



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 17, 2014, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2

18th Annual Consultations of Slovenian diplomats



Slovenian ambassadors and senior Foreign Ministry officials together with President Borut Pahor.

Heads of Slovenian embassies, consulates and representative offices abroad and senior Foreign Ministry officials met at Brdo estate on January 6–8, 2014, for a three-day annual consultation. The event focused on Slovenia's new foreign policy strategy, topical international and bilateral issues and economic diplomacy.

The annual meeting of Slovenian diplomats opened on Monday with an address by Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec, who stressed that a new Slovenian foreign policy strategy

will redefine the country's role in the international arena and identify its vital interests. The minister, in his speech, also underscored the importance of economic diplomacy and, turning to multilateral relations, noted Slovenia's bid for membership on the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2016-2018. The protection of human rights, particularly of vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly, will therefore remain the focus of Slovenia's foreign policy.

In the afternoon session, the ambassadors were addressed by President Borut Pahor, and at the opening of the second day, by Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek. The Prime Minister highlighted the diplomatic service as having a key role in advocating Slovenia's interests in international institutions, opening doors for the Slovenian economy, and creating the atmosphere for boosting bilateral and multilateral ties. The PM also outlined regional cooperation and good relations with the



neighbors. She also cited the Western Balkans as a priority in terms of bilateral relations as well as in the context of the E.U. and NATO enlargements. At the heart of the discussion at the meeting were also the current challenges that face Slovenia's foreign policy and its diplomats, "green" policy and international development cooperation.



The meeting took place at the Brdo estate.

EMBASSY ADOPTION PROGRAM

An Hour at Janney Elementary School

On January 15, Nuška Zakrajšek and Brina Murnik from the Embassy of Slovenia made the first visit of 2014 within the Embassy Adoption Program to the adopted class at the Janney Elementary School in Tenleytown, Washington, D.C.

The group of very interactive and motivated children first got acquainted by Ms. Zakrajšek with the Slovenian alphabet, especially the letters, specific to Slovenian language. Later, they learned how to count in Slovenian up to 20 and, through fun games, practiced the

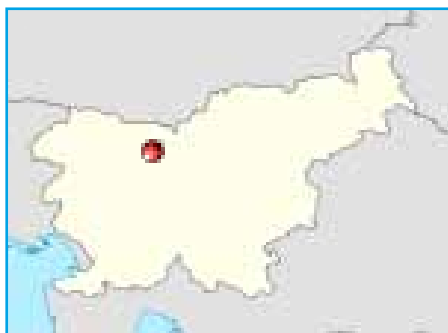


pronunciation of a few essential phrases of introduction.

Although unfamiliar, the unusual sounds in the language and the distinction between the feminine and masculine form of words were quickly mastered. The last few minutes were dedicated to a quick pop quiz on fun facts about Slovenia, and the students showed their knowledge about the length of the Slovenian coastline, the Lipizzaner horse breed, the capital city of Ljubljana, etc. The fun-filled but educational hour quickly passed; but there is to be the next one already in two weeks.



Preddvor



Many archeological deposits, ruins of forts and older castles speak about the rich history of Preddvor and its surroundings. This area was settled already in the Stone Age. On Apnišče (739 m; 2420 ft.), between Možjanca and Stefanja gora, there was a Neolithic settlement.

The most vigorous among them was Preddvor, where archeological finds prove 3000 years of continuous settlement, from the Neolithic -- around 100 BC -- until today. In the Iron Age, the surroundings of Preddvor contained several settlements: Sv. Lovrenc, Gradišče, Vrtičnik, etc. Further finds confirm the presence of the Romans and later, in the early Middle Ages, of Carniolans (Preddvor, Sv. Jakob, Tupaliče, Dolga njiva, etc.).



The Bistrica stream, which flows down the steep valley from behind the Potoška hill, was dammed at the castle and it now feeds the artificial Črnava lake. (Photo courtesy: Zavod za Turizem Preddvor / Tourist Organization Preddvor)

The oldest written sources mention castles and villages from the 12th century. A document from 1156, preserved in the Carinthian land museum in Celovec, mentions that count Bernard Spanheim donated Dvor and Preddvor to the Cistercian abbey of Vetrinjin Carinthia before he left for a crusade in 1147. The Vetrinjin abbey established a "grangija" in Preddvor, which meant a court with land cultivated mainly by the monks themselves. In 1224, the "grangija" broke up. The abbey divided the estate and allotted farms

to its subjects for an annual rent. In the following centuries, the abbey enlarged its holdings, but they were reduced in the 16th century, when a state prince demanded large amounts of money for fighting the Turks. At that time, a defensive wall was built around the church St. Peter. What remained from the abbey, estate was sold on the 1st of October 1605 to a private buyer for 8,000 guildens. Since then, Dvor and Preddvor have changed many owners.

The two-storey building of the the Preddvor manor, in the Renaissance-Baroque style, was mentioned for the first time in written sources in 1147. Preserved are the Renaissance ceiling with stuccos, and wooden ceilings from the 17th century. Since then, the manor functioned as an abbey, sanatorium, holiday resort and reformatory institution. In the 19th century, a park was designed on the eastern side behind the manor and renovated in the beginning of the 20th century.

The 16th-century Hrib Castle stands on the shore of the artificial Črnava lake, in the middle



The Turn Castle. (Photo courtesy: Helena Krampfl Nikač)



The avenue of ash trees..
(Photo courtesy: Helena Krampł Nikač)

of a park with exotic trees and an avenue. The castle changed many owners and went through many renovations. Currently, it is part of hotel Bor, which contains an inn with a wedding hall. The avenue of ash trees at the Hrib Castle is well-known for the intertwining of its branches at the top. The legend says that in ancient times the Hrib Castle's gardener fell in forbidden love with a castle's young lady. They had secret meetings in the avenue. Only trees understood their love, therefore, they interlaced their branches to help hiding them. When a mother-countess realized how deep their love was, she permitted their wedding. Their marriage lasted in joy and happiness for 50 years. Hence, today the Hrib Castle guarantees to newlyweds who walk through this avenue on a wedding day, 50 years of happiness together!

The Turn Castle is mentioned in written sources in 1408 as the Turn Castle under the Novi grad castle. Both castles were owned by the counts of Celje. Initially a tower-like castle from the 14th century, it was gradually completed to become a two-storey and four-tract building with an inner courtyard. It changed several owners. The castle and the

estate were bought in 1793 by Martin Urbančič, who had been until then caretaker at the Brdo Castle. Josipina Urbančič (married name Toman), who published under the pen name Josipina Turnograjska (July 4, 1833 – June 1, 1854), one of the first Slovene female writers, poets, and composers, was born at Turn Castle.

The Neuburg Castle (Novi grad Castle or Pusti grad Castle) was first mentioned in written sources in 1156. In 1439, it was greatly damaged in the battle for the estate heritage of the counts of Celje by knight Jan Vitovec, and in 1473 by the Turks. Finally, it was destroyed



Oil painting of Josipina Turnograjska by Henrika Langus. (Photo: wikimedia)

by an earthquake in 1511.

The church of St. Peter in Preddvor was mentioned for the first time in 1156. From an older church, only a late-Gothic tower is preserved, which was added in the period of Turkish invasions. The church was given its present look in 1751. The presbytery of the Baroque church was painted by Matija Bradaška, side altars were made by M. Vrbnik, and the main altar painting, The Last Supper, was painted by Janez Wolf. The church has a crypt and a dome. The Church of St. Lawrence (892 m; 2920 ft.) was mentioned

in written sources in 1154. It is also mentioned in the folk poem "The galley slave". The present building with a Roman nave and a Gothic star-like vaulted presbytery was consecrated in 1507. The frescoes of the Journey of the Three Kings, made by Friulian masters in the 15th century, are partly preserved. The ceiling was coffered at the end of the 17th century.

Next to its rich history and monuments of cultural significance, Preddvor gives visitors many possibilities for cycling trips, one-day walking trips and hikes in the unspoilt natural surroundings. The Storžič mountain (2132 m; 6977 ft.), which got its name from its conical shape, plays a dominant role among the peaks that interest hikers, but, walking trails to St. Jacob and Kališče are also fascinating. Geological path to Možjanca (691 m; 2260 ft.) cuts through a steep slope that offers multicolored rocks in the exposed area, which are full of interesting animal fossils. There are numerous walking paths also along the Kokra River. More information about Preddvor is available at: <http://www.preddvor-tourism.si/>



"Posmodule" are cakes typical of Preddvor. They are spread with minced lard or sprinkled with cracklings, or spread with cottage cheese and sprinkled with chopped chive. (Photo : Helena Krampł Nikač)

SWU Scholarships for Academic year 2014-2015

The Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation is in 2014 celebrating 65 years of financially assisting students. The mission of the foundation is to generate funding to financially assist students with hope that they will promote and preserve Slovenian Culture.

The Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation is offering the following scholarships, for college and graduate students for the academic year 2014-2015, to be awarded in April 2014:

ROSE MARIE PRINC SCHOLARSHIP of \$4,000 for a graduate student majoring in the field of education. Applicant

must be of Slovene ancestry. Applications are available online www.slovenianunion.org "scholarship" and must be submitted via postal mail before **March 1, 2014**. E-mailed materials will not be accepted.

SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION SCHOLARSHIPS of \$2,000 and \$1,000 will be offered to high school seniors and college students, majoring in any field and attending accredited colleges or universities during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Students applying for these awards must have held membership in the Slovenian Union of America for the past three years, beginning before March 1, 2011.

Application forms are available online www.slovenianunion.org "scholarship" and must be submitted via postal mail before **March 1, 2014**. E-mailed materials will not be accepted.

For more information on the SWU Scholarship Foundation or to send much needed and appreciated contributions, please contact: Mary Turvey, Director, 4 Lawrence Drive, Marquette, MI 49855, e-mail: mturvey@aol.com or Marge Church 1028 Skyland Drive, Macedonia, OH 44056 yemec1@windstream.net

TO DO LIST

[Slovenian Cultural Evening at the Embassy of Slovenia](#)

Through food, drink, a short film that highlights the scenery, culture and people of Slovenia, and live music by the Slovenian mezzo-soprano Barbara Jernejčič Fürst and guitarist Zarko Ignjatović, experience the rich Slovenian culture. In cooperation with Things To Do, Inc. – Young Professional Cultural Society.

When: [Thursday, January 30, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.- 9:30 p.m.](#)

Where: [Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW, Washington DC 20008](#)

More information and registration: <http://www.thingstododc.com/> -- see EMBASSY AND CULTURAL EVENTS

[Second Annual Cleveland Kurentovanje in Cleveland, OH](#)

The Second Annual Cleveland Kurentovanje will take place on [March 1, 2014](#), on St. Clair Avenue between East 62nd and Addison Road. This cultural event, which connects ethnology, culture, arts, and people from all over Europe, has been celebrated in Slovenia for the past 50 years. The central figure of the carnival, the Kurent, is believed to chase away winter and usher in spring with his supernatural powers. Last year, the first annual Cleveland Kurentovanje was attended by over 2000 people, and the 2014 celebration promises to be even larger.

More information at: <http://clevelandkurentovanje.com/>

If you are interested in joining a festive 1/2-mile parade along St. Clair Ave, please fill out the form which you will find on the following link <http://clevelandkurentovanje.com/join-the-parade/>

[A Taste of Slovenia with International Club of DC](#)

The International Club of DC, with the cooperation of the Embassy of Slovenia, cordially requests the pleasure of your company for an enchanting evening of Slovenian culture, art, music, cuisine, and wine at the Embassy of Slovenia. This is a wonderful opportunity to discover Slovenia through all your senses while meeting other ICDC members! The evening will begin with a short presentation about Slovenia and Slovenian culture, geography, trade, and tourism. Afterwards, you will be invited to feast on a buffet of traditional Slovenian delicacies along with Slovenian wine served at the open bar. The evening will also provide an opportunity to meet diplomatic personnel of the embassy as well as International Club of DC members in attendance. During the evening, you will also enjoy a concert of Slovenian music by the SLOWIND Quintet.

When: [Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.](#)

Where: [Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20008](#)

More information and RSVP: <http://www.internationalclubdc.com/Events/EventDetails.aspx?EventGUID=7AEFE4C2-C32A-485F-861D-482EA5711250>

[Ansambel Saša Avsenika in Cleveland, OH](#)

Slovenska Pristava, Slovenian National Home and The Slovenian Hour present the grandson of the legendary Slavko Avsenik, who continues the Avsenik tradition. In February, Sašo Avsenik will introduce his sound to North America; however, his Cleveland, OH, concert will be the only one in the U.S.

When: [Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.](#)

Where: [The Slovenian National Home, 6417 St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland, OH](#)

Tickets: [\(440\)537-1941](#)

\$20 pre-sale | \$25 at the door | students \$10.

[SlovenSki Calendar for 2014 Ski Season](#)

SlovenSki Weekend

Where: WINDHAM MOUNTAIN, NEW YORK

When: Friday, January 31 to Sunday, February 2, 2014.

Slovenian GS Ski Race championship on Saturday.

SlovenSki trip #1 (Presidents Week)

Where: SUN VALLEY, IDAHO

When: Monday, February 17 to Sunday, February 23, 2014.

Total cost \$1,495.00 from LaGuardia, NY to Boise, Idaho.

6 nights lodging at Sun Valley; 3 bedroom condominiums, 5-day ski pass.

Kids under 15 stay and ski FREE.

Call for air info from other airports: Cleveland, Toronto, Chicago

SlovenSki trip #2

Where: ASPEN / SNOWMASS, COLORADO

Top of The Village 3 bedroom Condominiums, ski in, ski out.

When: Monday, March 24 to Sunday, March 30, 2014

Snowmass is home of 2014 Nastar Nationals Ski Championships during last week of March.

[More information and application:](#)

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The weekly Embassy Newsletter, produced by the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, is available on: www.washington.embassy.si.

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