



NEWSLETTER

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Reception on the occasion of the Independence and Unity Day of the Republic of Slovenia



Opening remarks on the occasion by ambassador Dr. Cerar.

Every year on December 26, Slovenia celebrates its Independence and Unity Day, commemorating the proclamation of the official results of the independence plebiscite in 1990.

The referendum took place on December 23, 1990, when 93.2% of eligible voters came to the polls to declare with an overwhelming majority of

voters (95% of those who voted and 88.5% of all eligible voters) that Slovenia would, within six months after the plebiscite, conduct disassociation talks with the other Yugoslav republics and persuade foreign countries to grant recognition to the new state. The plebiscite took place following the first multiparty election in Slovenia in April of 1990.

To honor the 24th anniversary of the independence referendum, Ambassador Dr. Cerar and his wife, Dr. Martina Skok, hosted a reception on December 22 for the local Slovenian community members and their families. In his address, Ambassador Dr. Cerar underlined the importance of the event 24 years ago, which led to the declaration of independence on





Ambassador Dr. Cerar and his wife Dr. Martina Skok receiving guests.



More than 80 guests attended the event.

June 25, 1991, and on December 23, 1991, exactly one year after the referendum, to adopting the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. In his speech, the ambassador recognized the role of the Slovenian community in the U.S. in the process of gaining recognition from the United States and also thanked it for its support on Slovenia's pathways to NATO, the 10 years of membership in it Slovenia celebrated this year. In his remarks, the ambassador also

outlined the most important highlights in the U.S.-Slovenia relations in the past decades and wished all the guests a merry holiday season and a happy new year 2015.

On this occasion was also opened an exhibition of paintings by Andrej Schlegel, titled "New York 1987–2014". Andrej Schlegel is a renowned Slovenian painter and art professor, who closely intertwined his personal and unusual life story over several decades with the New York

City and devoted an impressive visual oeuvre to the metropolis. Even though his acrylic paintings surely are among his more important artworks, his series of ink-on-paper drawings holds the most prominent position in his oeuvre. The drawings are distinguished by their strong expressive line that has spilled out freely into a visual poetics of its very own, for which Schlegel can be recognized and placed among the most interesting Slovenian artists.

Andrej Schlegel in 2001 donated a painting to New York City and then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. His paintings commemorating the victims of September 11 were also received as gifts by the then-U.S. President, George W. Bush, and the then-Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani. The exhibition "New York 1987 – 2014" will remain on view for visitors for a few months every day Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, 2410 California St., Washington, D.C. 20008.



Artist Andrej Schlegel next to his paintings.



Class Enemy at the AFI EU Film Showcase

The annual AFI European Union Film Showcase ran from opening night on December 3, when Polish film Warsaw Uprising was screened, through December 21, when Slovenian film *Class enemy* concluded the festival, which traditionally takes place at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland. Presented by the American Film Institute (AFI) in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and E.U. Member States, the festival in its 27th edition showcased the best in European film-making. This year's selection of more than 50 films included international film festival award winners, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents.

A complex feature film, *Class enemy* is based on actual events that occurred in the high school of debut filmmaker Rok Biček. The film charts moral disintegration in a high school following a shy student's suicide.



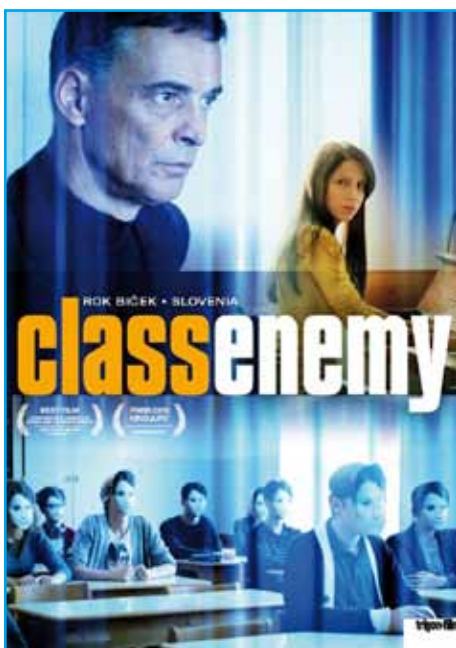
A scene from the film.

Guilt is universally ascribed to an autocratic and hugely unpopular substitute language teacher, but the truth is a puzzle with a hundred shades of meaning, and the blame spares no one.

Class enemy was in the past year widely celebrated on the international film festival circuit. In 2013, the film was Slovenia's official Oscar® submission for Best Foreign Language Film. It was nominated for the 2014 Lux Prize and at the 70th Venice International Film Festival, where it won the Best Film award, as

a part of the International Film Critics' Week.

In the U.S., the film was screened in January, at the Palm Springs International Film Festival and later in February and March at the Cinequest Film Festival in California. From March 19 – 30 it took part at the 38th Cleveland International Film Festival, and was presented at the 17th E.U. Film Festival in Chicago. In April, the film was also introduced in New York at the First Time Fest (FTF 2014) in April. Official website: <https://www.facebook.com/RazredniSovraznikClassEnemy>



Goran and Zoran Dragić meet with Embassy Staff

Slovenian basketball stars Goran and Zoran Dragić visited Washington, D.C., as their team, the Phoenix Suns, played against the Washington Wizards in the Verizon Center on Sunday, December 21. Embassy staff attended the game to support the Suns and their Slovenian point-guard Goran Dragić and his brother Zoran. Goran Dragić was among the leading scorers of the game, winding up with 16 points, four assists and six rebounds, helping Phoenix beat the Wizards 104-92.

Goran Dragić began his professional career at the age of 17 in 2003 with Ilirija Ljubljana. In 2007, he joined the Slovenian League, Adriatic League, and Euroleague club Olimpija Ljubljana, where he played for one year, during the 2007-08 season, winning the Slovenian League championship. In 2008, he signed with the Phoenix Suns and joined the NBA. In 2011, he was traded to the Houston Rockets; however, Dragić returned to Phoenix Suns



Phoenix Suns' Goran and Zoran Dragić, of Slovenia, meet with the embassy staff after the game in the locker room of the Verizon Center.

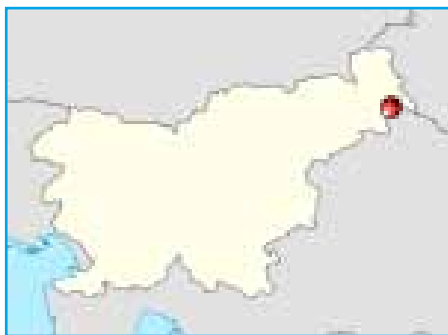
in 2012, signing a four-year contract as the team's first play.

Zoran Dragić, in July 2012, joined the Houston Rockets for the 2012 NBA Summer League. On August 20, 2012, he signed a two-year deal with Unicaja Málaga of the Liga ACB. In 2014, he signed a two-year contract

extension with Unicaja Málaga. However, after agreeing to sign with the Phoenix Suns, Dragić and Málaga agreed to part ways and Zoran Dragić officially signed with the Suns to play the shooting guard and small forward positions.



Velika Polana



Among the mysterious Mura river, black meadow woods and silhouettes of the nearby hilly vineyards, lies the Velika Polana municipality. Consisting of only three villages: Velika Polana, Mala Polana and Brezovica, it is a rich mosaic of natural and cultural heritage and friendly people and, hence, the reason why a visitor should stop and discover more. It is home to the largest population of storks in Slovenia -- the reason why the »Euronatur“ foundation bestowed on Velika and Mala Polana the title "European village of storks". "Polanski log", the largest complex of black alder in Europe, offers shelter to many endangered



Townhouse in Velika Polana.

plant and animal species. The educational path through the heart of this forest acquaints the visitor with local plants and animals, and the importance of water for their existence.

Velika Polana is also the birthplace of the famous Slovene writer Miško Kranjec. At his homestead is preserved his study and is on display a

permanent exhibition of his books, documents, photographs, and works of art. The homestead is also the starting point of two hiking trails: the Miško's path, which leads to the writer's vineyard cottage in Lendavske gorice, and the Slovenian writers' path.

In Mala Polana, next to the Črnc creek, stands one of the last preserved water mills in the Pomurje region, known as Čopek's mill. An example of historical residential architecture is Sabol's homestead in Mala Polana. The parish church of Velika Polana, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is also the starting point of the Daniel Halas pilgrimage route. Štefan Hozjan, once an Austrian Royal-Imperial pilot and one of the most successful pilots of World War I, was born in Brezovica, where a monument has been erected in his memory.

The tourist story of Velika Polana is meant for those who seek genuine contact with the natural and cultural heritage and for those who wish to feel the



Homestead of famous Slovene writer Miško Kranjec.



Čopek's water mill.

heartbeat of this place. Biking and hiking trails do not have their end here, but are part of the trail network that take a visitor along the Mura river and lead him across several countries. The true spirit of the place can be felt at many festivals and other local events organized by Velika Polana associations throughout the year. They organize cultural, sports, culinary and other events which try to preserve the local traditions and customs.

The largest event is the Pomurski poletni festival (The Pomurje Summer Festival), which lasts eight days and offers a rich program with something for everyone and is also considered one of the largest festivals in Slovenia. More about the festival and its program can be found at <http://www.strk.si>. The ŠTRK Slovenia association is also the bearer of the Guinness World Record in cooking "bujta repa", a delicious traditional dish of



"Bujta repa", a delicious traditional dish.

Prekmurje.

Guests can stay at the homestead of Miško Kranjec on straw beds or in creative studios. There are also thermal springs and health resorts in the vicinity of Velika Polana, in which a guest can find a place to stay or experience interesting thermal and other adventures.

The beauties of the Velika Polana municipality have been noticed also by various expert committees, which have honored it with the following titles: Slovenia's Most Beautiful Town Core 2013 and Slovenia's Most Beautiful Tourist Location 2014 as well as with the Golden Award in European competition in July 2012, or Towns and Villages in bloom as Europe's Most Beautiful Place and, also in the same competition, a special recognition as for the park "Storkland" (»Dežela štokelj«).

CONTACT AND INFORMATION

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The largest event in the town is The Pomurje Summer Festival.

Eva Prša Simonovič Ends her Posting in the U.S.

At the end of the month, our administrative attaché, Ms. Eva Prša Simonovič, is ending her posting in Washington after almost 6 years, during which she performed management duties at the embassy, was responsible for administrative assistance and accounting, and managed relations with U.S. provider companies and other counterparts. She will continue with her work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We wish her and her family all the best in their future endeavors.



Ms. Eva Prša on the very right at the Monday's reception.

SREČNO

Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for a Prosperous New Year 2015!

Vesele božične praznike in srečno novo leto 2015!

Embassy of Slovenia



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