason behind the hard-to-solve problems, especially regarding utility infrastructure and poor road connections. In addition, over half of the area is classified among demographically endangered areas as the proportion of population of old persons is above-average. Despite this, the Īdrijsko - Cerkliansko area belongs to the economically more successful areas in Slovenia thanks to Kolektor and Hidria. The most important and dominant industry is the export-oriented (electrical) industry, which will represent the key driver of development in the area in the future as well.
Podsreda, Podčetrtek, Olimje:
The Region of Many Faces

Summer in Atomske Toplice.

The Church of St. Mary of Assumption.
When you set out to Kozjansko, you imagine it is a distant, undeveloped, mostly agricultural part of Slovenia, on the southern part of Slovenia, whereas on the eastern side the region borders with Croatia by a natural border formed by the Sotla River. But while on your way, you soon discover that these statements only hold true with regard to the geographical description. The name of the region - Kozjansko - came into use only after World War II, and comprises the river basin of Bistrica and partly also of Sotla. This land is in fact somehow detached from the modern traffic routes, which intersect contemporary Slovenia; it is truly overgrown with forests and there are numerous farms, but it would hardly be claimed that it is undeveloped and poor. And another thing: Kozjansko itself is today divided into several smaller unofficial regions; we could say that the typical Kozjansko region is the part comprised by the Municipality of Kozje, although the land by the river Sotla strives to acquire the name of its narrower area, Obsotelje, whereas the asserted name of the second narrower area to the south of the region is Biziľsko. Naturally, the whole area is included in the Kozjansko Regional Park, which was in 1981 founded by the Republic of Slovenia as Trebče Memorial Park, and was in 1999 founded as an institution under its current name. The park comprises areas of the municipalities of Bistrica ob Soti, Kozje, Podčetrtek, Brežice and Krško. Of course, the main task of the institution is to preserve natural beauties and cultural heritage, and to help the locals in creating a better and economically successful life.

Kozjansko Park

The Kozjansko Park, which has its official seat in the ancient and beautifully renovated town of Podsreda, is due to its bio-diversity one of the most important areas of natural protection in Slovenia. The diversity of the region, particularly the flora and fauna, all year round invite visitors to walk through forests and meadows among mountains of medium height - Vetnik, Bohorje, Orlica and Rudnica - where you can find numerous rare plant species. In many ways, this is not only a Slovenian, but also a European natural reserve, a fact which is also confirmed by numerous foreign visitors as well. The official seat of the park - Podsreda - is a pleasant market town, which was given its name by its market and lawcourt days, which took place on Wednesdays (‘Sreda’ means ‘Wednesday’ in Slovene). However, nothing has been left of the former fairs and courts of law. The locals look for work in nearby factories, as well as churches, chapels and other cultural landmarks, such as interesting old homes, some of which have been wonderfully renovated. The management of the park also provided a carefully prepared documentary and information material about the glass factories of the Kozjansko Region and its architecture, as well as guides for Kozjansko walking routes, and the Vetnik geological route and study path. Of course, everything is also reachable by car, bicycle or by other means of transport..EntityFrameworkCore

Podčetrtek and the Sotla River Valley

The Sotla River, somewhat more than 80 kilometres long, is a border river between Slovenia and Croatia. However, the locals say this border has never been a sharp dividing line between individual places and people. This valley is also called the valley of health springs, as there are quite a few sources of healing thermal water, on the Slovenian as well as on the Croatian side. And this is the very reason that tourist workers from both sides of the border have tried to establish unified tourist zones, which will also include a special regime of crossing the border and tourist visits in two neighbouring countries, of which Slovenia already is an EU member, and Croatia is striving to become one.

So what is supposed to be so interesting for tourists in this tourist zone of two countries on the banks of the Sotla? It is appropriate to enumerate some attractive elements of the natural and cultural heritage of the region: on the Slovenian side, there is the Olimje Monastery, Podčetrtek Castle, the museum of old farm equipment in Podčetrtek, the church of St. Ema and some other interesting churches, whereas on the Croatian side there is the manor house of Miljana, the churches of St. Ana, St. Katarina, St. Martin, St. Ivan, the prehistoric settlement of Spičak, and the previously mentioned sights of the Kozjansko Park and health resorts on both sides of the river. Undoubtedly, there are even more attractions and beauties on both sides of the river, which make the initiative of local tourist workers all the more justifiable.

Nevertheless let us return to our starting point - to Podčetrtek. This town might not have been worth writing about, had it not been for the thermal and health resort of Atomske Toplice. For a number of years after World War II, the town lead a poor existence and it seemed that the region had no prospects for development. But some of the few locals began talking about hot water springs, which were believed to be medicinal. So the idea of the thermal and health resort was born, but the very realisation of the idea required years of hard work, geological researches and economic studies. Finally, it was discovered that there was more than enough thermal water, and the locals also found an investor. The still unofficial thermal springs were called Atomske Toplice, because visitors believed the water had a high healing, atomic power. The health resort Atomske Toplice was officially made public in 1966. Today, we can say the entire development of the Municipality of Podčetrtek depends on the Atomske Toplice thermal spa, which was some years ago renamed into Terme Olimia because of its constant expansion and the services it provides. It's almost hard to believe everything that has appeared in the past few years in Podčetrtek and its surroundings, and the things that represent Terme Olimia: Hotel Breza, Apartment Hotel Rosa, Tourist Village of Lipa, Natura Camp, Termalia Pools, Thermal Park Aqualuna, and Health and Beauty Center. Nowadays, building machines are humming again - a new hotel is growing in the health resort.
The successful operation of the health resort provides an income to just about every inhabitant of Podčetrtek and of the surrounding settlements, who are fit for work, and this was also a strong encouragement for the development of numerous other commercial activities - private hotels and restaurants and wine growing. The range of services offered to the health resort tourist has in the past years also been enriched by numerous rural homes, which are part of the so-called "cottage industries" and offer their own wines and homemade dishes; there is also a well-known deer breeder, a mushroom grower, a private chocolate industry in Olimje and a private brewery; even "the land of fairytales and imagination" was founded for visitors, and finally, a golf course was also arranged. The following surrounding places in the area must be mentioned as well: Olimje, which is situated 3 km from Podčetrtek, a wine-growing town called Virštanj (it was named after four former boundary stones, vier Stein in German), there is a famous cooperative wine cellar in Imeno, whereas in Pristava near Mestinje, there is the famous baroque church of St. Ema.

Olimje

Olimje is a village in the nearby proximity of Podčetrtek, and is today a destination of numerous tourists, particularly visitors to the health resort of Olimia, i.e. the Atomske Toplice. The village is, despite its smallness, one of the most beautiful Slovenian treasures. Olimje was historically first mentioned in 1208, whereas the first castle in this area already stood there at least a hundred years before, and the owner of the castle was St. Ema of Krka. The current castle was built in the years 1525-50. In 1663, the cloister of the Paulines was established in the castle, to which a church was also added. The Austrian Emperor Joseph II abolished the cloister of the Paulines in 1782, and in 1785 the parish was established there. The church was built in baroque style. A mighty altar stands in the presbytery, in 1780; the frescoes of Saints Cosmos and Damian, patron saints of doctors. At the entrance, there are also frescoes of famous doctors, such as Esculapus, Hypocrates, Dioscurides, Galen, Avicenna and Paracelsus. At the entrance, there are also frescoes of Saints Cosmos and Damian, patron saints of doctors. It must be mentioned that with the abolition of the Pauline order their pharmacy was abolished as well, and the space was later used as a wine or fruit cellar. Renovation works in the castle, as well as in the pharmacy began in 1952, but in later years the castle was renovated and will be open to the public for many centuries ahead. Today's inhabitants and caretakers of the castle, the Minorites, renewed in 1999, after 217 years, when the monastic tradition was continued by the minor brothers of St. Francis of Assisi- the Minorites. Interestingly enough, the history of Olimje is linked to two saints. It has already been mentioned that St. Ema of Corinthia was the owner of the Olimje castle at the beginning of the second millennium. According to some evidence, Saint Ema was responsible for the present name of the settlement, as she had apparently on one occasion exclaimed: "Hier ist Wohlhimmel!" - "Here is true Heaven!" Consequently, the following names appeared: Wohliml - Ulimia - Olimje ... However, it is also interesting to know that the story about the appearance of this name was written down by the blessed Anton Martin Slomšek, to whom a special room is dedicated in today's monastery.

An exceptionally valuable feature of the Olimje monastery is its pharmacy, which was established by the Paulines. It is known that these monks also dealt with medicine and not only with the worship of God and with architecture. Their rules demanded that every monastery keep a room for sick brothers and a pharmacy with drugs. In Olimje the pharmacy stood on the ground floor of the left round tower. Today this pharmacy, which has been nicely renovated, is the third oldest pharmacy in Europe - after Paris and Dubrovnik. The pharmacy's equipment was unfortunately not preserved, but Lerchinger's magnificent frescoes from 1780 have been preserved. The frescoes introduce biblical motifs from the creation of the world to Christ as the healer of our souls and bodies. Therefore, the paintings represent biblical subjects, which apply to illnesses and medicinal herbs, and there are also portraits of famous doctors, such as Esclupas, Hypocrates, Dioscurides, Galen, Avicenna and Paracelsus. At the entrance, there are also frescoes of Saints Cosmos and Damian, patron saints of doctors. Today's inhabitants and caretakers of the castle, the Minorite brothers, still continue former traditions. Visitors can buy various medicinal herbs and books, which discuss natural ways of healing. In front of the cloister the Minorites also laid out a garden, where they grow many kinds of medicinal plants. The whole Olimje area, and in particular the Olimje pharmacy, is therefore quite justifiably known as one of the most beautiful treasures of Slovenia.
Why should the lives of our grandfathers and grandmothers be of any interest to today's consumers, especially teenagers, who are preoccupied with daily advertisements of ever newer trademarks they have to keep up with at any cost if they wish to remain popular, respected and accepted in their exclusive circle of friends? What counts, after all, is possessing the right mobile phone and always showing up dressed in a new outfit from some popular fashion store, which serves to improve teenagers' self-confidence, rather than knowing in what kind of conditions our ancestors used to live. Or is it? It all comes down to good promotion and the right kind of advertisement that could eventually find the right kind of attention, but in these times attention is hardly ever paid to tradition, or at least not in a way that could be sufficiently attractive for a young target. Nevertheless, strong will, the right ideas, a good feeling for children's psyche, enthusiasm and a lot of passion can help make an open-air museum just as attractive for both the young as well as for older visitors. At least that is the case in Rogatec.
The Rogatec open-air museum is one of the five venues that are included in the national project on the establishment of an all-Slovenian open-air museum. More than 30 years ago Slovenian conservators started to consider the fact that Slovenia should revive its traditional architecture and give it the importance it deserves, and so the concept of an open-air museum was already developed at that time. It was not a central museum, however, as due to the diversity of the regions there would be little point in presenting Slovenian traditional architecture at a single venue. It was therefore decided that each region should have its own open-air museum that would preserve their respective architectural heritage, reviving in their own specific ways the cultural tradition of our ancestors. But of the five venues that had been planned, only three actually came to life: one in Pieterje, one in Sečovlje, and one in Rogatec. The other two museums failed to be erected, as the gap between the idea of a project and its actual implementation is wide, and only a few people are able to make that long but essential step. This is especially true in these days of market-oriented mentalities: days when it is not enough to have a construction, a revival and the presentation of authentic buildings, but it is also necessary to think of the final proceeds or at least avoid ending up in the red, which is seldom easy.

**THE PROJECT CAME TO LIFE IN ROGATEC**

The buildings representing the traditional architecture in the area to the south of Donačka Mountain and Boč were transferred to a common site, where they were renovated, and the curators not only made sure the buildings were put on display to passers-by, but even that life in them continued. They represent central Styrian architecture of the sub-Pannonian type. The main features of both regions are reflected in the use of the materials. Even though the basic material used is wood, i.e. a kind of material typically used in the mountains, the wooden walls are covered with clay, and the floors are also made with this material, which is typical of the Pannonian world. The Pannonian influence is most evident in the use of iron, which is typical of Pannonian wells. In the areas below Donačka Mountain, such wells used to be constructed in the farms over the valley, where underground water could be found after only a few metres of digging.

The open-air museum includes some original constructions that were transferred from their original site as well as some reconstructed old houses. A multi-storeyed house of the sub-Pannonian type, which is also the house in which renowned Slovenian poet and translator Jože Šmit was born, was actually the main reason for the creation of the museum, as well as the determining factor in choosing the right premises. The house was discovered by two women teachers, who subsequently proposed that the house should be renovated and dedicated to the esteemed poet. The two ladies turned to the memorial institute in Celje. "Our wishes to renovate the local architectural heritage were met. The synergy was working. The premises were completed," remembers with pride Irena Roškar, present co-ordinator of the open-air museum’s programme, who is also the director of the municipal institute managing the museum, and indeed a Woman with a capital "W". Šmit’s house was moved to today’s premises in 1981. A special feature of the house is the girls’ room, also called the “small house”, which was built subsequently. "In those days, boys who had reached the age of seven or eight had to sleep outside, in the hay barn or under the corn-drying rack due to lack of room, while the girls would sleep in small rooms with very narrow windows, and their father had additional iron bars built on them. Girls would sleep in that room until they got married. In those times, there were very strict social norms. The door to the girls’ room had to creak, so hinges were never greased, in order for their father to hear if any uninvited young man was on his way to the room. Illegitimate pregnancy was forever stigmatised in those days, which is why every father had to be even more careful about his daughters,” Roškar points out.

The Rogatec open-air museum furthermore includes an administrative manor with adjacent stable, which only had room for two head of cattle and possibly some calves; in the left part of the stable was the wine cellar, and above it was what was called the “floor”, where corn was threshed. The museum is most proud of its typical corn-drying rack dating back to 1892, which was originally standing on the Croatian side of the border. The museum has actually even increased its value in terms of utility. Not only do they keep using it to dry hay and other produce such as corn, but they even organise various events under it. "When the poet Jože Šmit died last year, we held a small ceremony at the rack, which was only illuminated by oil lamps. The event was also attended by his friend Tone Pavček." Cultural events featuring folklore ensembles and singers are also held. Performing here was the group Kurja koža, which plays popular folk music that is typical of Haloze with authentic, traditional local instruments.

For the conservators, bringing the original constructions to their new premises was a heroic project. Today, moving such constructions is not a common practice, as it entails quite elevated expenses, which is why some of the constructions that are included
in the museum are reproductions. Still, the people working on the project have done their best to breathe into each of the constructions a soul of its own, which is defined by a past and a present-day spirit. The bees in the beehive, which is the same as those that were used in the early 20th century, are still diligently making their honey. This honey can also be bought in the “lodn”, a small shop as it was called in past times, offering various goods in the typical old fashion. The shop resembles the shops that were typical of Rogatec in the period between both world wars. Behind the wooden counter, on which are displayed a big red till, original boxes containing sweets, dried fruit, some pipes and old-fashioned scales, there are several small drawers and shelves still offering some original products. The most interesting products certainly include phloem-knit handbags, which many a refined lady’s eye might fancy even today.

**HOW CAN WE MANAGE AND PROMOTE CULTURAL HERITAGE AT THE SAME TIME?**

How can we present the lives and works of our ancestors to our schoolchildren, who find very little meaning in the smell of hay and in that of a typical Slovenian kitchen in some autochthonous and not-cheesy-enough rustic house? The fact that this is not a classic museum, where objects are showcased behind glass and ancient gear can only be admired from a safe distance, while here it can actually be touched, is in itself a big advantage that definitely has the power to attract many visitors. But touching objects is most certainly not what it is all about.

“Architecture alone is not interesting enough for young visitors. Entering an old, static building and observing the objects on display are not sufficiently attractive for youngsters,” notes Roškar. That is why she decided to turn tradition into an activity, in which the visitors to the museum might actually participate. The result was several museum programmes.

“My Grandmother’s Žulka” is one of the most popular workshops among both younger and older generations of visitors. The workshop starts with Roškar telling a story: “Mother would knead a large amount of dough for baking bread only once a week. She would choose the child, who had been the most diligent that week, to help her with the baking. She would give the child some dough, and the child would knead it hard with his small fingers, making his own little roll (žulik), which he was also allowed to eat by himself.” Another starting point at the workshops is the story recounting the origins of the good food that we enjoy today. “We simply eat it and which they simply take for granted. “We, on the other hand, wish to present the whole chain, from the seed to the bread, and I am glad when I see the happy faces of the children as they bite at the warm rolls that they have practically made by themselves.” Other workshops are also part of this programme, including making paper flowers, phloem strips to create bracelets, visiting the local blacksmith, making birthday cards using potato stamps. Additional fun is provided by walking on stilts and sling-shooting. In the spring time simple pipes are made from tree bark. This year, a dance workshop has been included in the programme for the first time, giving visitors the chance to learn some traditional folk dance (rašpla or mazurka), depending on their age and on the group’s previous knowledge. Another programme that the visitors can choose was named *Stari ato so me naučili* (which is archaic for “Grandpa Taught Me”); While showing the museum to the visitors, the guide stops at three selected craftsmen. One may be the lady knitting straw, or the stonecutter, or the blacksmith, depending on the season and the interests of the group of visitors. At the end of July the traditional corn-threshing takes place. The museum is very proud of the *gepelj*, to which two cows are harnessed and then walk around in circles. The *gepelj* is connected to the threshing machine on the floor. Thus, the corn-threshing is performed in its authentic environment, just like 200 years ago. Each year, somebody comes up complaining that the animals are being tortured when these old rural practices are being performed. However, no offence is ever taken, as the museum believes that with such brief demonstrations the animals are by no means being tortured. What is alarming, though, is to see how even adults are sometimes alienated from the real world due to lack of knowledge about the actual origins of things.

The construction of the Rogatec open-air museum was started as early as the 1980’s. The fact that the museum was constructed according to traditional standards and that it has reached such large proportions is thanks to the ambitious conservator of that time, Vito Hazler, and numerous locals, who were guided by Franc Žerdoner. “It is thanks to them that the project fully succeeded,” Roškar is proud to observe. In 1997, the museum was nominated European museum of the year. That same year, Franc Žerdoner, who had been constructing and renovating the open-air museum with the help of numerous devoted people, was bestowed the prestigious Murko award for achievements in ethnology. The promotional and organizational commitments increased each year, so he decided to pass his precious contribution to the preservation of the local cultural heritage on to new enthusiasts, who would be able to deal with the ever-greater pressure of the market-oriented way of life. And what a coincidence it was to meet Irena Roškar, a real spark and a courageous pedagogue, who successfully took his place, heading towards new challenges on her original journey into the past.
Why Slovenia? This question has, without doubt, been the most frequent asked of me since I decided to come to Slovenia; indeed I'm more used to answering this question than my own name, and yet there is not really one easy or logical answer. My name is Justin Holland and I have come from Tasmania, Australia, to study for a year at the Economics Faculty of the University of Ljubljana. Coming to Europe had always been a dream of mine, not just to be a tourist, but also to live in a different culture for an extended period of time and learn a foreign language while I was there. Although I knew extremely little about Slovenia at the time, I did realise what an ideal destination it was. As well as the language advantage, Slovenia is geographically well situated, also very close to my friends in Austria and it was also affordable compared to many other countries in Europe. Above all, however, Slovenia seemed to be a different place to go. Many might go to France, Italy etc., but in Australia we don't hear about Slovenia so often and few people even know where it is (although the people I knew who had been here all told me how great it was) and I really wanted to do something that was quite original.

When classes started to begin other foreign students started to arrive. Pretty quickly the parties started and Ljubljana was about to be hit by an army of internationals representing over twenty countries. Every one was having a great time getting to know each other and getting to know Ljubljana as well. The student organisation's International Office organised a number of activities and parties, including a weekend ‘get to know you’ trip to Kranjska gora where we went bob sledding, skiing and just had a good time. The International Office has continued to organise trips and activities for us including movie nights, bowling, swimming and a trip to Planica to watch the ski jumping.

Because I knew little about Slovenia before I came, I didn't really have many expectations of what life would be like here. My early impressions of Slovenia were very good. For the first few days after arriving, I was just excited to see all the immediate differences. Things like the landscape, old buildings of which many would be older than my country and small European streets filled with small European cars. Coming from a culture of big cars, this is something, which looked quite strange until I got used to it. There were many other small, simple things that amazed me; things that Slovences and most Europeans would find quite normal. The first time it really snowed I was like a little child, making snow angels and dancing in the snow. I had never seen a whole city blanketed in snow before.

Right from the beginning I liked the feel of Ljubljana. To me it feels like a city where the Middle Ages meet the 21st century. The castle hovering on the hill and the old buildings with beautiful architecture attracted a lot of my photographic attention. For a city of this size, I find Ljubljana to be quite a relaxed personal city. Coming from a small town of 16,000 people, I like walking down the street and bumping into people I know and this happens regularly in Ljubljana.

The most pleasant thing about being in Slovenia is meeting nice, interesting and helpful people. I have rarely had a problem finding someone who speaks English when I needed them and they have always been more than willing to help. It is this sort of thing that leaves a lasting impression on visitors like myself. While these days I would prefer to speak Slovène where I can, it is comforting to know that I can use English when I need. I love meeting the locals as well and I have made a few good friends in the student dorm who help me with Slovène and really crack me up.

While of course I occasionally miss some stuff from home like beaches and cheaper, more easily accessible internet, I haven't felt home sick since I arrived and I look forward to the next nine months I will spend here. I feel really comfortable here. Every day represents some sort of challenge that I enjoy overcoming, or something exciting and different to everyday life at home. Most of all, I love the true multiculturalism that I am experiencing. I have some great friends from Austria, France, The Czech Republic, Canada as well as friends from numerous other countries and of course Slovenia. Everyone has a slightly different culture and I learn so much about the world. Slovenia is beautiful, Ljubljana is a great city, I would really love to come back here in the future to live and work. I feel really at home here and not for one second have I regretted my choice of country. Why Slovenia? That’s why!
“Ring, ring, ring.” tinkle the bells of the bicycles rushing down the narrow paved streets of age-old towns on an early summer morning, through the thousands of canals, mills and bridges, on their way to work, school or university, or just out and about. I am referring to the Netherlands, where I have been a guest, so to speak, for quite some time now, as on an autumn afternoon a little over three years ago, after finishing my studies in Ljubljana, life took me to the ancient city of Utrecht to study for a master’s degree in law and economics, and I am now approaching the midway stage of my doctoral studies at the University of Utrecht.

One of the nicest stories for me about the Netherlands and its people is probably the one about a small boy who, on a stormy night, spotted a hole in one of the dams holding back the raging sea, and noticing that water was already pouring through, the boy simply blocked the hole with his finger, thus saving the entire region from being flooded. Still today the boy protects the sleeping cities and towns from wild overflowing waters in the famous miniature city of Madurodam. The Dutch do have some quite ‘strange’ customs and (bad) habits, mind you. Let us forget about the stereotypical perceptions about this land of tulips, mills and all those coffee shops, where no coffee is actually served, but inebriating rolls of grass can be puffed, perfectly legally, instead, and let us take a closer and somewhat roguish look at these habits. As a matter of fact, the Dutch are actually really keen on flowers, and flowers of all sorts at that, whether they are the famous tulips, daffodils, peonies, or hydrangeas. The famous postcard featuring a charming lady on a bike holding a bouquet of paper-wrapped tulips is certainly true to the Dutch culture. The Dutch also have a very sweet tooth; there is no birthday party or other happy occasion, whether early in the morning or late in the evening, when people do not gather in crowds to have a good time enjoying their coffees and cakes. Surprisingly enough, the Dutch are also extremely chatty! At least once a day groups of people will meet to sit in circles and discuss numerous topical issues, in a totally informal and relaxed manner. This is the famous “Dutch talk”, and it can be compared to the old Slovenian tradition when people in small towns and villages would gather under ancient linden trees. The Dutch love the colour orange, and are also great fans of everyday exercise, young as well as older people being very keen cyclists. The Dutch, you see, are also keen builders of shocking and sometimes even slightly amusing modern buildings, and in past times canals, of which there are millions of kilometres, still exemplarily maintained today, which, when seen from a low-flying airplane, are incredibly fascinating indeed. On top of all that, these hosts of mine are also extremely economical; surely you are familiar with the English phrase “Let’s go Dutch”, which translates to Slovenian as “everyone pays for their own lunch”. The Dutch are also very precise, organized, with their famous pocket organizers containing all their important dates and meetings, without which, they would be as good as lost. Another thing the Dutch adore is all kinds of experimental theatre and shocking performances. Furthermore, the Netherlands is a very liberal country, and street illumination actually turns to red in some areas, which may come as quite a surprise to any uneducated and inexperienced passer-by. Won’t these girls catch a cold?! Finally, let me say a few brief words about Dutch women. There are all tall and attractive, but what good is that if I only reach as far as their waist?!

Living abroad most certainly broadens one’s horizons and opens one’s spirit, so that one can possibly learn to look on his or her homeland more soberly, with more balance and from due distance. At any rate, it has certainly helped me realize things to which I had never given any consideration before, and it especially made me appreciate what we have back in Slovenia and all the things we take for granted or consider as ordinary. There are countless details one ends up missing every day away from home, little things one had never thought of. All that stuff about homesickness and longing for home has happened to me, too. There have been times when in my mind I would subconsciously even idealize Slovenia, and sometimes, when I went home for a while that I would be disappointed in discovering the harsh reality that was really quite different from my romantically-moulded image. Still, every time I reach a hilltop and stand there, almost out of breath, looking at the valley in the perfectly clear morning air, or when I meet the boys from his or her homeland more soberly, with more balance and from due distance. At any rate, it has certainly helped me realize things to which I had never given any consideration before, and it especially made me appreciate what we have back in Slovenia and all the things we take for granted or consider as ordinary. There are countless details one ends up missing every day away from home, little things one had never thought of. All that stuff about homesickness and longing for home has happened to me, too. There have been times when in my mind I would subconsciously even idealize Slovenia, and sometimes, when I went home for a while that I would be disappointed in discovering the harsh reality that was really quite different from my romantically-moulded image. Still, every time I reach a hilltop and stand there, almost out of breath, looking at the valley in the perfectly clear morning air, or when I meet the boys from the Tone Tomšič choir in some local tavern or some typical Carinthian farm, and we have a glass of local wine, intoning some old folk song with ardent discretion and harmony, that is when it really occurs to me that there is absolutely no other place in the whole wide world where I would rather live.
BAKED BUCKWHEAT WITH COTTAGE CHEESE

INGREDIENTS:
170 g buckwheat
100 g cottage cheese
0.5 l milk
1.5 dl sour cream (creme fraîche)
2 eggs
1 apple
nutmeg
salt
pepper

Cook the buckwheat in slightly salted milk. Let it simmer slowly, until it swells up. Cool down the cooked 'porridge'. In the meantime, beat the eggs, add cottage cheese, cream, pepper and grated apple. Mix into the porridge, pour the mixture into a greased, shallow earthenware baking dish and bake for approximately 20 minutes at 160°C. A delicious crust should form on the top.

STYRIAN MILK SOUP

INGREDIENTS:
2 dl of sour milk
1 tbs flour
1 l water
salt
cumin
0.5 kg cooked potatoes
2 dl sour cream (creme fraîche)
grease for the pan

Mix the sour milk and flour until it is smooth. Boil the water; add salt and cumin. Slowly pour the beaten sour milk into the boiling water and stir until it is completely dissolved. Add separately cooked potato cut into pieces together with water (take away some of the water the potatoes were cooked in, it can always be added later if necessary). Let it simmer for a few minutes, then add the cream and serve immediately.
MAIZE ZLIVANKA

INGREDIENTS:

- 0.75 l milk
- 370 g cornflour
- 2 tbs sugar
- 4 tbs sour cream (creme fraîche)
- 1 egg
- grease for the pan

Mix all the ingredients to form dough, pour it into well greased baking pan and bake it at approximately 200°C.

BLACK RADISH WITH PUMPKIN SEED OIL

INGREDIENTS:

- 750 g black radish
- 0.5 dl pumpkin seed oil
- vinegar
- salt
- pepper

Grate the peeled radish and add pumpkin seed oil. Add vinegar, salt and pepper to taste.

Source: Slovene National Dishes
Klara Krapež

10TH SLOVENIAN BOOK DAYS

23rd April was proclaimed World Book Day, and because we love to read we joined this activity ten years ago at the initiative of the Slovenian Writers’ Association. The idea originated in Catalonia, which organised the first book fair back in 1926. This fair celebrated the birth of Miguel de Cervantes, and on that occasion local men of letters gave books to people, who brought flowers. In Slovenia, originally only one day was dedicated to offering books, but with time it extended to a whole-week event with a varied cultural programme, the basic aim of which has always remained the offering of a written word. This year's 10th Book Days jubilee offered visitors many books at discount prices, numerous works for children, youths and adults, creative workshops, debates and musical events. Additionally, literary guests from Valencia introduced themselves in Ljubljana to visitors to the fair, which also took place in different Slovenian towns.

THE STORY OF DON QUIXOTE

As a dedication to this year’s 400th anniversary of the novel Don Quijote and his squire Sancho Panza, the Slavic library in Ljubljana organised a 50-hour reading of this knightly novel. Numerous celebrations worldwide encouraged the management of Slavic library to bring the written word about the adventures of this impoverished nobleman closer to a wider circle of readers. A unique reading marathon was organised by approximately 250 Slovenian and Spanish poets, writers, translators, actors, students and professors, who were also joined by Minister of Culture, Vasko Simoniti, Mayor of Ljubljana, Danica Simšič, Teodoron Condé, director of the Cervantes Institute, Pablo Zadivar Miquelarena, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Republic of Slovenia, and Erwan Fouère, the leader of the European Commission Representation in the Republic of Slovenia. Continuous reading presented a new reading experience to visitors. The idea of the 50-hour reading was based on a similar event, which started some years ago in Spain as a single event, but later its growing popularity changed it into an annual event. Consequently, Slovenia joined the celebration of this major anniversary of Cervantes' novel Don Quixote as the first and currently the only country outside Spain.

THREE EXHIBITIONS AND AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MILKO BAMBIČ

Slovenian cultural institutions in Gorizia in Italy, in cooperation with the Goriški Museum from Nova Gorica, organised a great celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the versatile Slovenian artist, Milko Bambič. The painter Bambič was born on 26 April 1905 in Trieste, where he attended a private school of art run by the brothers Rendič. Years later, in a non-classical secondary school in Idrija, he met a famous Slovenian painter, Lojze Špacapan, who introduced him to the avant-garde. In Trieste, Bambič distinguished himself as a leading illustrator of the Slovenian press in Italy, and in 1927, together with France Gorše, Ernest Sešek and Albert Sirk, he took part in an exhibition of Slovenian painters in Trieste at St. Ivan in Trieste, which was forbidden by the fascist authorities.

Because of problems with the regime of the time, he was unable to enrol in the Venetian Academy of Fine Arts, so he went to Ljubljana, where he drew caricatures for daily newspapers of that time. In 1929, he moved to Zagreb, where he established the company Reklamografika and published an art review, Samorodnost. After returning to Ljubljana in 1930, he settled with the sculptress Karla Bulovčeva. Then he created a wholesome commercial for the mineral water Radenska, whose symbol in a typical writing and its three hearts are still used today. He also created posters for the famous shoe factory Peko and the newspaper Slovenec. In 1935, he issued an illustrated fairy story, Kralj Honolulu (King Honolulu), for which he received an award by the publishing house Mladinska matica. In 1943, after the capitulation of Italy, he returned to his native Trieste and distinguished himself as the most important Slovenian illustrator and the leading Slovenian art critic in Italy. In Trieste in 1975, he was given the Marcello Mascherini award. After 1978, when he held an exhibition in Kosovelova Library in Sežana, even the Slovenian art profession noticed him. Milko Bambič died in 1991.

DAYS OF INDIAN CULTURE IN LJUBLJANA

In April, the Indian-Slovenian Friendship Association organised a presentation of rich Indian culture. In a wide-ranging programme visitors could among other things see a performance of classical Indian dance with dancer Ujwal Bole, listen to a classical music concert in a performance by Lalita and Peter Szalai with guests, and discover the charms of the Indian fairytale Savitri and Shaktuntala, told by Andreja Vukmir. Through such events the Indian-Slovenian Friendship Association aims to introduce Indian culture to Slovenia, and at the same time express the rich heritage of this South-Asian country, which preserves the diversity of its culture even in these modern times.
Even during his lifetime, Milko Bambič was known as a unique artist, publicist, art critic, outstanding illustrator, inventor, graphic artist and writer of commercial texts, illustrator of industrial design, but most of all as a painter, who made a major mark in the historical avant-garde - Italian critique places him among its most significant futurist painters. His art shows elements of Viennese secessionism and Slovenian impressionism.

For his hundredth anniversary, experts from both sides of the border in Gorizia prepared an international conference about the artist and his work, entitled Kaj bo z nami čez sto let? (What Will Happen to Us in a Hundred Years?). The Cultural Centre Lojze Bratuž is holding a retrospective exhibition of Bambič’s works from the Verani collection and from the permanent collection of the Gorški Museum from Nova Gorica, while the Cultural Centre in Gorizia is exhibiting Bambič’s caricatures, commercial posters and illustrations and many until now unknown paper drawings from the mid-1930s.

HERDER AWARD TO PRIMOŽ KURET

From 1963 onwards, the University of Vienna, in cooperation with the Alfred Toepfer Foundation from Hamburg, has granted the Herder award annually for cultivating and encouraging cultural ties in east and south-east European countries. The award was named after the renowned German writer and philosopher, Johann Gottfried von Herder. One of this year’s prize winners is the Slovenian musical historian and musicologist, Dr Primož Kuret, a professor at the Music Academy of Ljubljana. Professor Kuret is the author of numerous musicological books, discussions and translations, and he is also a co-organiser of various international musicological symposia. One of his works in particular, a study of Gustav Mahler in Ljubljana, was much praised in neighbouring Austria, but so was his very interesting book Glasmorna Ljubljana 1899-1919 (Musical Ljubljana 1899-1919), which analyses the repertory policies of the German Philharmonic Association in Ljubljana of that period.

The Herder Award, which was received in April by Primož Kuret, consists of two parts and enables the prizewinner to choose a young researcher to receive an award in the form of a scholarship as well. Dr Primož Kuret chose his prizewinner to be a student of the Ljubljana Music Academy, Staša Peršolja.

NEVER AGAIN - A FUTURE REMINDER

In the beginning of May, Slovenia also joined the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. As a reminder to the whole of mankind, various events took place throughout Europe, the main message of which stated that the evil of World War II should never happen again. The German concentration camp Dachau, which was liberated by American forces on 29 April 1945, is holding an exhibition of works by the painter and graphic artist Zoran Mušič, with the simple title ‘Mušič and Dachau’, which will be held until the end of August. The author, who himself survived the hell of concentration camp life in years 1944 and 1945, secretly made sketches of terrifying daily images during his internment, full of suffering and degraded people. Later, he also wrote a poem about this time, entitled Nismo poslednji (We Are not the Last).

Zoran Mušič was born in the village of Bukovica near Nova Gorica. He studied at the Zagreb Academy of Fine Arts, and in 1943, he visited Venice for the first time. He returned to Venice in 1945 and he still partly lives there. Mušič is an internationally recognised painter and his works can be seen in numerous world collections. He has also had independent art exhibitions in Venice, Paris, Rome and Milan. He received various awards for his creative opus, among others in 1970, he was awarded the highest French artistic award - the Chevalier d’Art, and in 1991, he received the highest Slovenian recognition for creativity in the area of culture - the Prešeren Award for his lifetime achievements.

As a part of the celebration of the end of the World War II, the City Gallery of Ljubljana organised an exhibition entitled ‘In the Storm of the World War II - Drawings of Slovenian Artists from Prisons and Camps, and a Presentation of War in the World and in Slovenia’.

The exhibition, which introduces works by sixteen Slovenian artists from the archive of the National Museum of Contemporary History, also offers various artistic interpretations, experiences of dreadful
times, the suffering and misery of the people. A part of the exhibition introduces documentary material on world events of that time, which was devastated by war.

War events captured in artistic expressions can also be seen in the Pilon Gallery in Ajdovščina, which organised an exhibition entitled “Slovenian Artists in the Gorško Region, 1914-1945". The period of thirty years is presented by works of various authors - Slovenian and foreign, which were active in the Gorško Region if only for a short while. Special attention is given to the study of illustrations in the Slovenian press in fascist times. The value of the exhibition is not only in its documentary testimony, but also in the fact that this time the works of artists from the border area, which was particularly affected by fascism, are exhibited together. The exhibited works originate from Slovenian and Italian public and private collections, and there is also a first-time presentation of works, which were in past years acquired for the collection of the Pilon Gallery in Ajdovščina.

SPRING FESTIVAL IN LJUBLJANA

Tivoli Park - the central park in Ljubljana, which was architecturally designed by Jože Plečnik, will this year serve as a central area for the events that will take place as a part of the Spring Festival. The purpose of this event is to revive the city and offer its inhabitants quality cultural events that will be mostly free of charge. So the organisers have prepared various activities for the central scene - workshops, an open-air library, world cuisine and a daily concert programme.

There is already a Chinese political poster exhibition, which represents the richness of specific styles. These often apply to the visual tradition of the Chinese art of painting, lithography, people's arts, decoration, and also the tradition of oil paintings and Soviet posters. In addition to thirty original posters, which will be exhibited until the end of May, a nine-hour documentary film, "West of Tracks by Wang Bing", will also be presented. The film depicts the position of the Chinese working class at the end of the millennium.

This year, the Spring Festival will also include the event "ProstoRož" (a pun meaning ‘space for flowers’) - an exhibition of street flower installations at various city locations, which the authors want to embellish, give a new character, and bring closer to city inhabitants and visitors alike.

DRUGA GODBA: A FESTIVAL WITH A CHARACTER

The Druga godba festival that Slovenians adopted a long time ago takes place from 6 to 11 June and once again it represents interesting musicians from all over the world. The festival remains loyal to its programme continuity; concentrated on one geographical region, it takes place in Ljubljana - in the culture and congress centre Cankarjev dom, and in the open-air theatre Križanke. A part of it will also be happening in the city streets.

Approximately one quarter of this year’s programme will be the music from central Asia. Its tradition will be represented already at the opening concert with Huun Tuur Tu from Tuva and the Swiss duet Stimmhorn. The first three concerts, together with the opening one, will take place in Cankarjev dom that is also a co-producer of the festival. Jazz stars Evelyn Petrova from Russia and Livio Minafra from Italy are also appearing. The third concert on the 8 June will represent traditional music from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The second half of Druga godba festival will take place in the open-air theatre Križanke; with the concert of steel drummers Renegades Steel-Band Orchestra, Djelimady Tounkara from Mali, and Danyel Warom from the island Reunion, whose music bases on percussion instruments. Slovenian performers that are to appear on the stage are the group Čompe with cabaret and Olivija, the alter pop group. Brazilians Nacao Zumbi and Japanese jazz "circus" Shibusashirasu Orchestra will also be amusing the visitors of the festival. However, the peak of the festival will be the concert of Khaled, the "king of rai music". Summer days are inviting and the tickets are also available on www.drugagodba.si.
The image of Bled with its peaceful Alpine lake, its island with a church, and a steep hill with a castle often reminds us more of a landscape painting, depicting the harmony of nature and things that belong there, than of a place that actually exists. This beauty, which has often been the theme of poetic inspiration, turned Bled into a kind of all-Slovenian tourist icon, which makes it one of the most recognisable elements of the country for Slovenes, as well as for many foreigners. In addition to this, Bled is also a lively place, which leads its normal life and is proud of its history. Last year Bled celebrated the thousandth anniversary of its first mention as a town, and this classifies it as one of the oldest Slovenian settlements. This year Bled will honour another centenary anniversary, which has in the past decades greatly contributed to its fame and reputation. It is the hundredth anniversary of competitive rowing, this strenuous and worldwide sport of strong men and even women, and, at the same time, one of the oldest Olympic sports. Although this year’s jubilee is ten times younger than Bled itself, one can say without exaggeration that, in addition to its “heavenly beauties”, as our greatest poet France Prešeren once described them, rowing in particular has given Bled its identity as a sporting town. Seeing two young men from a town with approximately ten thousand inhabitants bring home such a great number of Olympic medals, and also two of the highest medals from the world championships, i.e. competitions of the highest, global rank, is something that is only likely to occur in somewhere like Norway in traditional ski disciplines, but probably not anywhere else.

**From Beginnings...**

It began over a century ago, but it was barely visible then. The first sporting rowers, who took to the peaceful waters of Lake Bled in racing boats, were most likely rich tourists from Austria (Slovenia was at that time still a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). These were regular visitors to Bled, who by organising a few regattas in the years between 1905 and 1910 enlivened the social life on the lake and in the town, which was at that...
time still only a health-resort. The approaching World War I interrupted the tradition. So, the subsequent competitions, particularly the State championship of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia, did not take place before 1930, but this time the locals were also substantially included in the preparation and performance of the competition. Under the sponsorship of Queen Mary numerous distinguished business and political personalities from Ljubljana joined the honorary committee, whereas the organisation was successfully taken over by Bled locals, with help from experienced colleagues from places with a long rowing tradition (especially the Dalmatians). The State championship at Bled became a great social event, which was also widely covered by newspapers.

The rule that says a certain thing becomes important only when it is wholly taken over by locals as their own, was confirmed in 1949, when a rowing club was established in Bled. The club soon became a meeting point for many important figures in Bled. Despite the shortage of competition boats, because there was never enough money to buy them, some female and male crews practised in the club from the very beginning. During that first period women in particular attained great results. The shortage of expert trainers was compensated for by guest experts from Belgrade and Dalmatia - but the club's own generation of trainers was appearing as well. In ten years, some rowers were already qualified enough to take the position of a trainer. In 1960, the young trainer Peter Klavora put together an elite eight, which won first places and completely Destroyed the myth about the until then invincible rowers from Dalmatia. So the ice was broken - the Bled Rowing Club became the strongest club in Yugoslavia. The locals achieved all that with an exceptional rowing technique, as they defeated giants that were incomparably stronger in shape and strength. Bled’s rowing style became a synonym for an exquisite technique, by which the Davids defeated the Goliaths. The doors to European and world championships opened, and in 1964 the Bled Eight lost the Olympic bronze medal by a hair’s breadth and won 4th place at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, but won 1st place at the renowned Lucerne Regatta and 3rd place at the European championship in Amsterdam.

... to World Class Championships

Despite occasional crises, rowing generations have been raised in Bled ever since, and they have regularly won the highest competition medals. Although the Eight never repeated their success, from 1989 onwards Bled sportsmen brought home the following medals: 17 medals from the world youth championships (7 of which were gold), 12 medals from the world rowing championships and 5 Olympic Games medals. In 1995, Iztok Čop became the world singles champion, and four years later they had a double sculls champion with Luka Špik. However, the greatest success is undoubtedly Iztok Čop and Luka Špik winning a gold Olympic medal in Sydney in 2000, and a silver Olympic medal in Athens four years later. The successes above should all be attributed to two men, both former Bled rowers, Miloš Jaša and Stanko Silvnik, who fell in love with rowing. They have perfected an extraordinary Bled rowing technique. In addition to quality, the Bled rowing club also became more numerous, as it today includes over 100 rowers of various categories. However, one must not forget to mention a former president, the deceased Božo Benedik, an outstanding organiser and event chronicler, whose writing created the Bled rowing phenomenon.

Nevertheless, those outstanding competitors were accompanied by excellent organisational achievements. In the second half of the 20th century Bled developed into a real rowing Mecca, and is perhaps just a step behind Lucerne in Switzerland. Countless rowing competitions are organised in Bled. Only the most important will be mentioned at this point. The 50th international regatta will take place this year. This regatta is an annual event of the International Rowing Association. The same anniversary is mentioned in connection with the first spring regatta, which takes place in the beginning of May, and usually opens the rowing season. In addition to this, in 1954, at the very beginning of its existence, the Bled club hosted the European championships, and in 1968, 1979 and 1979, it organised the world rowing championships. There is an incredible list of events, through which Bled established itself as a renowned rowing centre that will continue to stand as a candidate for rowing championships even in the future. The fact that Bled and Bled rowing became one of the small wonders of this part of the world has in many ways been a twist of fate. Lake Bled, surrounded by the greenery of the forests, has a length (2200m), which is ideal for setting up a rowing course, as the surplus of 200m enables fast boats to stop when reaching the finish line. The lake, which is also surrounded by hills, is only rarely affected by strong winds, which on most rowing courses often cause unequal rowing conditions. Even rowers themselves admit it is much more pleasant and interesting to row on a beautiful natural lake than on artificial canals, specially made for rowing competitions, where the surroundings are dull and the winds usually very unpleasant. Nevertheless, it matters much that the Bled event takes place in the centre of the town, so to speak, where rowers also live and socialise.

First Hundred Years

So how will Bled celebrate its one hundred years? If everything goes well, there will be a park of Bled Olympic rowing medallists in front of the rowing centre. The park would serve as a kind of tribute to all Bled participants in Olympic Games (currently 21). In the beginning of April a new boathouse appeared at the start of the regatta course under the Park Hotel. The rowing centre itself will greet the anniversary with a new appearance, because it now already shows the weight of years. And if all goes as planned, a renovated boathouse (its roof has already been fixed) will also house a new boat, maybe an eight, because succeeding generations of young rowers call for work with bigger crews.

Additionally, a festive event will be organised in September. The event will host some of the most notable figures from the world of culture and social life, but most attention will be given to the present generation of Bled rowers. Next to the management of the Slovene Olympic Committee and its president, Janez Kocjančič, the President of the International Olympic Committee Mr. Rogue is also expected. The event will also be broadcast or presented by national television, which will also prepare a special documentary about the hundredth anniversary. And the following day the renovated rowing centre will also be the setting of mass festivity, where every visitor will have a chance to sit in the boat and try to row alone. Let them see that miracles only happen through hard work!
When the war ended, the wire fence was removed and a special pathway was constructed where the wire used to be, to be used by walkers and other recreation-loving people. The pathway was later given the name Remembrance and Comradeship Pathway. 60,000 young men and women, who put in 350,000 hours of work, helped to build this pathway, together with secondary school students, cadets, soldiers, and thousands of white collar workers from the five Ljubljana municipal units of that time, who volunteered to draw up space acts and location decisions. A large part of the pathway was built using only hands and spades. While building the pathway, 6,700 trees were planted alongside, of which 4,353 are still there today. There are more than a thousand maple and lime trees, as well as birches, willows, oaks, plane trees and other types. There are also 1,500 shrubs to be found along the pathway.

The Memory of the Wire-Surrounded City

To commemorate 9 May 1945, when the units of the 29th Division and the 7th Corps of the Slovenian partisan army marched into the city of Ljubljana, Slovenian recreation-loving people, on the Saturday closest to the date, take part in a traditional remembrance walk around the city limits, to mark the liberation of the city and the end of World War II.

Italian occupying forces assumed control of Ljubljana on 11 April 1941, and in February 1942, the city was surrounded by a 34-kilometre long and 8-metre wide wire fence, which was lighted by searchlights at night and protected by 69 bunkers, allowing rare crossings, which were only possible with special permits. The memory of the 1,171 days Ljubljana spent entirely surrounded by wire is symbolically presented with 102 memory stones.

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The pathway is 32.9 kilometres long, however, the participants in the annual walk, who also cover the unfinished parts, can boast a 35 kilometre “walk”. In the first walk, which took place in 1957, there were only 362 participants, whereas as early as in 1975 the number reached its peak, with 124,000 people attending (however in 1972 there were only 5,000). In the years following Slovenian independence, attendance dropped considerably - in 1991 only 1,800 people attended, with the number rising to 18,000 in 2004 and reaching 20,480 this year, the organisers (Municipality of Ljubljana, Timing Ljubljana, Agency for Sports Ljubljana) report.

This year’s 49th walk started two days before the central event with the kindergarten children’s walk; on Friday, the primary and secondary school students had their go, and on Saturday between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m., the main walk took place. The people, who cover all the 35 kilometres of the pathway, receive a special medal; others can join the walkers in any of the several check points according to their preferences and in this way walk a shorter distance.

At the time of the walk, a special traditional 28-kilometre and 12-kilometre run of threes is also organised. This year, 3,000 people participated.

This year, the walk and the programme itself were given a new name and will from now on be called “The Pathway Along the Wire”. The logo, a green ring surrounding Ljubljana, and the name symbolically remind us of Ljubljana’s past when it was forced to live surrounded by wire.
Cultural Events:

• 28 May, Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Center, Ljubljana: “Swan Lake”, ballet by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Appearance by ballet soloists, members of the Ballet Solo Choir, the Choir and the SNG Opera and Ballet Ljubljana Orchestra.
• 1 June, Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Center, Ljubljana: “Olimpija - 50th Anniversary”, the central celebration on the jubilee of the Olimpija Academic Sports Association.
• 5 June, Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Center, Ljubljana: Gala on the 100th anniversary of Slovenian film.
• From 6 to 11 June, Ljubljana: 21st Druga godba International Alternative Music Festival.
• From 6 to 11 June, Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Centre, Ljubljana: 61st FIAF Congress of the International Federation of Film Archives.
• From 6 to 28 June, Križanke Summer Theatre, Ljubljana: “La vie en rose - Days of French Chansons”
• From 8 to 11 June, Velenje: 4th Pan-Slovenian Literary Festival - Herberstein-Litera's Meeting of Slovenian Authors in 2005.
• From 14 to 21 June, Bled: 71st World Congress of International PEN, the global writers' organisation.
• From 23 June to 2 October, Ljubljana: 26th Graphics Biennial in Ljubljana entitled Sunek (Thrust).
• From 24 June to 9 July, Maribor: 13th International Festival Lent.
• 25 June, Brezihna: Šrot, 7th Rock Festival.
• 25 June, Trzin: International Folklore Festival.
• From 28 June to 2 July, Maribor: 17th International Folklore Festival - Folkart 2005.
• From 30 June to 2 July, Ljubljana: 46th Jazz Festival Ljubljana.
• From 30 June to 13 July, Bled: 9th International Music Festival - Bled 2005.
• June, July, Nova Gorica: 9th International Meeting of Saxophonists.
• End of June, beginning of July, Ljubljana: "Ana Desetnica" 8th festival of street theatre.

Sport Events:

• From 23 to 29 May, Ljubljana: Challenger 2005 international tennis tournament.
• From 23 to 29 May, Maribor: International Bergant Memorial in tennis for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16.
• From 28 to 29 May, Maribor: EAA Combined Events Meeting, an international athletics competition.
• 29 May, Ilirska Bistrica: Brkini 2005 Cycling Marathon.
• From 2 to 6 June, Lipica: World Cup Dressage Competition.
• From 4 to 5 June, Ljubljana: Athletic Cup of Slovenia, appearances by top Slovenian athletes.
• 4 June: Qualification match for the football World Cup between Belorussia and Slovenia.
• From 9 to 12 June: Cycling around Slovenia.
• From 10 to 12 June, Kranj: XXII Tristar International Water Polo Tournament.
• 19 June, Orehova vas (Radizel): European 125 Championships and the MX3 World Motocross Championships.
• 23 June, Velenje: EAA International Athletics Meeting.
• From 24 to 26 June, Tacen-Ljubljana: European Kayak and Canoe Slalom Championship.
• From 24 to 26 June, Lake Bled: 50th International Rowing Regatta.
• From 24 to 26 June, Šaleška in Zg. Savinjska dolina: 3rd International Adventure Race Slovenia.
• 25 June, Kranjska gora: Cross Country Run to Vršič.
• From 25 to 26 June, Velenje: Athletic Championship of Slovenia for boys and girls under 18.
• June, Črna na Koroškem: Divja jaga Downhill 2005, international mountain bike downhill competition.

Other Events:

• From 24 to 28 May, Ljubljana Fairgrounds, Ljubljana: Hevreka, the central international fair and educational event featuring the fields of consumer and professional electronics, digital photography, electronic communications and computer technologies, informatics and other advanced technologies and solutions, which bring Slovenia face to face with technological achievements from the region of Central and South-East Europe.
• 25 June: Slovenia marks Slovenian National Day.
Andreja Križ

latest DNA blood analyses show Arabian blood samples going back a thousand years. Later, new blood stock was successfully added; at first with the Andalusians and later also with Neapolitans and Arabians. The stock was still called "Karst horses" or "Karst horses of the Lipica Breed" for at least two centuries after their establishment, and only later the name Lipizzaner (originally "Lipicanec"), after the village of Lipica, was accepted. The village of Lipica got its name many centuries before and it means a "small lime tree". In Slovenian mythology, the lime is the tree of life, and today it is still among the most important Slovenian national symbols. The horses were later used for military purposes, for gentlemen and post carriages. In 1572, the Spanish Riding School in Vienna was established. The best stallions from Spain were imported to the Viennese court at the beginning, but after the Archduke's grandson took over the Viennese court, stallions of the Karst breed fully replaced Spanish stallions in the Vienna Riding School. After that, Lipica became the emperor's stud farm. The best stallions were transported to Vienna to become elite dressage horses. They returned to Lipica after almost 20 years of successful work under the riders, to serve as breeding stallions. Three limes were planted as a personal memorial to every young stallion that left Lipica, creating the Lime Avenue that leads into the stud farm.

Nowadays, this avenue brings a certain mysterious atmosphere that reminds of the former baroque age. After the founding of the royal stud farm, the Lipizzaners were bred for more or less three centuries only in the Slovenian Karst region. Nowadays, the complex of Lipica is composed of four riding halls, six riding places and two hotels, which is also the centre of the many-sided tourist attractions there. Lipica attracts not only horse-fanciers, but also visitors keen on sports and recreation. All the elements of the classical high dressage in the classical riding school of Lipica are performed on a regular basis, including piaf, passage, levade, courbette and capriole. Today, there are over 700 pure blood Lipizzaners in Slovenia. The Lipizzaner population worldwide has been estimated at approximately 3,000 horses, and in this number, the Slovenian herd represents the most important breeding nucleus because of the high concentration of horses in a small territory as well as the top quality for breeding animals. Because of this fact, the Republic of Slovenia took responsibility for the future care of the development of the Slovenian Lipizzaner herd, which was confirmed with the so-called "Lipizzaner Law" (1996). Taking care of international breeding, Slovenia was in 1999 accorded the exclusive right to use the word Lipizzaner, translated in all languages. In order to prevent possible misuses and to keep the Lipizzaner population in pure blood and classical type, all other Lipizzaner breeding studs and associations must obtain special authorisation for using this registered name. In 2002, the Lipica Stud Farm was registered as the authorised breeding organisation according to EU legislation. Lipizzaners have been called the finest riding horses in the world. They are very intelligent, sociable horses. Their form is robust and graceful. Surprisingly, Lipizzaners are not white when they are born, but are grey, bay or even chestnut. The celebrated "Imperial Whites" does not develop until they are between 5 to 10 years old, when their hair loses its pigment. Their skin remains grey, however, so when they are ridden hard and sweat, they become mottled.

Lipizzaners are not just ridden for the dressage of the classical riding school, they are recognised across the borders of Slovenia and the Spanish Riding School throughout the world as a dear and faithful leisure-time partner and friend.

On the northern Adriatic Coast at the mouth of the Timavus River, the ancient Romans sacrificed a white horse to the God Diomedes (mythological protector of travellers and horses) every year. Valvasor wrote (1689): "Of all the horses, the whole of Europe favours the Karst horses, bred up in Crain (the largest part of present-day Slovenia) especially because of their life span, while they live long and tolerate work and riding for a very long time".

Karl II - Archduke of Caranthania in 1580 bought studs of Karst horses together with the village of Lipica. The Karst horses of the herd he bought and horses from the surrounding Karst region are the origin of the Lipizzaner breed. Other breeding stock was already included at the beginning. The