



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# NEWSLETTER

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## 19th Consultation of Slovenian Diplomats

Heads of Slovenia's diplomatic missions and top Foreign Ministry officials met at the Brdo estate on Monday, January 5, for the annual three-day consultation. Minister Erjavec welcomed the participants, underlining that, despite austerities, Slovenian diplomacy has been operating well and responding successfully to all key challenges.

He mentioned that, in 2015, the international community, including Slovenia, is marking the anniversaries of some important milestones in the development of international relations. The First World War centenary commemorations continue; this year will also mark seventy years since the end of Second World War, seventy



Discussion with the Slovenian Prime Minister, Dr. Miro Cerar and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Karl Erjavec. (Photo: STA)

years since the establishment of the United Nations, forty years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, which is one of the pillars of European security structure, and twenty years since the genocide in Srebrenica, which, in addition to the regional context, contributed significantly to the strengthening of international criminal justice and, later, to the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle. "The year 2015 will be the right time for both the international community and Slovenia with

its foreign policy to review these milestones and consider what can be learnt from the past and what can still be improved," emphasized Minister Erjavec.

The new year also brings anniversaries of special importance to Slovenia, such as the fortieth anniversary of the Treaty of Osimo, which determined the Slovenian border with Italy and the situation of the Slovenian minority in Italy, and the sixtieth anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty, which is





On the second day of the consultations, the heads of diplomatic missions and consular posts were addressed by the Slovenian President, Borut Pahor, and on Wednesday, also by the President of the National Assembly, Dr. Milan Brglez. (Photo: STA)

crucial for protecting the rights of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia and Styria. The minister stressed that relations with neighbors are a vital priority of each country. "I note with pleasure that our bilateral relations are positive, without major outstanding issues, and that all other issues are being resolved through constructive dialogue," he explained. Slovenia's foreign policy will continue to focus on its place and role in Central Europe, including regional integration, which is increasing in strength and importance also in the EU.

Regarding the Western Balkans, the basic goal remains: Slovenia's credible, active, and visible policy on the region is a foreign policy priority. Although Slovenia is not part of the region, its vital political, security and economic interests dictate that the region should adopt the E.U. acquis, values, norms, and customs as soon as possible. Minister Erjavec stated that Slovenia would continue the Brdo Plus Process and announced that a ministerial conference will be held in the spring. One of the core foreign policy issues this year will be the recognition of Palestine. Taking into account all aspects and effects,

the Government will propose, at the right time, that the National Assembly recognise Palestine, which it is obliged to do according to the decision of the Committee on Foreign Policy of the National Assembly of November 28, 2014.

The minister voiced concerns about developments in the E.U.'s eastern neighborhood and their impact on the whole of Europe. He underlined that Slovenia will continue to defend the basic principles of the international community and advocate respect for the territorial integrity of states. Slovenia believes that the Ukrainian crisis can be resolved only through dialogue, and will continue its efforts to minimize the impact of the heightened tensions on the national economy. Bilateral dialogue is being conducted with the Russian Federation, which Slovenia is also striving to use to convey coordinated EU positions on security and political issues in the region. Slovenia would also welcome enhanced dialogue on a wide variety of regional and global issues with its key partner and ally, the United States.

Minister Erjavec went on to underline that Slovenia will continue to be an active player

in the international multilateral framework, with particular focus on the candidature for the U.N. Human Rights Council; in addition, there will be activities in preventive diplomacy, following the direction mapped out last year in a successful seminar on mediation in the Mediterranean. A similar event on human rights, the rule of law and the responsibility to protect is planned for April. "As to security policy, I would like to underline the need to consider the adequate presence of Slovenia in the U.N.- and E.U.-led missions and operations as well as the continuation of Slovenia's activities as a NATO member to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan", added Minister Erjavec.

The minister devoted special attention to economic diplomacy, assessing that "the decision to set it as a key Slovenian foreign policy priority proved correct". The third day of consultations, Wednesday January 7, focused entirely on these issues, with an in-depth debate by all key players on the internationalization of the Slovenian economy.

During the consultations, the participants were also addressed by the Slovenian Prime Minister, Dr. Miro Cerar, who pointed to the importance of credibility, also in international relations. One of the Government's most important tasks is the country's economic recovery, where he assessed, Slovenia is on the right track. He agreed with Minister Erjavec that the diplomatic service and its economic diplomacy activities have a very important role in this effort. The Prime Minister also underlined the importance of multilateralism, referring to two strategic documents – the Declaration on Foreign Policy, and the Foreign Policy Strategy – as this year's major foreign policy projects.

## PM Cerar and MFA Erjavec Join the Unity Rally in Paris



About 200 people, mostly journalists and politicians, turned up for the rally in the capital city, which, like the event in Maribor, was organized by the Slovenian [Association of Journalists](#).

On January 11, Minister Erjavec and Prime Minister Cerar attended the unity rally in Paris, organized in memory of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, as a gesture of solidarity with France and the French nation. Rallies were held in Ljubljana and Maribor on January 8 as an expression of solidarity with France and condemnation of the attack on the Paris offices of the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo. On behalf of the Embassy of Slovenia, Deputy Chief of Mission, Vladimir Kolmanič joined on January 11 the march in Washington, DC, which began at the Newseum downtown and finished at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

The international community must stand together in unity and solidarity in condemning terrorism. With the development of modern

technologies – particularly in the new millennium – terrorism has become a complex global problem. No country is completely immune to terrorist attacks, and consequently the response to them should be universal.

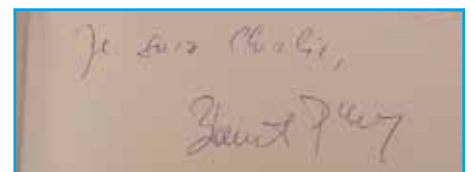
As a responsible member of the United Nations, Slovenia is of one mind with its partners and allies in the E.U. and NATO. We firmly believe that the response to the threats posed to modern civilization by terrorism should not involve solely repression; in its reaction, the international community should also address the circumstances which might lead to radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism.

Efforts for strengthened security must not become the only goal guiding our actions, for this might lead to marginalization of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Our common

response must be in line with international law, human rights, fundamental values and assumed international commitments.

The attack in Paris was also an attack on the freedom of speech and expression, and an attack on the media. Political satire is an important element of the media as well as one of the indicators of a society's democracy. The rights to freedom and safety, freedom of religion and other beliefs, freedom of thought and expression, and freedom of association are universal in nature and cannot be denied or curtailed to anyone.

Terrorism should not be associated with any religion, race or belief. Muslims all over the world condemned the attack in the center of Paris in the strongest terms. When responding to the tragic events such as the attacks in Paris we must all – as a community and as individuals – avoid any collectivization of guilt and creation of stereotypes related to particular ethnic or religious groups, for this leads to a vicious circle of intolerance and hatred. In addition to the state, civil society has an important role in expressing solidarity with the victims of terrorism.



President Pahor expressed condolences for the families of the victims as he signed a book of condolences at the French Embassy in Ljubljana.

## Carmina Slovenica Performs in New York



The ensemble and the conductor Karmina Šilec after the first show.

The internationally acclaimed Slovenian girls' choir Carmina Slovenica, presented its new project "Toxic Psalms: Ultimate Collective Experience" to the North American public at a festival in New York between January 8 and 11.

The ensemble is renowned for its unconventional choral storytelling, which combines opera, drama and movement. In New York, it staged five 90-minute performances at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn as part of Prototype festival. A global festival of opera-theater and music-theater is co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects and HERE, the leading names in contemporary, post-classical, multidisciplinary opera-theater and music-theater production.

Channeling ancient and modern humanities, the ensemble of 31 young women tried to invoke

Africa, the Middle East, Pussy Riots, weapons, concentration camps, blood feuds, extinctions, and contamination of religions, and, through music, created a reflection of human brutality.

Artistic director and conductor, Karmina Šilec, outlined that Toxic Psalms are not a show that follows a story, but rather "a kind of an internal experiment within the ensemble itself with the relationships among its members and in relation to external authorities". In a conversation following Saturday's performance, she explained that the idea of presenting the phenomenon of response of an individual and a collective to authority is loosely based on the writings of German political theorist Hannah Arendt, who followed the trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Eichmann defended himself by

saying that he was following orders from his superiors.

The New Yorker magazine paid a tribute to the ensemble with its typical illustration by Jeffrey Alan Love whereas The New York Times described the performance as a "striking new work by the rabidly talented Slovenian female vocal ensemble". Next to complimenting Ms. Šilec as savvy about maintaining dramatic momentum and executing every shift of the performance in tone with subtlety and agility..", The NYT also gave recognition to costumes by Belinda Radulović and lighting design by Andrej Hajdinjak.

Ambassador Dr. Cerar attended the performance on January 10. Among others the project was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. More about Carmina Slovenica can be found at the website: <http://www.carmina-slovenica.si/en/>



# A Look Back at the Year 2014 at the Embassy

Another remarkable year at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington was marked by high-level visits, bilateral meetings, consultations, anniversary celebrations, numerous cultural and public-diplomacy events, lectures, business events and tourist promotions. Slovenia opened an honorary consulate in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Ambassador Dr. Cerar paid visits to California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia.

As the new permanent observer at the CARICOM, the ambassador presented his credentials to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). He also presented the Letter of Credence to the President of the United Mexican States, Enrique Peña Nieto, in his capacity as the Ambassador of The Republic of Slovenia to the United Mexican States, residing in Washington, DC.



Ambassador Dr. Cerar and Ambassador Irwin LaRocque.

## JANUARY

On January 22 and 23, the Ambassador of Slovenia, Dr.

Božo Cerar, visited Georgetown, Guyana, to present his credentials to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ambassador Irwin LaRocque.

In cooperation with Things To Do, Inc., the Young Professionals Cultural Society, the embassy on January 30, organized a Slovenian cultural evening, which featured a musical performance by the



Barbara Jernejčič Fürst and Žarko Ignjatović.

Slovenian mezzo-soprano Barbara Jernejčič Fürst and guitarist Žarko Ignjatović. The duo also performed in Sterling, VA, Hartford, CT and played in St. Cyril's Parish in New York when the Slovenian community in New York marked the Cultural Day.

The Embassy of Slovenia showcased the country's culture, geographical features, and food at the Janney Elementary School International Night. Slovenian film "Class enemy" was featured at the Palm Springs Film Festival in California.

## FEBRUARY

In the Nippon Gallery in New York, Emil Memon Tobias Putrih,



Manca Juvan's exhibition in the Emporium Gallery in Knoxville, TN.

and IRWIN introduced their artwork as part of the Japanism in Contemporary Art show. Photo exhibition "Afghanistan: (Un)ordinary Lives" by Slovenian photographer Manca Juvan was showcased at the Emporium center in Knoxville, TN. The exhibition traveled in 2014 throughout Tennessee and was presented at Pellissippi College and other venues managed by the Tennessee Board of Regents system.

As a part of the Embassy Adoption Program, students of Janney Elementary School in Washington visited the embassy on Wednesday, February 12, to learn about Slovenian arts and literature on the occasion of the cultural day and to enjoy the exhibition Ljubljana-Washington, DC by Stane Jeršič and Barbara Jakše Jeršič.



CulturalFest in Seattle, WA.

On February 7-8, the Seattle area organization of Slovenes, Slovene Americans and friends, together with students of the Slovene language at the University of Washington, hosted a Slovenia booth at U.W.'s CulturalFest.

Responding to Slovenia's request for assistance, the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana and the U.S. military delivered electrical generators to areas of Slovenia hit hard by an ice storm. The United States also helped Slovenia with financial support to the Red Cross of Slovenia.

The Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, on February 14, 2014, presented to the President



Ambassador Dr. Cerar presenting his credentials to the President of the United Mexican States, Peña Nieto,

of the United Mexican States, Enrique Peña Nieto, Letter of Credence in his capacity as Ambassador of The Republic of Slovenia to the United Mexican States, residing in Washington. Meanwhile, Slovenia's sportsmen and women won overall seven medals at the Winter Olympics, a record for Slovenia, ranking it second in the world in medals per capita.

The Ambassador, Dr. Cerar, visited the San Francisco Bay Area from February 22 to February 24. The highlight of the visit was the inauguration of the American Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF).



Slowind.

In cooperation with the International Club of DC, the embassy hosted on February 27, a cultural evening featuring the renowned Slovenian woodwind quintet SLOWIND. Prior to its performances on the East coast, Slowind performed in several venues in California. On February 27, the embassy participated at the Embassy Showcase and Exhibit at the Catholic University of America. The consular officer from the embassy held consular hours in New York City.

### MARCH

Colonel Ivan Mikuž assumed his duties as Defense, Military, Naval and Air Attaché of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington,



Documentary about Boris Pahor was presented in Annapolis, MD.

with jurisdiction covering the United States and Canada. The documentary, "The Stubborn Memory" (Trmasti spomin), about a centenarian Slovenian writer, holocaust survivor and

Nobel-literature-prize nominee, Boris Pahor, was shown at the seventh annual international film series organized by the World Artists Experiences. The series ran from the first week of February through the first week of March at five venues throughout the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The Second Annual



Colorado National Guard visit.

Cleveland Kurentovanje took place on March 1, 2014, in Slovenian National Home on St. Clair Avenue in Cleveland, OH. "Class enemy," a feature film by Rok Biček, was screened at the 17th Annual European Union Film Festival in Chicago in March. The film was also shown as part of San Jose's Cinequest at the California Theater.

On March 20, 2014, Colorado National Guard leadership paid their annual visit to the Slovenian embassy. On March 21, the Embassy of Slovenia presented the



La Grande Fête de la Francophonie.



Ambassador Dr. Cerar at the Lehigh University.

country at La Grande Fête de la Francophonie, a cultural and promotional event, which was the highlight of the 14th annual Francophonie Cultural Festival.

On March 22, the ambassador traveled to Bethlehem, PA, to join the 100th anniversary celebration of Slovenian St. Joseph's church. While visiting Bethlehem, Ambassador Dr. Cerar, the Mayor of Murska Sobota, Stihec, and members of Bethlehem-Murska Sobota Sister-City Association on Saturday afternoon joined the faculty and students of



After the NFL game, a photo with Anže Kopitar and Goran Dragič.

Lehigh University for the annual Martindale Student Associate Induction Reception. Embassy staff met with Slovenian basketball star Goran Dragič, who plays for the Phoenix Suns, and hockey player Anže Kopitar, of the LA Kings.

The consular officer from the embassy provided consular

services in San Francisco on March 24. On the same day, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted in Washington the event »Central Europe: Innovative and Open for Business«, focusing on the wide range of commercial opportunities in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. On March 25, a group of law students from the University of Ljubljana,



Ljubljana School of Law students visiting the embassy.

Slovenia, visited the embassy.

Ambassador Dr. Cerar traveled to Texas to honor the memory of Slovenian Honorary consul Richard Wilkens II, who served Slovenia with distinction for 18 years. As the first Slovenian consul in Houston, he was dedicated to expanding economic, scientific, educational and cultural ties between Slovenia and Texas, and performed his duties with great competence and enthusiasm. On March 29, Slovenia marked 10 years since becoming a full member of NATO.



Women Diplomatic Series event.



NATO Fest in Norfolk took place in April.

## APRIL

On Tuesday, April 1, the embassy hosted the Women's Diplomatic Series for breakfast and a dialogue with Ambassador Dr. Cerar. Slovenian film "Seduce



Irena Koblar.

Me" (Zapelji me) by the young Slovenian director Marko Santič was screened at Panorama Europe Film Festival in NYC. Rok Biček's "Class enemy" was screened on April 6, gaining high recognition by the festival jury of the First Time Fest. Prior to the screening in New York, the film was also shown on April 5 at the International Film Festival in Minneapolis, MN. Miss SNPJ, Ashley Russ, was a representative of the Embassy of Slovenia in the Cherry Blossom Princess Program during the week of April 7.

Former President of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Türk, addressed the participants in the

International Law Association and American Society of International Law conference, while students of the Ljubljana School of Law successfully participated in the Jessup competition.

Musicians, composers, and members of the local New York Slovene community gathered in Williamsburg, NY, for a concert, titled Dialogues,



The ambassador's visit to Colorado.

which featured three of Slovenia's leading composers as well as three American composers. Co-sponsored by the Embassy of Slovenia, the opening of Jasmina Cibic's project Fruits of Our Land took place in New York on April 10. Ana Kučan, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, discussed the work of Studio AKKA, in AIA New York. On April 13, the Slovenian pianist Irena Koblar performed a concert at the McEvoy Auditorium of the Smithsonian American Art



G-fest at NYU.



Learning about Slovenia in the E.U.

Museum in Washington, DC within the Steinway Series. The artist JAŠA presented in New York City Crystal C, a performance and installation. On April 21, Slovenian film "Karpotrotter" (Karpopotnik), directed and written by Matjaž Ivanišin and co-written by Nebojša Pop-Tasić, was screened at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival.

The annual meeting of Slovenian economic counselors took place on Tuesday April 22 and Wednesday 23. Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar, paid a visit to the



E.U. Open House.

state of Colorado on April 25 – 26. The Colorado National Guard and the Slovenian National Army have since 1993 been partners under the auspices of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. On April 25 and 26, Norfolk was once again host of the annual NATO Festival. The ceremony was attended by the DCM, Ondina Blokar Drobič. Slovenia was also featured at the festival's parade

and the fair of nations, where Slovenia's artifacts, brochures, touristic spotlights and food were presented. At the end of April, the embassy hosted a performance of Mendelssohn's Piano trio concerto, and for



EU Open House.

the second time participated in Washington in the annual Global Fest, organized by Global Language Network and the New York University.

## MAY

On May 1, Slovenia marked the 10th anniversary of its accession to the European Union, alongside with Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Cyprus, and Malta.



E.U. Open House.

On Saturday, May 3, former U.S. Congressman James L. Oberstar, who also had Slovenian roots, passed away. He was a great advocate for Slovenia's decision for



independence in 1991 and supporter of Slovenian endeavors to join NATO. His contribution to the preservation of Slovenian heritage in the U.S. and to the relations between the two countries will always be cherished.

Around 4000 people visited the Slovenian embassy on Saturday, May 10, 2014, for the annual open house. The



E.U. Open House.

guests had an opportunity to learn about the best Slovenian tourist attractions, taste Slovenian culinary specialties and Slovenian wine, admire an exhibition of paintings by the 94-year-old Slovenian from Virginia, MN, Al Zaverl, listen to traditional music, learn about the 2000-year-old Ljubljana, see how gingerbread hearts are made, and admire historic costumes.

The visitors could also view original household items, artwork and implements



E.U. Open House. E.U. Open House.

displayed on the embassy premises by the SNPJ Heritage Museum from Pittsburgh, PA. Slovenian Union of America (SUA) members conducted an online class of Slovene, exhibited traditional beehive



E.U. Open House.

panels and other traditional items. The visitors could also admire Rogaška crystal and Idria lace, and get tourist information. Children could listen to traditional Slovenian



Slovene language class.

stories, play in the special kids' corner and enjoy painting. Slovenia also participated in other events within the framework of the European month of culture program, which highlighted the diverse cultures of the European Union member states. Films by Karpo Godina and other OHO artists were shown at the National Gallery of Art as part of the Experimental Cinema in Eastern Europe series.

The novel "Necropolis". written by Boris Pahor, was discussed at the Library of Congress by Luka Zibelnik, a teacher at the Center for Slovenian Studies at Cleveland State University who also conducted at the embassy on May 13 a Slovenian Language Class for Beginners. A screening of the documentary "The Stubborn Memory" (Trmasti Spomin) took place at the embassy on May 14.

On Thursday, May 15, the Ambassador of Slovenia, Dr. Božo Cerar, opened a Slovenian consulate in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, headed by honorary consul, Mrs. Petra Mitchell. In connection with this event, a business delegation of 15 Slovenian companies visited Cleveland and Akron, OH, and Pittsburgh, PA. The mission was organized jointly by the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia (AmCham Slovenia), the public agency Spirit Slovenia, the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, the Consulate General in Cleveland, and the Slovenian American Business Association (SABA).

In collaboration with the International Club of DC, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted on Friday, May 23, an evening event that featured cultural, business and culinary offerings of Slovenia. Also held at the



Business delegation to OH and PA.

embassy were elections of Slovenian representatives to European Parliament.

Soprano Irena Preda and pianist Nejc Lavrenčič performed on May 25 at the Kennedy Center music by Slovenian composers Ipavec, Škerjanc, Simoniti, Lajovic. On May 28, a composition by Nejc Kuhar had its world premiere at the National Gallery of Art,



Opening of the consulate in Pittsburgh.

performed by the National Gallery of Art Chamber Players. Designer Sanja Grcić returned to NYC with her collection, "Transformers". Slovenian theater group Out of de Boks under the direction of Mateja Kokol performed the play "Chairs!" by Eugène Ionesco at the Festival Los Cosmicómicos de Teatro Alternativo in Zacatecas, Mexico.

A plaque was unveiled on Tuesday, May 27 in the Military History Park in Pivka, Slovenia, to honor military cooperation between Slovenia and the United States. In addition to the



Irena Preda and Nejc Lavrenčič.

U.S. ambassador present was also U.S. senator of Slovenian ancestry Tom Harkin.

The Embassy of Slovenia participated in a Multicultural Fair that took place on May 29 at Garfield Elementary School



Soccer match with Janney ES.

in Southeast Washington. The event was organized and hosted by the Communities in Schools of the Nation's Capital. Slovenia was also represented at the Murch Elementary School's International Night. In



Ambassador in Paraguay.

collaboration with Washington Performing Arts Society and within the framework of the Embassy Adoption Program, students of Janney Elementary School performed on May 28 traditional Slovenian songs and a folk tale at the Slovenian embassy and on May 31 for a broader audience at the Embassy of Austria. The ambassador and the embassy staff played a soccer match with Janney ES students on May 30.

Dr. Žiga Turk, former

Slovenian Minister for Growth and Minister of Education and now a professor at the Ljubljana University, was a guest speaker at the SAIS's Center for Transatlantic Relations (CTR) and at the CATO Institute in Washington, DC. The consular officer held consular hours in New York City.

## JUNE

On June 3 to 5, th Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, attended the 44th regular session of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Asunción, Paraguay. Slovenia and the United States signed on Monday, June 2, an intergovernmental agreement on compliance with tax regulations, which will expand the exchange of tax information in a bid to combat tax evasion.

Slovenian rapper N'toko was featured at the New Music Seminar in New York City's annual music, music business, and music technology conference on June 8-10, 2014. The World Forum for Foreign Direct Investment 2014 in Philadelphia (PA) from June 16 to 18 gathered key decision-makers and experts in FDI. Slovenia was represented at the event by the Public Agency for FDI, Spirit Slovenia, and Regional Development Agency Mura.



EducationUSA forum.

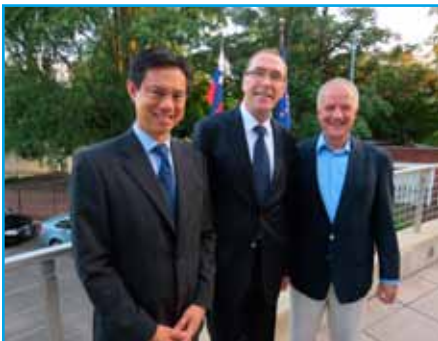
On June 24, 2014, representatives of the embassy and Ms. Darinka Trček, advisor from the EducationUSA center in Ljubljana, participated in the EducationUSA Global Showcase in Washington, DC. The event was organized within the framework of 5th Annual EducationUSA forum.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr.



National Day celebration.

Božo Cerar, and his wife, Dr. Martina Skok, jointly with the Defense Attaché, Colonel Ivan Mikuž, hosted on June 24 a reception on the occasion of the Slovenian National Day and Slovenian Armed Forces Day. The reception was attended by more than 250 people, among them representatives of the U.S. Administration and U.S. Congress (among them Senator Amy Klobuchar), ambassadors and other members of the diplomatic corps, military attachés and other high military officials, Colorado National Guard



National Day celebration.

representatives, think-tank and NGO members, businessmen, the media as well as members of the Slovenian community in the greater Washington area. On the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Cerar also opened -- in the



National Day event in San Francisco, organized by Hon. Consul Tom Brandi.

artist's presence – the exhibition of artwork of Slovenian-born artist Miro Zupančič.

Celebrations to mark June 25, when in 1991 the Slovenian Assembly passed the Basic Constitutional Charter and the Declaration of Independence, were held also in Cleveland, OH, Bethlehem, PA, Norfolk, VA, St.



Flag raising in Norfolk, VA.

Paul, MN, and San Francisco, CA. Also in June, the Stanley Cup found its way back to Slovenia, also due to the outstanding performance of Anže Kopitar for LA Kings. Three Slovenian teams which participated at the Genius Olympiad in Oswego, NY, won gold, silver and bronze medals.



Slovenefest.

## JULY

Ambassador Dr. Cerar attended SNPJ's 33rd Annual Slovenefest, held at the SNPJ Recreation Center in the Borough of SNPJ, PA. The largest Slovenian cultural festival in the U.S. brought together thousands of people to enjoy the ethnic food, music, and culture of Slovenia. In 2014, SNPJ celebrated 110 years since its establishment. Another Slovenian organization in the U.S. celebrated an anniversary this year -- American Slovenian Catholic Union, which was established as early as 1894!

Flautists Matej Grahek and Nina Assimakopoulos and pianist Tadej Horvat introduced on Tuesday, July 15, at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, a composition by Vito Žuraj, Blaž Pucihar and Črt Sojar Voglar. On July 16, 2014, Robin Wright, a journalist, author, foreign policy analyst, USIP Senior Fellow, and Wilson Center Distinguished Scholar, discussed



Women Foreign Policy Group event.



Celebration in St. Stephen, MN.

the crisis in Iraq at a Beyond the Headlines event at the Embassy of Slovenia. The event was organized in collaboration with the Women's Foreign Policy Group.

On Sunday, July 13, Slovenia held early parliamentary elections of the 90 deputies to the National Assembly. On July 17, Slovenia joined the marking of the 16th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As a Party to the Rome Statute,



Participants of Global Young Leaders Conference at the embassy.

Slovenia has ctively supported the operation and strengthening of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as one of the most significant tools for preventing and prosecuting the most serious crimes whenever states are unable or unwilling to do so themselves.

On July 19 and 20, the ambassador visited Minnesota for the 100th anniversary celebration of incorporation of the first all Slovenian settlement

in the U.S. -- St. Stephen. Next to St. Stephen, he also paid a visit to Slovenian communities in the towns of Virginia and Ely. An exhibition by Beti Bricelj, featuring hard-edge geometric abstraction



Ambassador dr. Cerar in Indianapolis, IN.

paintings, opened on July 18 at the Museum of Geometric and MADI Art in Dallas, Texas.

Two groups of



Lana Trotovshek.

accomplished high school students from more than 20 different countries, who participated in the Global Young Leaders Conference in Washington, DC, visited the Embassy of Slovenia for briefings



Kalorama Tour.

in July.

After four years, Ms. Tjaša Deleja Balja, consular officer at the Embassy of Slovenia, ended her posting in Washington on July 25.

## AUGUST

"Karpotrotter", a road movie, a tribute to the Slovenian cinematographer and film director Karpo Godina, was screened at the 2014 Rural Route Film Festival in NYC. The year 2014 marked the Centennial Year of the Slovenian National Home Organization in Cleveland, OH, and the 90th anniversary of its hall. A grand celebration commemorating these milestones took place on Saturday, August 16. On August 31, the ambassador attended the Slovenian Festival in Indianapolis, annually organized by The Indianapolis Slovenian society.

## SEPTEMBER

Ms. Ondina Blokar Drobič, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Slovenia, ended her posting at the end of August. The new DCM, Mr. Vladimir Kolmanič, arrived in Washington at the beginning of September.

The Bled Strategic Forum (BSF), Slovenia's top foreign policy event, wrapped up on



Andrej Blatnik.

Tuesday, September 2, following two days of debates dedicated to restoring trust in international relations and promoting regional cooperation. On the sidelines of the forum, Slovenian President, Borut Pahor, received the visiting U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Mr. Hoyt Yee.



The ASEF East Coast Chapter Inaugural Event.

On September 6, accordionist Marko Hatlak performed at the Indianapolis Sister Cities Festival; his performance was organized by the Indianapolis-Piran Sister Cities Committee.

In cooperation with The Embassy Series, the Embassy of Slovenia, on September 9th, organized a concert by one of the most renowned Slovenian violinists, Lana Trotošek. The embassy opened its doors for the participants of the Kalorama House and Embassy Tour -- an annual open-house walking tour of the residences and embassies



Annual meeting of honorary consuls.

located in the Kalorama neighborhood.

Between September 10 and 15, Theremidi Orchestra (TO) held in New York a workshop on basic usage of electronics to create



The ambassador lectures on ICC at the Salisbury University.

instruments and sounds. The European Division of the Library of Congress, in partnership with the Embassy of Slovenia, presented Slovenian writer Andrej Blatnik, who discussed his latest book in English, "Law of Desire". A Slovenian folklore group performed between September 26 and October 7 at



Marko Hatlak performs at the EU DEL

the CIOFF festival Santa Lucia in Monterrey, Mexico. From September 25 to 28, Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. participated in New York City in the ninth edition of the largest and most prestigious fair of artists' books in the world, the NY Art Book Fair. The Wilson Hughes Gallery International Artist Series in Roanoke, VA, featured in

September and October Barbara Jurkovšek's project "Albino United Extended".

Slovenia's 12th government, headed by Prime Minister Miro Cerar, was sworn in on Thursday, September 18. In the last week of September, Slovenian President, Borut Pahor, and Foreign Minister, Karl Erjavec, as well as Ambassador Dr. Cerar traveled to New York City to take part in the 68th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The embassy staff welcomed two new members, Ms. Mateja Dolenc as embassy's administrative and financial attaché and Mr. Taylor Cluff, who offers consular assistance at the embassy. Educational and Dramatic Club Slovenia in San Francisco celebrated its 90th anniversary.

## OCTOBER

The American Slovenian Educational Foundation (ASEF) inaugurated its East Coast Chapter on October 2 in Washington, DC. Hosted by the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the U.S., Dr. Božo Cerar, the event was attended by around 100 guests: members of the diplomatic corps, academia, professors, researchers and scientists, representatives of



Wine tasting in Knoxville, TN.

Slovenian organizations in the U.S., Slovenian community members and Slovenian honorary consuls. Also on this occasion, an overview exhibition by one of the leading Slovenian graphic designers, Jože Domjan, was opened.

As is traditional, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted on first Friday of October the annual meeting of the consul



Presenting Ljubljana with IDCD.

general and of honorary consuls of the Republic of Slovenia in the United States and Mexico. The Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, inaugurated the Ambassador Lecture Series on Monday, October 6, in the Holloway Hall Auditorium of Salisbury University. He spoke about the pathway of the international criminal justice from Nuremberg to Kampala and beyond. A Slovenian delegation paid a visit to Washington to attend the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank.

Slovenian accordionist Marko Hatlak explored the versatility of the accordion in a solo concert, featuring baroque, contemporary and folk music, at the E.U. Delegation within the framework of the Conversations-in-Culture series. Marko Hatlak then traveled to Tennessee where he performed at five locations in Knoxville: a school of music

for children, a neighborhood festival, a university international music class, a radio show that is broadcast internationally (Blue Plate Special on WVDX –noon Oct. 23) and a Tango milonga at Williamswood Castle. He also performed at the Third Annual Wine and Culinary event at the Slovenian Consulate in Knoxville, Tennessee, where the Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, was the guest of honor. On October 20, the Ambassador remained in Knoxville to give a well-received lecture at the University of Tennessee Law School, and held meetings with business representatives.

During the same week, Director of International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security, Ambassador Damjan Bergant, visited the U.S. In New York, he met with the representatives of the U.N. and some U.N. member states and, in Washington, DC, with



U.N. Day celebration.

the representatives of the State Department and several international institutions.

The Embassy of Slovenia, in collaboration with the International Club of DC, organized on Friday, October 24, a wine tasting event, which included a tourist presentation of Slovenia's capital. The around 100 guests were first addressed by the Ambassador, Dr. Božo



Trick-or-treating at the embassy.

Cerar, who introduced to the guests the main interesting features of the country, including the viticulture and winemaking. On United Nations Day, the Embassy of Slovenia joined the Oneness-Family School in Chevy Chase, Maryland, for the annual celebration honoring the anniversary of the day in 1945 when the Charter of the United Nations entered into force.

As part of the Embassy Adoption Program, the Embassy of Slovenia for the sixth year "adopted" a school class. This year, the embassy has bonded with the fifth graders of the Hearst Elementary School in Northwest Washington. On Sunday, October 26, the embassy participated in an AIESEC DC Global Village event, which took place at the George Washington University Yard. Slovenia was also represented at the Washington National Cathedral School's International



Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club event.

Day luncheon. The embassy also participated in Trick-or-Treating on the Embassy Row. We offered Halloween treats and sweets to the visitors, mainly students from George Washington University, Georgetown University, American University, and Catholic University of America.

## NOVEMBER

Upon invitation by former U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia, Johnny Young, Ambassador Dr. Cerar, on November 4, addressed members of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club.

Through folk songs and puppetry, Nika Solce, of Puppet studio Lutkarnica, brought traditional folk tales from Slovenia to life in an enchanting, interactive performance with performances at Hearst Elementary School, Takoma Park



Nika Solce.

Library, in the Hill Center, and Hillwood Estate Museum and Gardens. Performances were part of the Kids Euro Festival, one of the country's leading festivals for children and their families.

The moving photo exhibit, "(Un)Ordinary Lives" – pictures of Afghan people experiencing daily life in a war zone, created by Slovene photographer Manca Juvan — once again has captured the emotions of an American

audience. On November 3, the exhibition was opened on the premises of the Pellissippi University. On November 7, American-Slovenian Education Foundation presented an



Briefing for Harvard Club of D.C.

evening with famed Slovenian American artist Gary Bukovnik at the Thomas Reynolds Gallery in San Francisco.

The Embassy of Slovenia on November 12 hosted members of the Harvard Club of Washington, DC, who were addressed by the DCM, Vladimir Kolmanič. Ambassador Dr. Cerar attended the annual Martinovanje event organized on November 9 by The New York Branch of Slovenian Union of America.

Društvo v tujini izobraženih Slovencev - VTIS (Association of Slovenes Educated Abroad) organized an event in New York, which was part of the global series "Slovene Science Around the World". The event took place



Business conference in Chicago, IL.

on November 15, 2014, at New York University.

Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar paid his first visit to Illinois on November 16 and 17 to address the participants of the semiannual business conference of the Slovenian American Business Association (S-ABA). On the occasion, he also met with Slovenian community members in Lemont and Joliet. On November 20, Ambassador Dr. Cerar joined Lehigh University students and faculty members at the Martindale Society's Annual Meeting and Gala at Harmonie Club in New York, when Economic Journal on Slovenia, published by the Martindale Center, was launched.

On November 21, the embassy introduced the traditional Slovenian breakfast to Hearst Elementary School students, who participate in the Embassy Adoption Program. 13 short films from 13 E.U. countries, including Slovenia's "Obsession" (Obsedenost), directed by Marina Gržinič and Aina Šmid, were presented at Boston University's College of Communication and The Goethe-Institut Washington. Dance productions Titanic.si, "Two of us", were performed in March, October and November in Santa Barbara, CA, and New York by Mojca Majcen in Miha Alujevič.



The ambassador visiting SUA headquarters in Joliet, IL.



Traditional Slovenian breakfast.

The Society for Slovene Studies (SSS), an organization of international scholars interested in Slovenia, had its annual meeting at the ASEES (Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies) convention November 20-23, 2014 in San Antonio, Texas. U.S. astronauts of Slovenian ancestry Ms. Sunita Williams and Ronald Šega visited Slovenia in October and November respectively.

## DECEMBER

Slovenian literature was presented at Guadalajara Book Fair. Mitja Čander, Gabriela Babnik, and Aleš Šteger, came to Mexico from Slovenia for the occasion. Books by other Slovenian authors: Mojca Kumerdej, Jani Virk, Andrej Blatnik, Drago Jančar, Feri Lainšček, Marko Sosič, and Suzana Tratnik were also exhibited at the fair. The Embassy of Slovenia in cooperation with



Mitja Čander, Gabrijela Babnika and Aleš Šteger at the Guadalajara Book Fair.

the International Club of DC organized on December 4, a public diplomacy event, which featured a presentation of a tourist guide, "Finding Slovenia", showcased Slovenian wines available on the U.S. market, and introduced "Pocket Slovene", a language handbook published on the occasion of the World Festival of The Slovene Language.

On December 5, evening, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted the annual holiday reception for the Washington, DC, chapter of the University of Minnesota



The Fulbright alumni reception.

alumni. The Bishop Baraga Society, Lodge #257 of the KSKJ (American Slovenian Catholic Union), organized on December 6, the 50th traditional Slovenian Saint Nicholas Celebration—attended also by the ambassador and embassy staff. 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 attended the event,

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted on December 10 in Ljubljana the seventh regular annual political and security



World Festival of the Slovene Language.

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. On the occasion of Human Rights Day, Minister Erjavec and his male colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) joined the U.N. Women #HeForShe Campaign to highlight the significance and role of women in society.

In the program of the 27th annual AFI European Union Film Showcase, which traditionally takes place at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland, and this year ran from December 3 through December 21, Slovenian film "Class Enemy"



Political and security consultations.





Exhibition by Andrej Schlegel.

was presented. Slovenian basketball stars Goran and Zoran Dragić visited Washington, DC, as their team, the Phoenix Suns, played against the Washington



New Slovenian citizen Mr. Koch meeting with the ambassador.

Wizards in the Verizon Center on Sunday, December 21, and met with the embassy staff after the game.

To honor the 24rd anniversary of the Slovenian 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. On this occasion, also was opened an exhibition of paintings by Andrej Schlegel, titled "New York 1987 – 2014".

At the end of the month, our administrative attaché, Ms. Eva Prša Simonovič, ended her posting in Washington after almost 6 years. The consular section concluded the year with a solemn swearing in of a new Slovenian citizen, Mr. Robert Koch, by the ambassador. Throughout the year, fifteen Slovene artists had an opportunity to spend a month in the artists' residence in New York, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of the

Republic of Slovenia. The artists that presented their work to the U.S. audience in 2014 were: Mojca Zupanič, Lilijana Šturm, Janez Janša, Luka Javornik, Ana Kučan, Igor (Ičo) Vidmar, Saša Rakef, Jasmina Založnik, Branko Jordan, Katarina Stegnar, Primož Bezjak, Aleksandra Vajd, Andrej Blatnik, Uroš Rojko, and Igor Bašin.

Those are only a few highlights of Slovenia's presence in the U.S. in the year 2014. We are looking forward to new challenges in 2015!



Independence and Unity Day Reception.

## EMBASSY STAFF

# Welcome to Consular Officer Ms. Tjaša Tanko

At the beginning of January, Ms. Tjaša Tanko, assumed her position as the First Secretary at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, DC. As the head of the Consular Department, Ms. Tanko will be responsible for consular affairs, including providing support to Slovenian citizens in the U.S. and offering assistance to those

Americans and citizens of other countries who want to travel, work or live in Slovenia.

Ms. Tanko did her undergraduate studies at the University Of Ljubljana School Of Law (Pravna fakulteta Ljubljana) and finished her postgraduate law degree at University College London. She started her career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005 where

she worked in the International Law Department and most recently in the Department for International Development Cooperation and Assistance. Ms. Tjaša Tanko has been appointed for four years. We wish her good luck in her future professional and personal endeavors as she starts her tenure in Washington, DC.

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