



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Director-General Cencen in talks in the USA

Slovenian Director-General for Bilateral Relations, Dr. Marjan Cencen, had several discussions in Washington, DC on May 24, 2013. He and his hosts in the U.S. Administration discussed bilateral political, economic, development and defense cooperation, including the efforts of the Slovenian Government to address the financial and economic crisis.

The main discussions were with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central and Northern Europe at the U.S.



Department of State, Brent Hartley, which particularly emphasized bilateral political and economic cooperation. Director-General Cencen described the measures and government program for addressing the financial and economic crisis in Slovenia and reiterated Slovenia's interest in concluding certain agreements to upgrade existing cooperation in a number of areas. He also repeated the invitation to representatives of the U.S. Administration to participate in the Bled Strategic Forum.

In the talks with representatives of the National Security Council, the U.S. side expressed satisfaction with the measures taken by the Slovenian government to overcome the economic crisis and underlined the importance of dealing with the situation, not only for Slovenia and its population, but also for the entire Eurozone. The signal that the country is able to find a way out of the crisis is essential for both financial markets and other countries. The United States is well aware that this requires great effort and



many compromises in reaching a consensus on appropriate measures.

The talks partly focused on various regional issues, particularly the Western Balkans, Afghanistan, and Syria. The United States appreciates Slovenia's efforts in the Western Balkan region, and Slovenia will continue to provide support to all countries in their integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

The Belgrade-Priština agreement and Croatia's E.U. integration were assessed as important achievement, which, it is hoped, will provide a new impetus and send the right signals to other countries in the region.

The talks also focused on the participation of both countries in Afghanistan to date and on their endeavors to promote the future transition process

in the country. The situation in Syria was also on the agenda. Slovenia hopes for a political and diplomatic resolution of the dispute and the earliest possible end to the conflict, which has claimed many lives in two years.

The U.S. side appreciates Slovenia's development efforts in the Western Balkans region and, therefore, hopes to enlist Slovenia's cooperation in the Mediterranean, particularly with its knowledge and experts, as these countries need assistance in establishing democratic institutions and cooperation among them, and on providing training for the public sector, monitoring elections and institution building.

The Director-General underlined Slovenia's cooperation with the countries in the region, particularly on humanitarian

projects and plans for the future.

The talks also touched on economic cooperation, with particular emphasis on the conclusion of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – TTIP, which is a great opportunity for the E.U., Slovenia, and the U.S., as it provides a number of additional business opportunities and new jobs.

According to Slovenia, support given to the mandate in the European Parliament is an additional signal that the Union is interested in the project, which would eliminate certain obstacles in the largest economic area in the world, and open up new opportunities for economic growth. The talks with Director-General Cencen in Washington were part of regular political dialogue between the two partners and allies.

EDUCATION

Lehigh University's Martindale Student Associates' Research Trip to Slovenia

The Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise at Lehigh University develops programs to promote understanding of the U.S. economy and its relationship with the world economy. Directed by Professor J. Richard Aronson since its inception in 1980, the Center is a model of experience-based learning exemplifying the university's goal of training leaders for a global society and providing insights into an interconnected global economy.

Each year, the Center selects a country of study and inducts twelve students to the Martindale Student Associates Program. Their mission is to produce an academic paper on



The group engaged in discussions with leaders of higher education at the University of Ljubljana.

the country of focus, suitable for publication in the economics journal *Perspectives on Business and Economics*. This year, Slovenia was selected. The choice was encouraged by Arkady Voloshin, a Lehigh professor of mechanical engineering, who works closely with Professor Igor Emri from the Center for Experimental Mechanics at the University of Ljubljana, and by Stephen Antalics, a retired Lehigh Professor, who founded the Bethlehem-Murska Sobota Sister City Association. This relationship brought Ambassador Roman Kirn and his staff to Bethlehem and to Lehigh University on several occasions over the past year.

The research project began with a series of speakers at Lehigh University, followed by a trip to Washington, DC, for briefings at the European External Action Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, where the students were received with generous hospitality by Ambassador Kirn and his staff, who offered a number of presentations to prepare the group for a ten-day research trip to Slovenia in May.

The group of the students arrived in Murska Sobota on May 9 to a warm reception by Mayor Stihec, followed by a guided tour of the local museum. The Mayor and Mrs. Stihec later joined the group for dinner in the company of the first dinner speaker, Simon Ravič, from the Murska Sobota agro-business, Panvita.

On May 10, the group drove to Ljubljana, which was their base until their departure on May 19. During their busy schedule of presentations and briefings, the students were privileged to meet and engage in discussions with leaders of higher education at the Universities of Maribor, Primorska, and Ljubljana, from research institutions, from prominent businesses, including



Lehigh University students visiting the premises of Gorenje domestic appliances manufacturer based in Velenje, Slovenia.

Gorenje, Pipistrel, and Medis, and the Slovene Chamber of Commerce. The Martindale Program students were warmly received during a field trip to the Postojna Clinic, where they were briefed on Slovene health challenges. They were also hosted and insightfully briefed by the economy/business editors of the Ljubljana daily *Delo* and its weekend supplement at the offices of *Delo*.

Furthermore, they visited the Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they received briefings by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and the Office for Slovenians Abroad. They also met with the U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia, Joseph A. Mussomeli, and his Embassy officers.

The featured speakers covered a range of topics, including the current economic and banking crisis, entrepreneurship, sustainability, the political system, the legal system, the taxation system, the health-care system, the education system, the role of religion and culture, and much more. They provided a very

thorough general economic grounding, and covered aspects of each of the students' chosen research topics, which -- as of now -- include privatization, direct foreign investment, labor reforms, pensions and taxation, the wine industry, the legal system, education and career readiness, transportation and infrastructure, and the country's competitive advantage in the global market.

Despite their full schedule, the students also got a chance to visit Slovenia's most awe-inspiring sights, such as Lake Bled, the stunning Skocjan Caves, and the beautiful coastal cities of Portorož and Piran.

After returning home, the students' respective final papers about business or economic issues pertaining to the country they visited will be published in *Perspectives on Business and Economics*, the undergraduate journal of the Martindale Center in November 2014.

(Ashley Yancy, Martindale Student Associate, on behalf of the Slovenia 2013 Martindale Program)

Cherry Festivals in Goriška Brda and Brkini



Goriška Brda. (Source: www.slovenia.info; Photographer: B. Mladenovič).



Year by year in mid-May, the cherries inundate the countryside and marketplaces all over Slovenia, where one can find a wide selection of cherries with shades ranging from light and dark red to the sweetest black sorts.

Despite the diversification and density of cherry orchards all over the country, there is nevertheless a region where cherries in Slovenia literally reign and share their crown, depending on the season, with grapes and wine. This region is Goriška Brda, often called the Slovenian Tuscany, hidden in a corner between Gorizia (in Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia), where only a narrow road corridor used to lead from the Slovenian side, but is today easily accessible from anywhere.

In the early spring, cherry blossoms cover the hills of Brda and soon mature into delicious red cherries. The Cherry Festival is the biggest and most widely known cultural and tourist event in Brda, dedicated to the delicious local fruit

and attracting every year more than 30,000 visitors from Slovenia, Italy and Austria. The program of the festival is rich and varied, covering ethnological and cultural events, entertainment and commercial activities.

Another region in Slovenia that has its own Cherry Festival is Brkini. Located in southwest Slovenia, wedged between Italy

and Croatia, Brkini Hills are famous for producing quality fruit, notably cherries, apples and plums, and for their plum brandy, the Brkinski slivovec, due to the flysch and limestone structure of land and the local climate, in which Mediterranean and continental features meet, having a favorable impact on fruit quality.



In mid-May, the cherries inundate marketplaces all over Slovenia (Source: www.primorska.info; Photographer: M. Kalman).

Consular Hours at the SCC in Lemont, IL

Jure Žmauc, Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia, will be available on [Thursday, June 6, 2013](#), at the [Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center](#) beginning at 5:00 p.m.

The main tasks of the Consul General:

Providing information on Slovenia and possibilities for cooperation, and guaranteeing conditions for the strengthening of cooperation in all areas – tourism, culture, science and education, sport, healthcare, and economy.

Monitoring American media reports on Slovenia and establishing contacts with journalists.

Creating and maintaining contacts with the Slovenian community in the United States.

Providing consular assistance to the Slovenian community and Slovenian citizens in the United States.

Should you have a matter that requires the consul's assistance, please visit him on June 6. [No appointment is needed.](#)

Where: Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center, 14252 Main Street, Lemont, IL 60439

More information at (1)(630)243-670, or e-mail: secretary@slovenian-center.org

Website: www.slovenian-center.org

Holy Cross Parish's 100th Anniversary

The members of the Holy Cross Parish in Bridgeport, CT, and the KSKJ 148 St. Joseph Lodge are celebrating the 100th Anniversary.

When: [Sunday, June 9th, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.](#)

Where: [Holy Cross Parish, 750 Tahmore Dr., Fairfield, CT 06825](#)

Banquet to follow anniversary mass

More information: [\(203\) 372-4595](tel:(203)372-4595)

Slovenian American Heritage Foundation 2013 Lecture Series -- Women in Politics

The Slovenian-American Heritage Foundation invites all to attend the third talk in its 2013 Lecture Series. The Foundation is extremely pleased that Baldwin Wallace University Professor, Dr. Barbara Palmer, a Minnesota native of Slovenian descent, will present a discussion on women in politics with a special focus on Slovenian women in politics. The program is free and open to the public.

When: [Tuesday, June 11, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.](#)

Where: [Lower Hall of the Slovenian Society Home, 20713 Recher Avenue, Euclid, Ohio](#)

SNPJ Slovenefest

Slovenefest, a three-day annual event held the second weekend of July at the SNPJ Recreation Center in the Borough of SNPJ, PA, brings together thousands to enjoy the ethnic food, music, culture and fun of Slovenia.

When: [July 12, 13 & 14, 2013](#)

Where: [The SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Enon Valley, Pennsylvania](#)

More information and detailed schedule of events at: <http://www.slovenefest.com/schedule>.