



Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia

Washington, D.C.

NEWSLETTER

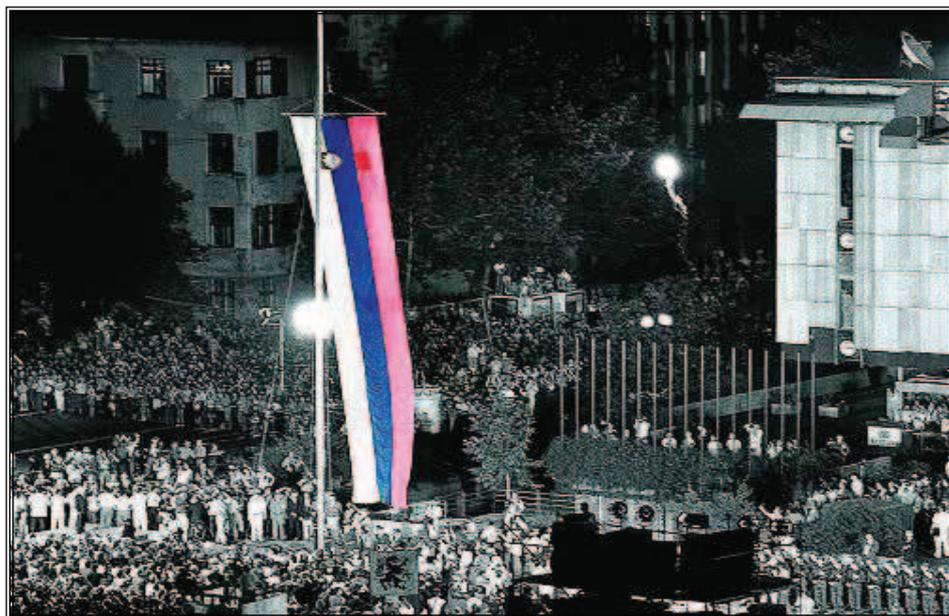
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2011 - The Overview

The year 2011 was a year of anniversaries. Slovenia marked the 20th anniversary of its independence, and the entire year was dedicated to activities in commemoration of this milestone.

Various celebrations took place across Slovenia, and, in the United States, they were held in Washington, Cleveland, San Francisco, Norfolk, Bethlehem, and New York City, and also in Mexico City.

At the reception at our embassy on June 22, Ambassador Kirn highlighted the importance of achieving independence and of other major events of the past two decades, which may have been "a small step for the world, but great for the Slovenes". After reaching almost all international political goals and excellent concurrent partner relations with the United States, it's time to deepen economic



cooperation between the two countries. We are also thankful to the people of the United States and Slovenians living in the USA, who have contributed to the recognition of independence of Slovenia.

U.S. Secretary of State Clinton also expressed her congratulations on this occasion: "In 1991, the people of Slovenia faced an uncertain future. But in just 20 years, your country has become a model for the region... On this special day, know that

the United States stands with Slovenians as a partner and friend, and we are committed to a brighter future for all our people."

Today, Slovenia is a modern state with a well-diversified educational system along with developed, widely accessible information technologies and good road connections. After reaching all major goals, there is always a question in the air: "What next?"

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I FEEL
SLOVENIA

2011 Through the Lens of Our Embassy

This year, Ambassador Kirn presented his credentials in Mexico. In addition to that, Slovenia also established a new honorary consulate in Mexico. Another Slovenian honorary consulate was opened in Denver.

The ambassador had the opportunity this year to pay visits to Colorado, Minnesota, Cleveland, and Iowa. He also gave a lecture at the International symposium on Cultural Diplomacy at the German Marshall Fund, and another lecture at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Ambassador Kirn also took part in the Slovenefest XXX event in Pennsylvania, and in a charity event organized in the Phoenix Teater in Arizona.

In 2011, our embassy hosted some very distinguished guests, namely Congressman Paul Gosar and former Congressman James Oberstar. Our embassy also hosted Ray Kogovšek, the Slovenian honorary consul in Colorado and one of most active proponents of Slovenian independence in the U.S.

We hosted a number of important visits from Slovenia as well. Prime Minister Borut Pahor and Slovenian Minister of Finance Franc Križanič both visited Washington, DC. Ambassador Kirn hosted a reception at the Embassy of Slovenia for the Society for Slovene Studies (SSS), an international group of academics, headquartered at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The society has been



Prime Minister Pahor, Congressman Oberstar and Ambassador Kirn.

publishing a Journal, and its long-term project will be establishing a research center for Slovene Studies in the United States. In 2011, the Slovenian embassy also welcomed the Colorado National Guard, Denver's Chamber of Commerce, and Friends of Mitchell Park in Washington. As every year, we hosted the annual general and honorary consuls' meeting in October.

Our culture department organized quite a few events during the course of the year. The embassy hosted an art reception for Japan, to help Japanese disaster victims after the tragic accident at Fukushima in March. In August, the dynamic a cappella singing group "Octet 9" from Slovenia shared their vocal music on a concert at our embassy in Washington.

A new exhibition, "River" by Jaka Vinšek at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, was solemnly opened with a reception on June 22, 2011, honoring the National Day and the 20th anniversary of independence.

We have paid tribute to Slovenian sports achievers

and their success stories. Dejan Zavec, Slovenia's best professional boxer was a guest of our embassy, while the ambassador and others also met with the Slovenian player at Nets, Saša Vujačić. This year Slovenia's highest-ranked men's tennis player, Blaž Kavčič, was noted at the Delray Beach International Tennis Tournament in Florida. Other Slovenian outstanding athletes won notable results in the United States: in May, Iztok Čop had his name inscribed in the Gold Cup in Philadelphia, and Marko Baloh represented Slovenia excellently for the sixth time in a row, by winning the 3rd place at the Race Across America. Slovenian extreme athletes Miro Kregar and Nino Cokan placed 3rd and 4th, respectively, at the 27th Ultraman World Championships in Hawaii in December.

Pipistrel, light aircraft producer from Ajdovščina, Slovenia, in cooperation with Penn State University, won 1st prize at the NASA Green Flight Challenge this year. It is one of six NASA technology competitions, which awards



Octet 9.

prizes for the most fuel-efficient aircrafts that reduce emissions by using renewable fuels and electric power.

Students, our big hope for the future, are big contributors to the visibility of Slovenia throughout the world and, most particularly, in the United States. In February, our embassy warmly welcomed the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition participants from Slovenia and another group of students from Ljubljana at their annual visit to the United States and its important institutions. Our embassy also hosted students from the Slovenian War College.



Minister Križanič speaking at the embassy during his visit in U.S.

We are very grateful for the effort of the young and bright American students from Ohio who represented Slovenia at the NATO Model, and the delegation

of Global Young Leaders, both of whom visited our embassy.

In 2011, articles about Slovenia were published in The New York Times and a major Cleveland newspaper The Plain Dealer, and amusing facts about our country were also mentioned in CNN blog.

In the framework of the embassy-sponsored programs within the E.U. community, hosted by the Embassy of France, we joined 20 European Union embassies in Washington by presenting Slovenian culture, traditions and culinary specialties.



Students of Pravna fakulteta Ljubljana at the embassy.

The program included Euro Night 2011 and the Kids Euro Festival 2011, the largest kids' festival in the United States. Our delegates were present also at the opening of the E.U. National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) in Washington, of which we also became an associate member.



Dejan Zavec with Ms. Mateja Kavaš.



Ambassador Kirn planting a linden tree during his visit in Colorado.

As other embassies of the E.U. member states, we opened in May the doors of our embassy for the fifth time at the Euro Open House, to give broader community an opportunity to take a glimpse into our indoor premises and explore our traditional cuisine, art, architecture and much more.



Melita Osojnik performing at the Kids Euro Festival.

At the beginning of a new year, it is with great pride that we look at the past and with great determination that we look at the future. With this in our minds, we wish you all a very happy New Year 2012!



Society for Slovene Studies.

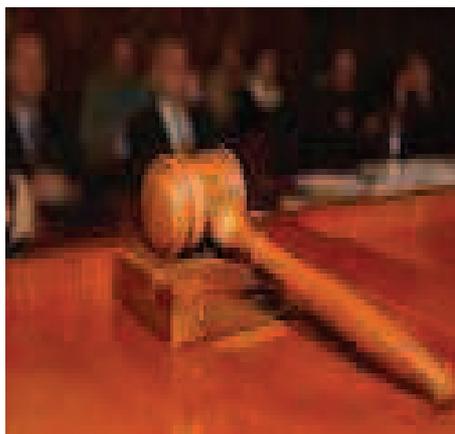
Constitutionality Day

On Monday, December 26, 2011, Slovenia celebrated 21 years since conducting its independence referendum, which was staged exactly a year before the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia was adopted and declared on December 23, 1991.

The celebration of 20 years of Slovenian Constitution as well as of the Independence and Unity Day culminated in the main national ceremony in Ljubljana, which was addressed by the Constitutional Court President Ernest Petrič, the first ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the United States..

On December 23, 1991, the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, its first constitution as an independent and democratic state.

As the country's primary legal document, the Constitution



lays the foundations of state authority and the position of individuals in the Republic of Slovenia. It guarantees a democratic political system with a parliamentary form of state authority, a state governed by the rule of law, and a social state based on respect for human dignity.

Some of the more important constitutional principles are the sovereignty of the people, the separation of powers, the right to self-determination, the protection

of human rights and the special rights of the Italian and Hungarian national minorities, the separation of the state and religious communities, and the guarantee of local self-government.

Furthermore, the Constitution also regulates the protection of human rights, the organization of the state, economic and social relations, public finance, constitutionality and legality, and the procedure for amending the Constitution.



Türk Wishes Happy 2012

Wishing Slovenians all the best in 2012, President Danilo Türk highlighted Slovenia's achievements in 2011 in terms of social cohesion as well as in business, sports, and art. Türk said that the recent early election was a sobering wake-up call, an appeal for a better management of the country and of the crisis.

He called on parties to help form a government without further delay, as "the tasks presented to the country by the global economic crisis and the problems of the EU will not wait". "We need a government that will be equal to this task. This is a goal that needs to be attained soon, at the very start of the New Year," Türk concluded.



40 Years of The World Heritage Convention

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention), a successful global instrument for the protection of cultural and natural heritage, was adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly 40 years ago on November 16, 1972.

It was an idea of the United States to merge the cultural and natural heritage, while the draft convention was prepared by UNESCO in cooperation with the International Council on Monument and Sites (ICMOS).

"Identity is significantly associated with the identity and affiliation of the people, though sustainable economic and social development in society," told Secretary General Irina Bokova at the meeting of Parties States of the Convention. Bokova also reiterated the need to involve local communities in the process of heritage preservation.



Due to its exceptional significance, Škocjan Caves were entered on UNESCO's list of natural and cultural world heritage sites in November 1986.

The celebration of the anniversary will be held on the topic World Heritage and Sustainable Development of the role of the Local Communities. Events will be held worldwide all year around.

There are already 936 registered world sites on the UNESCO list of the world

heritage. There are two sites in Slovenia on the list – in addition to the Škocjanske caves (Škocjanske jame) also nine lake dwellings on the Ljubljana Marshes (Ljubljansko barje) in the framework of prehistoric trans series of six countries around the Alps.

Maribor: One Of Lonely Planet's Top 10

Lonely planet, the largest unheralded Slovenian gem of travel-guide book and digital Maribor.

Lonely planet writes: announced its "Top 10 things to do in 2012". One of which is "Explore Maribor's Old Town". This year, Maribor is sharing the European Capital of Culture crown with Guimaraes, Portugal, and that is also one of the "must explore" reasons for visiting this art, music and other festivals to

accompany the well-established theatre, classical music and folklore performances. The real stars of the show will be Maribor's delightful Old Town and imposing castle, combined with a laid-back air best sampled from a cafe in one of the city's many delightful, diminutive squares."

A Trip to U.S. Film Festivals

Slovenian film, *A Trip*, by Nejc Gazvoda will be shown at the 23rd Cleveland film festival in the competitive program and at the 22nd Cinequest film festival as part of the "Global Landscapes Competition" category.

A Trip, the debut feature film of the young Slovenian director and screenwriter Nejc Gazvoda was shot in 14 days during the summer of 2010. *A Trip* is the story of the eighties' generation struggling to find its way in the world of countless decisions, and the story of three old school friends who, at 25, find themselves at a crossroads.



A Trip.

The film is produced by Aleš Pavlin and Andrej Štritof of the company PERFO Production, for whom Gazvoda previously wrote the screenplay for the medium-length film *Smile*.

A Trip is a low budget film that received partial funding from the Slovenian Film Center. The small cast includes actors Nina Rakovec, Jure Henigman, and Luka Cimprič.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Research And Innovation Opportunities

The conference "Destination Europe: Your Research and Innovation Opportunities" will be hosted by the European Commission on January 20, 2012, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This high-level Conference will showcase Europe's vibrant and attractive science, technology, and innovation culture; the excellent funding opportunities Europe provides for career development; and the challenging positions in world-class environments offered by European industry and research organizations.

Presentations by high-level speakers, representing some of

the major funding organizations and research-intensive industries in Europe, will be illustrated by testimonials from researchers who have taken advantage of the opportunities offered to develop their careers in Europe. Speakers will include: Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the E.U. Commissioner for Research and Innovation; Professor Tim Hunt, Nobel Laureate; Professor Donald Dingwell, Secretary General of the European Research Council, and many other inspiring leaders in the field.

The Conference is the first of a series of events planned for the United States and

has been organized by the European Commission and the European Research Council, in consultation with E.U. Member States and the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation.

The target audience is researchers of all nationalities based in the United States, opinion leaders and representatives from leading U.S. universities, representatives from the European Union and national networks working in the U.S, and members of the science diplomacy community and the media. Participation is free but registration is obligatory. For full information, please visit: <http://destinationeurope.teamwork.fr>.

Unique Slovenia

UNIQUE SLOVENIA is a boutique tour company in Slovenia, specializing in high-end and corporate travel, delivering pinnacle services for the most demanding clients.

The company was established to share its intimate knowledge of Slovenia with travelers looking for unique travel experiences. It prides itself in being able to take clients to unique destinations, while providing the highest levels of personal service. Unique strives to do this with elegance and sophistication, exclusiveness, and individuality. Its goal is to consistently exceed client's expectations and personally ensure that every aspect of client's time with it is perfect.

Unique creates specialized tours (wine and gourmet tour, cooking tour, active tours...), short breaks or getaways, and custom-made tours that are designed according to client's desire and budget. Luxury private jets to Slovenia or any other world destination, with inclusive or exclusive custom-designed voyages can be obtained for the



most demanding clients.

In the field of corporate businesses, it provides for business partners VIP service dedicated to all companies facing the issue of time and questioning themselves how to pamper their business partners while visiting Slovenia. It helps create the perfect incentive program that drives performance, inspires, entices, and delights your attendees. It will work with you as an integrated part of your corporate team to develop a unique creative program that is truly a 'once in a lifetime' experience for your attendees.

Team building programs include orientation competitions (treasure hunt), adrenaline weekends in combination with gourmand food and exquisite wines, cooking experience with a chef of renown Slovene restaurant...

On the US market Unique partners with Virtuoso member tour operators: Echelon Experiences, Searchlights, and Amazing Voyages in GB, to name just a few. It is Unique's vision to become Slovenia's leading inbound tour operator for demanding customers. On the other hand, corporate and meeting industries are quite complementary to its core operations, and it is thus rather natural for Unique to be penetrating this market as well. Its partnership with Helms Briscoe NY, Carlson Wagonlit Meetings & Events, and Belgian Air Travel has proven to be more than successful.

For further information, please, visit web site: www.unique-slovenia.com.



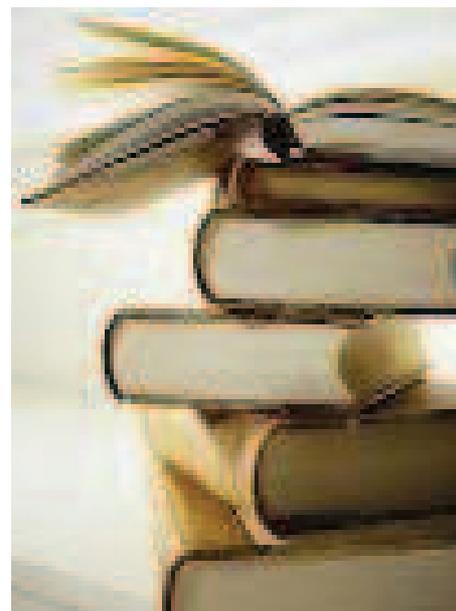
Slovenian Language Classes

In the spring semester, Slovenian language classes will resume at the Cleveland State University and Lakeland Community College, except for beginners' classes, which will not start until the fall of 2012. Anyone with some background in the Slovenian language is cordially invited to enroll in the classes on any of three levels.

Advanced level (at the 6th unit in Slovenščina v živo 3a), is scheduled to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 7:50 pm at Lakeland

Community College. Beginners (the same prerequisites as at the Cleveland State University) will have their lessons on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 7:50 pm, and intermediates (at the 5th unit in Gremo naprej) on the same days from 8:00 pm to 9:15 pm.

The invitation is meant also for students who have the knowledge that wasn't acquired through formal studying, or have used different textbooks. Please, find more information at: l.zibelnik@csuohio.edu.



TO DO LIST

"Polka! The Movie"

A film documentary about Slovenian music in America written and narrated by Mr. Joe Valencic for RTV Slovenija.

When: Sunday, January 15, 2012 at 1:30 pm

Where: Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130

More information: www.ClevelandArt.org or www.PolkaFame.com.

SEE Fest

If you are a filmmaker, do not forget to submit your film for SEE FEST 2012; a nonprofit festival presenting films from Southeast Europe.

Deadline: January 15, 2012.

More information: www.seefilmla.org.

Annual Ski Trip

Dust off the skis and snowboards, it's time for the SCC 2012 Annual Ski Trip to the famous Mt. LaCrosse, WI.

Depart: Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center, 14252 Main Street, Lemont, IL, on Friday, January 13, 2012 at 7:00pm.

Return: Leaving Mt. La Crosse on Sunday, January 15, 2012 at 5:00 pm.

The weekly Embassy Newsletter, produced by the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, is available on: www.washington.embassy.si.
Send us your comments or request for a subscription on: vwa@gov.si.
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