



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Slovenia- United States Annual Political and Security Consultations



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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted on December 10 in Ljubljana the seventh regular annual political and security consultations between Slovenia and the United States. The Slovenian delegation was headed by the Acting Director-General for Global Affairs and Multilateral Political Relations, Sanja Štiglic, and the American delegation by the Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Bureau for Political-Military Affairs, Todd C. Chapman, who

also had a meeting with State Secretary, Dragoljuba Benčina. Also participating in the talks on the Slovenian side were representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Slovenian Army.

The political and security consultations between the two countries focused on the most pressing unresolved international and regional security issues in the

Euro-Atlantic area and beyond, the functioning of both countries within NATO and their activities in other spheres of security policy, and the possibilities for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

The two delegations exchanged views on the Alliance's commitments arising from the September summit in Wales, and devoted special attention to the NATO position regarding the



Readiness Action Plan, defense expenditure, the crisis in Ukraine, the international response to the ISIL threat, and NATO's efforts and role in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of strong trans-Atlantic ties, which remain the cornerstone of

NATO, and shared views on the crisis-management operations and missions carried out by the U.N., E.U. and OSCE.

The Slovenian side underlined the importance of the open-door policy and the enlargement of NATO, including the related issue of the Euro-

Atlantic prospects of countries in the Western Balkans. Both countries expressed their support for ITF Enhancing Human Security, emphasizing the role of the U.S. as the institution's major donor and key partner.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

MFA commemorates Human Rights Day by taking part in the #HeForShe Campaign



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This year, the Foreign Ministry is dedicating Human Rights Day to women's rights, a major priority of Slovenian foreign policy. By joining the U.N. Women #HeForShe Campaign, the ministry's male employees have expressed their support for greater gender equality. In doing so, the ministry is also highlighting two major anniversaries in the

coming year: the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the 15th anniversary of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Human Rights Day, which is celebrated annually on December 10, honors the date on which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the second-most-translated document of all time. This year's slogan of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is Human Rights 365, encompassing the idea that every day is Human Rights Day.

To mark the 25th

anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Foreign Ministry in 2014 organized numerous activities. The importance of children's rights has also been recognized by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which on October 10 awarded to Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, children's rights activists, this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Slovenia also devotes special attention to the rights of the elderly. In light of the country's continuous efforts in this field, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons of the U.N. Human Rights Council paid her first official visit to Slovenia last month.

The year 2014 marks yet another important anniversary, the thirty years of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, while 2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Human rights remain a quintessential part of Slovenian foreign policy. Slovenia reiterated its strong commitment to this topic in its second presentation for Universal Periodic Review on

November 4, 2014, as well as in its unrelenting efforts to promote human rights values and standards in its candidacy for membership of the U.N. Human Rights Council in the period 2016–2018.

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day, Ambassador O’Sullivan, Head of the E.U. Delegation, hosted a breakfast meeting. Ambassadors from Ireland, Lithuania, and Slovenia on Thursday met with NGO representatives that strive for consistent respect of human rights in the U.S. as well as all over the world. In this latter regard, the cooperation between the U.S. and the E.U. is essential.



Breakfast meeting of E.U. ambassadors in Washington, D.C. with NGO representatives to celebrate Human Rights Day.

EDUCATION

Fulbright NCAC Annual Holiday Gathering



Potluck dinner.

On Sunday, December 7, the embassy of Slovenia hosted for the third time the annual holiday gathering of the Fulbright Association alumni of the National Capital Area

Chapter (NCAC). Around 180 students, academics, business people, and government officials who in the past participated in the Fulbright exchange program and are members of the NCAC of

the association joined the event, which included a performance by the DC jazz-piano band, as well as a tasting of culinary specialties of different countries.

Opening remarks by the Board President of Washington D.C. Fulbright Alumni Club, Ms. Rachel Aldridge, were followed by a welcoming speech by Slovenian Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, who emphasized the importance of international exchanges for achieving cross-cultural understanding among countries. He stressed that there is no better way to do it than through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills. In addition, he introduced the Slovenian–American Educational Foundation, and the VTIS – Association of Slovenes Educated Abroad, both founded in 2014. A short film about Slovenia’s geographic, historical

and business features was also shown at the gathering.

The Fulbright program, supported by U.S. Congress, is the international exchange scholarship program between the U.S. and partner governments of 155 countries, including Slovenia. Since 1964, when the first Educational Exchange agreement between the U.S. and the now former Yugoslavia was signed, over 350 Slovenian scholars have taken part in the program and even more Americans visited Slovenia as part of their grant, some of them also joining the embassy for the Sunday annual event.



Address by Ambassador Dr. Cerar.

EDUCATION

Hearst ES Students Visit the Embassy



Students were greeted by the ambassador.

As a part of the Embassy Adoption Program, Hearst Elementary School students visited the Slovenian Embassy on Thursday, December 11. Both the Slovenian Embassy and

the school are participating in an academic program (offered in partnership with the DC Public Schools and the Washington Performing Arts Society), the mission of which is to work with

5th- and 6th-grade students, to impart global education in the classroom. One of the program's highlights is field trips, so the students can experience firsthand their adopted culture.

On Wednesday, the students visited for the first time the Slovenian Embassy. Welcoming remarks were delivered by the Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, who described to the visitors the profession of a diplomat and the role of an embassy in a host country, and answered their questions.

Since last week was observed as The World Festival of the Slovene Language, the group then got acquainted by Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek with the Slovenian alphabet, especially the letters specific to the Slovenian language and learned how to read in Slovenian. They also learned how to count

in Slovenian and, through fun games, practiced the pronunciation of a few essential phrases of introduction with the help of the booklet Pocket Slovene, which was published on the occasion of the festival.

The students also had a chance to taste Slovenian traditional roll-cake "potica" – with chocolate filling -- and the famous Carniolian sausage (kranjska klobasa). Before returning to school, they presented Christmas ornaments they made to be displayed in Nova Gorica in Slovenia and posed for a picture in front of the embassy's Christmas tree.



CULTURE

50th Annual Miklavževanje in Washington, D.C.

The Bishop Baraga Society, Lodge #257 of the KSKJ (American Slovenian Catholic Union), organized on December 6, the traditional Slovenian Saint Nicholas Celebration-- Slovensko Miklavževanje. The

seasonal program, which took place in Chevy Chase, MD, first, featured musical performances by the attending children. Saint Nicholas, in his bishop's robes and attended by angels, then distributed presents to children.

In keeping with the tradition, some devils also were there.

Afterwards, Slovenian foods, including traditional pastries and Carniolian sausages with sauerkraut, were offered at a buffet dinner, which provided a



Children singing traditional Slovenian songs.



Remarks by Chris Bohince. KSKJ this year celebrates 120 years since its establishment.

nice atmosphere for an evening gathering of around 150 members of the Slovenian community of greater Washington, who joined the event to celebrate their Slovenian heritage.

In Slovenia, the winter holiday season begins with the feast of St. Nicholas on December 6. St. Nicholas or, as called in Slovenia, Sveti Miklavž, brings presents to children during the

night between December 5 and 6. When he visits the children, Sv. Miklavž is accompanied by angels, who help him carry and distribute the presents, and devils, who reprimand children who had been bad. Since, according to the legend, one night St. Nicholas threw three pieces of gold into a house of a poor man for his three daughters, traditionally children get oranges as a present

on December 6, along with other small gifts, cookies, dried fruit and, sometimes, if they hadn't been so good, a switch. Special bread, called poprtnjak, is made at this time. The bread is covered with a cloth and placed on the table, but it is not eaten until the feast of the Three Kings on January 6, when it is distributed to the children.



More performances by children of the local Slovenian community.



Arrival of Sveti Miklavž - St. Nicholas.

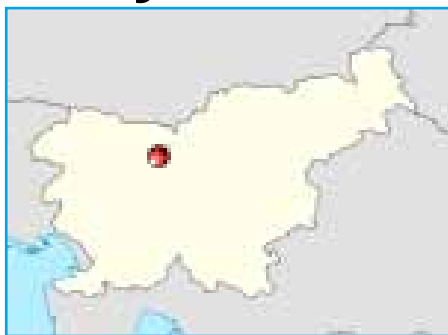


Ambassador Dr. Cerar talking with a member of Sv. Miklavž's delegation.



Miklavž distributing presents to children.

Cerklje na Gorenjskem



Cerklje na Gorenjskem, this year again declared as the most beautiful small town in Slovenia, is located between the Slovenian capital Ljubljana and the high mountainous region of the Kamniško-Savinjske Alps. The region is a melting pot of different natural environments and cultural landscape. Its location in close vicinity of the main Slovenian airport Brnik and the ski resort Krvavec offers a great variety of holiday possibilities in the area.

In Cerklje, the past and the present go hand in hand. Its rich history and that of the surrounding areas can be traced back to Roman times. Archaeological finds give



The baroque church of the Assumption in the town center of Cerklje.

evidence of luxurious villas located in the area and of a diversified road network, built about 2000 years ago, which linked smaller villages in the area, and was used for almost a thousand years. Some of the objects retrieved through archaeological excavations are now on exhibit in Petrovčeva house, a

museum in the center of Cerklje, which contains objects discovered along the road, such as a bronze buckle in the shape of two hobbies used for fastening belts and straps for a hanging purse, handbags, etc. dating from the end of the 6th or the early 7th century.

In written historical documents, the settlement was first mentioned in mid-12th century as Trnovlje (meaning village in thorns). The history of the area can be followed on the path of cultural heritage by visiting the baroque church of the Assumption in the town center, the secession summer residence of Ljubljana's most eminent former mayor Ivan Hribar, a chapel built by the Slovenian prominent architect, Jože Plečnik, the monument of the composer and conductor Davorin Jenko, and the memorial park of other prominent locals who have made a significant contribution to the development of the sciences and the arts not only of the region, but some of them



Secession villa of Ljubljana's mayor Hribar.



Castle Strmol.

also worldwide. Located opposite the memorial park is the Petrovčeva hiša (Petrovčeva house) dating from the 18th century (now hosting ethnological and archaeological collections of the area), a library, and a Tourist Information Center. The former two give evidence of the life of the wealthy peasants and inn-owners of yore, as well as of the antique inhabitants of the area through an exhibition of the objects retrieved along Roman roads and from Roman graves (coins, buckles, earrings, etc.).

In the Middle Ages, the region around Cerklje na Gorenjskem prided itself with numerous castles. Of the twelve medieval castles in the area of today's municipality, the castle Strmol is the only one preserved. It was first mentioned in the 13th century, and is today fully renovated and open to the public. Another important historical building is the famous monastery of Dominican nuns, Velesovo, established in 1238, with the church of Annunciation, located nearby in the valley of Adergas. The church is renowned for its paintings of the seven altars by the Austrian baroque painter Johann Martin Schmidt of

Krems. Today it still preserves the oldest statue of Our Lady with the Child in Slovenia (dating back to 13th century). Together with the monastery, the church now hosts numerous cultural events. Due to its excellent acoustics, it is a favorite venue for concerts of the most renowned organists and for recording of their performances.

In winter, the snow-covered slopes of the ski resort Krvavec, only 3 miles away from Cerklje and comfortably accessible by

cable car, offer an exciting skiing experience for beginners as well as expert skiers. Likewise, spring, summer and autumn provide a special experience on Krvavec, since the whole area turns into vast meadows, which offer excellent possibilities for hiking, collecting herbs, and enjoying pristine nature and beautiful views of the entire central Slovenia.

In the region of Cerklje, there are numerous restaurants with a wide range of excellent home-made meals based on locally produced meats, vegetables, wild mushrooms, berries, chestnuts and various herbs. The region also has a large variety of accommodations: hotels, guesthouses, farms, and mountain huts, suitable for families, fans of nature, athletes and business people. For more information contact:

Tourist Information Center Cerklje
Petrovčeva hiša; Krvavška 1b
4207 Cerklje na Gorenjskem,
Slovenia

www.tic-cerklje.si

info@tic-cerklje.si

Phone: 00386 4 28 15 822



Krvavec in winter.

Slovenian film CLASS ENEMY at the AFI–EU Film Festival

Now in its 27th year, the AFI European Union Film Showcase continues its tradition of bringing the best in European cinema to Washington audiences. This year's selection of more than 50 films includes award-winners, international festival favorites, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents, plus many countries' official Oscar® submissions for Best Foreign Language Film, including Slovenia's 2013 Oscar® Selection, Class Enemy (Razredni sovražnik).

When: [Sunday, December 21 at 9:45 p.m.](#)

Where: [AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, 8633 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910](#)

More information: <http://www.afi.com/silver/eushowcase/>

PSALMS IN NEW YORK performed by CARMINA SLOVENICA

"Chorus can take over from us and experience for us our innermost and most spontaneous feelings and attitudes, inclusive of crying and laughing." Zižek.

Choregie project by Karmina Šilec.

When: [January 8–11, 2015](#)

Where: [St. Ann's Warehouse, 29 Jay Street, Brooklyn 11201](#) -- just east of the Manhattan Bridge (aka DUMBO) <http://www.stannswarehouse.org/directions.php>

More information: http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current_season.php?show_id=100
http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current_season.php?show_id=100

Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qshuAZwC4Kw>

GRAMATIK in NYC

Gramatik, an electronic artist from Portorož, Slovenia, is wrapping up the #GramatikLYM tour with the biggest NYC show yet. His current genre falls under a mixture of hip-hop, glitch, electro, and dubstep.

When: [January 23 and 24, 2015](#)

Where: [Best Buy Theater, 1515 Broadway, New York City, NY 10036](#)

More information: <http://www.gramatik.net/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MENTLjubljana/photos/a.234000130134677.1073741828.232984166902940/305337683000921/?type=1&theater>