



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 17, 2012, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 7

New Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec Assumes Duties

On February 13, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karl Erjavec, has taken over from the former minister, Samuel Žbogar, who wished him every success in his work. Minister Erjavec thanked the former minister for his contribution and agreed with his assessment of Slovenian foreign policy.

Minister Erjavec will begin his mandate by visiting neighboring countries, as good and friendly relations with them are of great importance. "Of course, we have some outstanding issues with each neighboring country, but I believe that we will be able to deal with them appropriately," stated the new foreign minister. He assured that there would be no "radical changes" in Slovenian foreign policy, and his closest



team would consist of experienced and professional colleagues.

Although the Foreign Ministry is not directly involved in resolving the economic and financial crisis, it is responsible for opening doors to Slovenian business. The new minister thus stated that he would endeavor to retain economic diplomacy at the Foreign Ministry.

Regarding a possible reduction of the diplomatic and consular network, Minister Erjavec stated that it is necessary to establish a diplomatic network that is as effective as possible, and can respond to new challenges and

international circumstances, where a "shift of the centers of power from west to east and from north to south" has occurred.

Minister Erjavec also took the opportunity to congratulate his predecessor on his appointment as the E.U. Special Representative in Kosovo. "I am proud that Slovenia has taken over this important post," he emphasized. "We have agreed to continue to cooperate closely in the future, particularly as it is in the interest of Slovenian foreign policy that Western Balkans remain stable; and Kosovo is the key to that stability," he concluded.



Afghanistan (Un)Ordinary Lives

On Wednesday, February 15, 2012, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted a panel discussion "Afghanistan: Moving Forward". The discussion of the importance of continued international civilian engagement in Afghanistan was co-hosted by IRD (International Relief & Development) and was at the same time an introductory event to the opening of an exhibition "Afghanistan: (Un) Ordinary Lives" by the Slovenian photographer Manca Juvan.

Participating as panelists were, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer of the U.S. Department of State, Afghan Ambassador to the U.S. Eklil Hakimi, and Mr. Larry Sampler, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at the USAID. The event, moderated by the President of the Middle East Institute, Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, was attended by more than 100 eminent guests representing the U.S. Administration, Congress, the diplomatic corps, NGOs, and think tanks.

Opening remarks were given by the Slovenian Ambassador to the United States Roman Kirn and co-host Dr. Arthur Keys, IRD President and CEO. Ambassador Kirn discussed Slovenia's role, activities and priorities as a development assistance donor country, with emphasis on Slovenia's development assistance programs in Afghanistan, also within the E.U. framework. Dr. Keys presented IRD's work in partnership with Slovenia and other international organizations, and their long-term commitment to rebuild the Afghan civil society.

The moderator, Ambassador Chamberlin, invited the distinguished panel to discuss topics such as how to sustain the progress made in Afghanistan also after the 2014 withdrawal of international security forces -would that lead to a security vacuum-, how to engage more women and youth in strengthening Afghan institutions, democracy, civil society, and economic development.

The three panelists

agreed that the women's role in Afghanistan is crucial to assure sustainable development and long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan. Ambassador Verveer, who thanked Slovenian government for its contribution to ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) and OMLT (Operational Mentor and Liaison Team) in conjunction with the Colorado National Guard, mentioned that Afghanistan has made considerable progress in the past 10 years and that the degree of prosperity will depend on the degree to which Afghan women are allowed to fully participate economically and politically. She emphasized that the Afghan women don't want to see the progress they have made go backwards and that their participation will say a great deal about how the process will go forward.

Ambassador Hakimi stated that the Taliban have changed in the last 10 years as well: a minister of the former Taliban Government today runs a school for girls. That is



Ambassador Kirn speaking.



Dr. Keys speaking, next to him Ambassador Chamberlin, Ambassador Verveer and Ambassador Hakimi.



Ambassador Hakimi next to Mr. Sampler.



Panel discussion .

a good omen for negotiating and upholding women's and minorities' rights. The Afghan Government recognizes women's role in achievements of the past 10 years and has made their position very clear -- human rights and women's rights are red lines that won't be crossed.

Mr. Sampler offered an optimistic view of progress made in Afghanistan in the last decade: increase of GDP per capita from \$200 to \$500, 40% increase of births delivered by

skilled professionals, prolonged life expectancy, more children (including remarkable percentage of girls) are enrolled in schools. Mr. Sampler believes that "once education takes root, it cannot be taken away".

Concluding the event, Ambassador Kirn recognized Manca Juvan and her photos displaying powerful images of ordinary everyday life in Afghanistan. The photo exhibition, entitled "Afghanistan: Unordinary Lives", is a collection

of her work on Afghanistan and presents a more nuanced image of the country, one which tells more than just the news coming from the country.

The photos were taken on several trips to Afghanistan between 2003 and 2009, and are included in the book featuring quotations from her conversations with common people. The book (Un)Ordinary lives was first published in Slovenia in 2010; its English edition was launched by IRD on Wednesday.

BUSINESS

Slovenian Business in U.S.

The Embassy of Slovenia in Washington initiated a meeting with the representatives of Slovenian companies in the United States to get the input from the business community about how to improve economic and commercial relations between the two countries. The meeting, organized by the Slovenian Consulate General, was held in the Harvard Club in New York City.

Ambassador Kim acquainted the group with the overall picture of trade and investment trends between Slovenia and the U.S. in the last twenty years. He also emphasized that the newly elected Slovenian government places the support of business as one of its top two priorities.

The Cleveland Consul General, Jurček Žmauc, introduced the newly established Slovenian-American Business Association (S-ABA), which, despite having just been established, has already attracted a lot of attention from companies across the U.S. as well as in Slovenia. The S-ABA is based in Cleveland, OH, and currently chaired by the Consul General himself. At this moment, its members are located in ten States, but the S-ABA is aiming to include companies from the entire U.S in the future.



New York Consul General a.i. Dr. Melita Gabrič reported on the visit of potential investors from the fields of ICT, medical tourism, and green technologies to Slovenia last year. The Embassy would like to thank the representatives of the Slovenian companies for their insightful contributions and suggestions.

Visit of Students from Ohio

On Thursday, February 16, the embassy was visited by students from Kent State University in Kirtland, Ohio. They will be representing Slovenia at the 27th Annual Model NATO Conference, which is taking place in Washington, DC, between February 17 and 19.

Andrej Medica, Political Counselor, held for them a lecture on Slovenia and its political stance on several international issues, ranging from engagement in Afghanistan to political situation in the Balkans. He stressed the importance of the region's integration into the Euro-Atlantic organizations, and explained relations between NATO and the EU and cooperation between NATO and Russia. He also answered students' questions, most of which showed great knowledge and understanding of



Students at the embassy.

the situations they inquired about.

The Model Conference is essentially a simulation of the proceedings of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, discussed in a preconference study and briefings at the embassies of NATO member states in Washington, DC. It provides a unique opportunity for

university and college students to study the role, structure and activities of NATO, as well as the military, political-security, economic, and social issues facing the Alliance. The Embassy of Slovenia wishes the students of Kent State University the best of luck in their competition.

HONORARY CONSULS

Slovene Wine Tasting

This past weekend, honorary consul Dr. Lydia M. Pulsipher with the assistance of Mr. Emil Gaspari hosted a Slovene wine tasting at the very well attended Tennessee wine growers and producers convention in Gatlinburg.

As part of this event, Maja Djorcev, a Slovene graduate student at the University of Tennessee gave a very well received presentation on wine production in Slovenia,

including traditional and organic and biodynamic versions thereof.

Maja Djorcev will present a paper on issues regarding marketing Slovene wines at the AAG (Association of American Geographers) conference in NYC, which is scheduled for Sunday, February 26, 2012, from 8:00 AM to 9:40 AM in Holland Suite, fourth floor of the Hilton New York hotel.

Maja's paper is an introduction to organic

viticulture in Slovenia, and an analysis of the potential benefits of "cluster marketing" to the country's organic wine producers. Establishing a good marketing model is essential for future organic wine development in Slovenia. Furthermore, this model can be a good example for other wine growing regions where small-scale wine production can be a niche marketing opportunity rather than a barrier.

Novo mesto

Novo mesto is situated in southeastern Slovenia in the midst of the hilly landscape of Dolenjska, embraced by the Krka River. The Krka Valley, located just above Novo mesto, is one of the most beautiful river valleys in Slovenia with tender banks, picturesque rapids and natural dams.

Novo mesto entered the 21st century as the main economic, administrative, cultural, religious, educational and sports center of Dolenjska and assumed its role of the leading town in south-eastern Slovenia. Additionally, as the A2 expressway is now part of the European route E70, Novo mesto has become better connected to the rest of Slovenia and former Yugoslavia, growing as an important regional center.

The old city core of Novo mesto, situated on a promontory in a bend of the Krka River, is enchanting with its aristocratic Glavni trg square with arcades fronting the ground floors of rich townhouses and its characteristic City Hall. The Chapter Church, the Franciscan Church, the Dolenjska Regional Museum, and the Jakčev dom Gallery are worth visiting. The view of the remarkable row of houses Na Bregu is the most picturesque part of the city core; reflected in the Krka River below, has often been depicted by painters.

Novo mesto is home to the successful pharmaceutical company, the Krka Group. Founded on April 23, 1954 in Novo mesto, it grew from a



small pharmaceutical laboratory into an international company with its production facilities and research laboratories equipped with up-to-date technologies. Krka employs over 8,948 workers and supplies its products to markets in more than 70 countries worldwide – manufacturing its products in its own facilities in Slovenia, Poland, Russian Federation, Croatia, and Germany. In 2011, Krka recorded sales worth EUR 1,075.6 (\$1,413.5) million in product and services sales.

Two other notable Slovenian enterprises in Novo mesto are Adria Mobil, and Revoz, both offshoots of their predecessor, Industry of Motor Vehicles (Industrija Motornih Vozil). Adria Mobil, a leading European manufacturer of caravans, motor homes and mobile homes, exports over 98 per cent of its products. Revoz is the only car manufacturer

in Slovenia. The company is owned by the French Group Renault, and it has long held its position as the number one Slovenian exporter; it ranks at the top of Slovenian companies in revenues, as well

In Novo mesto, the European Capital of Culture events throughout the year will include animated film workshops, performances by rock, folk, and jazz artists, "literature in the street", the international "Fotopub"/Festival of Documentary Photography, musical-theater performances, an exhibit featuring photography of modern European architecture across the continent, an exhibit highlighting Novo mesto's history and artistic heritage, and public literature readings for the mentally or physically impaired, the elderly, and those for whom Slovenian is a second language. The readings will be simplified into texts with short sentences and dramatic illustrations.

Legislative Referendum on Family Law

The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia has called for a legislative referendum on Family Law, which will take place on March 25, 2012.

The referendum will take place at the representations of Slovenia in Cleveland, New York and Washington DC, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM local time.

Slovenian citizens with registered permanent residence in the United States can vote in person at the above listed representations or by mail by registering at the National Voting

Commission by March 10, 2012 (unlike in the case of elections, no referendum material will be sent automatically by mail).

Slovenian citizens with registered permanent residence in Slovenia and visiting or temporarily residing in the United States can vote in person at the listed representations or by mail. In either case, voters have to register at the National Voting Commission by March 10, 2012.

In order to register, a completed and signed registration form, which can be found at www.dvk.gov.si,

must be sent directly to the National Voting Commission. All registration forms must be received by March 10, 2012, and can be sent by mail to Državna volilna komisija, Slovenska cesta 54, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, by fax to (011) (3861) 433-1269 or by e-mail to gp.dvk@dvk-rs.si (due to the signature requirement, only scanned documents may be e-mailed).

More information can be found at the National Voting Commission's web site www.dvk.gov.si

ADVENTURE

Lenarčič Successfully Landed in the Antarctic

The Slovene pilot Matevž Lenarčič, who is flying around the world in his modified Virus SW 914 Turbo with an Intercooler unit, on February 16, 2012 (at 6:00 PM Central European Time) made a successful landing in the Antarctic on the Antarctic base Presidente Eduardo Frei Montalva.

Matevž started his epic flight on January 7, 2012, from Ljubljana, Slovenia. On his route, he is planning to cross the equator six times, cover over 80,000 km (49,680mi) of distance, fly over seven continents and over almost 60 countries, over 120 National Parks and three oceans, and also fly over five tallest peaks of the continents, including Mt. Everest. So far, he has flown the distance of about 25,000 kilometers (15,525 miles), covering approximately one third of the way.

This historic moment means the first-ever landing of a Pipistrel

aircraft on the 7th continent! Now we can truly say that our aircraft fly on all continents of the world!

To be able to accomplish this feat, Matevž needed a specially modified aircraft, able to withstand the temperatures reaching -50°C (-58°F). He will have to brave similar temperatures once again when he attempts to fly over the world's tallest mountain, Mt. Everest, later on his journey.

After he takes off from the Antarctic, Matevž will be faced with the toughest, most challenging part of his flight: crossing the Pacific Ocean. This leg of his flight will include several ocean crossings in excess of 4000 km (2500 mi) without a possibility of landing. Extreme distances and severe weather above the Pacific will be by far the toughest challenge for the pilot and his Pipistrel aircraft, weighing only a little over 300 kg (660 lbs), but we have no doubt

that Matevž's Virus will perform as well in the continuation of his flight as it did up to now.

The entire Pipistrel team congratulates and thanks Matevž and his ground support team for this amazing achievement.



Vlado Kreslin in Concert

One of the most influential Slovenian singer-songwriters, Vlado Kreslin, will give a performance in his distinctive style, which combines elements of folk, pop, and rock music. Kreslin has performed for more than 20 years, toured around the world and opened for acts like Bob Dylan and REM. Kreslin appears in concert with Slovenian pianist Gašper Konec.

When: February 21, 2012 at 7:30 PM

Where: The Church of St. Cyril, 62 St. Mark's Place (E. 8th St.), New York, NY 10003 (212) 674-3442.

There will be a \$10 suggested donation at the door.

Gašper Konec at St. Cyril's

Slovenian pianist and composer Gašper Konec will bring his talents to St. Cyril's church for an unforgettable morning of music performing pieces by Schubert, Schuman, and Debussy, as well as traditional Slovenian music. Konec was the recipient of the 2011 Prešeren award for students and is a recent graduate of the Ljubljana Academy of Music.

When: February 19, 2012; 10:30 AM –mass; 11:15 AM - concert

Where: The Church of St. Cyril, 62 St. Mark's Place (E. 8th St.), New York, NY 10003.

Memories of A City: Miha Štrukelj

For his first solo exhibit at the gallery, Slovene artist Miha Štrukelj will create an installation of murals and small drawings on panels throughout the gallery to address the limitations and confines of the gallery space.

When: Ongoing – March 11, 2011

Where: 139 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

More information: (212) 255-9707, email: info@lmakprojects.com, web: www.lmakprojects.com, www.miha-strukelj.com

All-Star Accordions exhibition

For the first time, the accordions of legendary polka bandleaders are brought together on display. The exhibition celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Polka Hall of Fame Awards Show with award-winning musicians performing in person.

When: Opening Wednesday, March 21, 2012. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. Admission free.

Where: National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum

More information: call (216) 261-FAME, toll-free (866) 66-POLKA, or check www.polkafame.com.