



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Slovenia Celebrates National Day

On Monday, June 25, Slovenia celebrated its National Day, marking June 25, 1991, when the Slovenian Assembly passed the Basic Constitutional Charter and the Declaration of Independence.

The documents were passed on the basis of a plebiscite held in December 1990, in which 88.2% of the electorate opted for a break with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

However, the first major step toward independence was the multi-party elections in April 1990, which were won by a coalition of newly emerged parties associated in the DEMOS



President of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Türk addressing the main ceremony on Congress Square in Ljubljana.

coalition. Three months later, DEMOS adopted a declaration of Slovenia's sovereignty, which envisaged the adoption of a Constitution within a year.

Independence, however, was officially declared at a June 25, 1991, ceremony in the square in front of the parliament building. Just hours later, the new state was attacked by the

Yugoslav People's Army, which marched into Slovenia in an attempt to secure Yugoslavia's borders with Austria, Italy, and Hungary. This was the outset of a brief war for independence, which ended on July 7, 1991, when Slovenia pledged in an E.U.-brokered declaration to delay the implementation of its independence for three months.



When the moratorium expired in October 1991, the Yugoslav troops left Slovenia and the country introduced its own currency. Slovenia became a full-fledged UN member in May 1992 and joined the E.U. and NATO in 2004.

On the occasion of Slovenian National Day, President Dr. Danilo Türk addressed the main ceremony that took place on Friday, June 22 on Congress Square in Ljubljana.

President Türk stated that Slovenia is capable of intelligent and sober solutions to overcome the current economic, social and political crisis, but finding sound common solutions and a common path forward for economic growth and development is possible only hand in hand with all Europeans featuring solidarity, social cohesion and giving opportunities to the younger generation.

The artistic program of the evening was performed by Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and numerous folk groups from across the country involving over 250 performers that presented



President of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Türk and Mrs. Türk, Prime Minister of Slovenia Janez Janša and Mrs. Janša, President of the Constitutional Court Dr. Ernest Petrič and the first Prime Minister of an independent Slovenia Lojze Peterle and Mrs. Peterle attending the ceremony on June 22, 2012.

Slovenian traditional folk songs and dances.

The United States congratulated Slovenia on its National Day in a cable sent by the U.S. Secretary of State, Hilary Rodham Clinton. Writing on behalf of the U.S. President, Barack Obama, Clinton wished Slovenia a continuation of peace, prosperity and success. Clinton stressed that

Slovenia has been an advocate of democratic values and a promoter of freedom and human rights around the world, especially in Kosovo and Afghanistan. In only two decades, Slovenia has become a reliable partner in NATO and other international organizations and a role model for other countries that aspire to be successful democracies.

STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Colorado National Guard Commander Visits Slovenia

Slovenia's Defense Minister Aleš Hojs met on Wednesday, June 27, 2012, with the Commander of the Colorado National Guard, Major General Michael Edwards, who is visiting Slovenia. Edwards, accompanied by the Chief of the Slovenian General Staff, Brigadier Dobran Božič, also stopped over at the Ljubljana barracks. During the visit to the barracks, Edwards inspected a memorial room dedicated to Slovenia's cooperation in international missions abroad.

Gen. Edwards also traveled to the town of Pivka, where one of the most important relics from the Slovenian war of independence, the first helicopter of the Slovenian Territorial Defense (TO), was put on display.

Minister of Defense Aleš Hojs welcoming Major General Michael Edwards. Slovenia has been building up a partner relationship and cooperation with Colorado National Guard since 1993.



Ambassador Kirn Lectures at the International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy

The International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy, themed "A Global Dialogue about Cultural Diplomacy, National Security and Global Risks", took place in Washington, DC, June 26th - 28th, 2012, featuring lectures and discussions on international relations and cultural studies provided by a diverse group of renowned speakers from across the world

As one of the keynote symposium speakers, the Ambassador of Slovenia, Roman Kirn, discussed the risk and challenges of a small country in a reshaped global world.

Ambassador Kirn outlined to the attentive audience Slovenia's history and its pathway in the process to independence as well as emphasized Slovenia's aspirations for the values of Western civilization, democratization, free-market economy, and human rights. He



stated that every fragmentation brings a chance for new integrations into entities that enable national's identity and scope of opportunities to grow. Facing global challenges, endeavors of each independent country in particular small ones should start aiming at efficient domestic governance, good

neighbor relations, regional cooperation, and effective multilateralism.

Following the lecture, Ambassador Kirn participated in a Q&A session as well as met with Mark C. Donfried, Director and Founder of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD), based in Berlin, Germany.

BUSINESS

Promoting Foreign Direct Investment

The Slovenian Government approved the Act Amending the Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment and Internationalization of Enterprises Act, which will combine the institutions implementing the policies of the Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investment (JAPTI), and the Slovenian Tourist Board

(STB) into a new agency.

The decision was made out of necessity to eliminate the duplication of tasks and optimize the work of institutions by bringing together similar activities, enabling greater transparency and closer integration of work processes, which will also result in lower business costs.

The aim of combining

the implementing agencies of the JAPTI, TIA (Slovenian Technology Agency) and STB into a new agency is to improve the promotion of, and ensure effective support and promotion of, technological development and innovation. For companies, this will mean that they will have a single contact point at the national level for enquiries and information.

Slovenian Artist Questions Role of Art in New York

In what is a reference to Martin Luther's 500-years-old theses on the Church, Slovenian artist Jiri Kočica has posted 95 theses on art on the doors of three New York galleries, questioning the role of modern art in light of political and social changes.

The project is dedicated to re-questioning the purpose of contemporary art in our civilization that became part of the philosophical discourse after the invention of the ready-made (Duchamp, Danto) and after conceptualism. The artist's idea is that the philosophical systems, which underlay contemporary art, are not much different from systems of beliefs and religious promises about ends and meanings of life.

Just as Martin Luther had fixed 95 theses on the doors of the Wittenberg church almost 500 years ago and Duchamp wanted to place his urinal

"Fountain" at the Exhibition of Independent Artists 95 years ago, Kočica has been trying to fix "my 95 Theses on Art" on the doors of galleries that would allow this act of "art-faith."

Lesley Hellen Workspace Gallery was the first place where the project "95 Theses on Art" was introduced to the public on June 6, 2012. The theses are currently posted also on the doors of BOSI and MC, while the artist would like to post them also on the doors of galleries across the world and organize panels on the questions raised by the theses.

Kočica was born in 1966 in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia. Apart from Slovenia, he has exhibited in Austria, the United States, Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He currently works as professor of design and decoration at the High School for Interior Decoration in Ljubljana and as assistant professor at



Kočica and his "95 Theses On Art" at Lesley Heller Workspace Gallery.

the University of Maribor. Over the years, he has successfully intertwined his pedagogical and artistic work in the form of workshops, exhibitions and articles on the theory of art, published in various books and journals.

20th Lent Festival Begins

Slovenia's largest open-air festival, the Lent Festival, is marking its 20th anniversary this year. Starting on Friday, June 29, Lent will bring over 1,200 events to the city of Maribor, including concerts by American singer-songwriter Macy Gray, reggae group Jamaican Legends and jazz legends John Scofield, Erik Truffaz and Dhafer Youssef.

The festival, organized as part of Maribor's stint as the 2012 European Capital of Culture (EPK), will take place at over 35 venues

across Maribor through July 7.

The action on the main stage on the Drava river will open with a concert by the Indexi band with guests, and will also feature performances by acclaimed Slovenian artists like Zoran Predin, Vlado Kreslin, and Magnifico.

The Folkart folklore festival will feature groups from Peru, Benin, Moldavia, Uzbekistan, Russia, Serbia, Italy, and Mexico. Lent will also host an experts' conference dubbed "Za odri Festivala Lent" (Lent Festival

Backstage), which is expected to be attended by some 40 festival directors, as well as the StandUpFest symposium for stand-up artists.

According to programming head of the EPK project, Mitja Cander, Lent will be the peak of Maribor's cultural offering at the end of June, while it will attract the most varied international audience of all EPK projects.

More information about the festival: www.festival-lent.si (Source: STA)

Slovenian Istria

Slovenian Istria lies at the juncture of the Karst to the east, the Adriatic Sea to the west and the Bay of St. Bartholomew to the north. It borders on two neighboring countries of Slovenia: Croatia and Italy. Although Slovenian coast measures only 46.6 kilometers (29 miles), it is famous for its diversity, unspoiled nature, rich cultural heritage, local people's kindness and great food and wine.

Istrian people enjoy a moderate climate with mild winters and warm summers, which enables them to cultivate olives, grapes and many other kinds of produce, the basis of Istrian cuisine. The history of Slovenian Istria goes far back, to the times of the Roman Empire and even farther. The remains of antiquity can be found in small villages in the neighborhoods of Koper, Izola and Piran.



Hrastovlje. (all photos are courtesy of Trnkoczy and Koper Tourist Information Center.)

Ancient atmosphere can be felt in cobbled streets, in squares, houses, and churches. These coastal towns attract visitors with their medieval image, cultural and historic heritage, fishing tradition, good restaurants and interesting events, whereas the more modern Portorož is the center of congress tourism and seaside resorts, and home of the casino with the longest tradition in Slovenia.

Almost a walking distance from Portorož, are the Sečovlje salt pans. Sečovlje, first mentioned in the 13th century, was named a regional park due to its enormous rich natural and historical heritage. Owing to the warm climate and richness of food in the salt pans, it offers perfect conditions for birds. Salt pans are a natural habitat of about 80 bird species that nest there. Istria is a natural reserve with abundant supply of marl and sandstone. The unique Strunjan cliff, the highest flysch wall on the Adriatic coast, ascends to around 80 meters (270 ft.) above the sea.

There are many wonderful hamlets in the countryside of Slovenian Istria: Črni Kal, Osp, Socerb, Krkavče, and Koštabona, just to name a few. Not far from the coast, there is the picturesque village of Hrastovlje with its church of the Holy Trinity, which is famous for its frescoes and glagolitic inscriptions. Its most noted part is The Dance of the Dead. Due to these, Hrastovlje is considered a real treasure of medieval fresco



Socerb.

art in Slovenia. Not far away, situated on the Karst Plateau, is one of the oldest stud farms in the world, the Lipica Stud farm, the home of the world-famous white Lipizzaner horses.

Many festivals, performances and events make Slovenian Istria very vivid. Among the most popular feasts in Koper are the Feast of Refošk, Festiko, Primorska Summer Theater Festival, Folkfest, Koperground, From the Wine Grower to the Olive

Grower, and many more. Izola hosts the famous Fisherman's Feast, and film festival Kino otok. Piran and Portorož are famous for a number of events, especially those connected with old customs and traditions, such as the Saltpans Feast.

Exquisite Istrian cuisine is an important part of each festival and local cantinas' offers. The basic elements originate in Istria's historical development: salt, fish, olives, wine, the persimmon fruit, asparagus,



truffles, and other. Traditional dishes from the coastal Istria are based on seafood, while dishes from the Istrian hinterland are prepared mainly from local produce. A frequent dish is "fuži" (type of pasta) and gnocchi with various sausages. "Bobiči" (casserole of beans) is the favorite among casseroles. Fritole, hroštole, and štruklji are typical desserts. Istria has an also an excellent wine offer, the best known being refošk and malvazija.

SPORTS

Slovenian Cyclers Third at RAAM

A cycling team from Idrija, Slovenia, participated in this year's Race Across America (RAAM). The team, composed of Alen Štucin, Luka Vodopivec, Damjan Rupnik and Dean Bratuš, finished in the third place, as the Germans won the race and the Americans gained the second place.

The cycling team from Idrija, competing in the team category, was the only Slovenian team in this race. The four needed six days and 20 minutes to finish the 4828 km (3000 mi) long race, accomplishing the great feat also due to their support team consisting of Sine Pečelin, Brane Vidmar, Evgen Seljak, Sara Štucin, Marko Likar, Igor Nemeček, Ervin Koder, Miran Levpušček and Tomaž Paternost.



The competitors finished the harsh test with great success, thereby paying their respects to Jure Robič, a Slovenian ultramarathon cyclist, who passed

away tragically in 2010. This year's RAAM started in Oceanside, CA, going across 12 states and 88 counties. The highest ascent in the race was to 3300 m (10,825 ft.).

Slovenefest to Take Place in July

The 31st Slovenefest, the largest Slovenian Cultural Festival in North America, organized by the SNPJ (Slovene National Benefit Society), will take place on July 13-15 at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Borough of SNPJ, PA, one of the smallest municipalities of western Pennsylvania,

A three-day weekend celebration of the talents, tastes and traditions of Slovenia is annually attended by up to 10,000 people. Numerous families of Slovenian descent from as far away as California, New Mexico, Florida, Canada, and Slovenia as well as Slovenian diplomats in the U.S. join the event every year.

This year, visitors of the Slovenefest will be entertained by more than 25 Slovenian polka bands and button box accordion

clubs at five indoor/outdoor venues within walking distance of each other. Bands will include local Youngstown, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh favorites, as well as others from Michigan, Toronto, and Slovenia. Moreover, visitors will have an opportunity to sample the great foods and beverages of Slovenia.

Families will appreciate number of activities for youngsters, including swimming, miniature golf, fishing in the lake, trackless train rides, moon jump, playgrounds, and organized activities lined up for children.

Slovenefest will also offer the visitors an opportunity to explore Slovenia's culture with extensive displays of folk attire, crafts, household items and more at the Slovenian Heritage Center museum. Slovenefest will also feature the Pennsylvania opening of the Slovenia-USA Art Exhibition in the Heritage Center's gallery, earlier displayed at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington.

For further information, including the information regarding accommodations, please visit SNPJ website's Slovenefest page at: www.snpj.org.



TO DO LIST

Dobrodošli doma – Welcome home 2012

Slovenians living in Slovenia as well as those who live all over the world are warmly welcome to join us once again for the event "Dobrodošli doma – Welcome home".

Key speakers: Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia; Gregor Virant, President of the National Assembly; Ljudmila Novak, Minister for Slovenians Abroad; Franc Pukšič, chair of the commission for relations with Slovenes in neighboring and other countries.

When: July 4, 2012

Where: The program will take place at several locations in the city center of Ljubljana, among them: the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (Šubičeva ulica 4, SI-1102 Ljubljana), the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the National and University Library

More information: www.dobrodoslidoma.si

Sensorial Perspectives - Boris Selan Exhibition New York 2012

The exhibition features Slovenian artist Boris Selan.

When: July 7 - July 27, 2012

Where: Agora Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001

More information: Agora-Gallery.com or www.Art-Mine.com

Discover Enchanting Slovenia

Those of you who love to enrich your knowledge or the knowledge of your children and grandchildren, or at one point decide to visit Slovenia, will appreciate this 30-minute DVD. This film by Zoya D. Pinto will introduce you to the most interesting places in Slovenia, which has a long history, great architecture, art, and a breathtaking natural beauty. Order DVDs not only for yourself, your children and grandchildren, but especially for your American friends and thus help promote tourism of our native country.

More information and request for order form: zdproduction@hotmail.com

Clearly filled DVD order form must be sent to: ZD Productions, 51 Village Circle, San Rafael, CA 94903-4242

Lecture on Reform, Revolt And Revolution In Egypt And The Arab World

Organized by Women's Foreign Policy Group and Embassy of Slovenia. Keynote Speaker: Lisa Anderson President of The American University in Cairo. Welcome address by H.E. Roman Kirn, Ambassador of Slovenia to the U.S.

When: Tuesday, July 10, 2012, 6-8 p.m.

Where: Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW Washington, DC

Space is limited. Advance registration is required at: <http://data.memberclicks.com/site/wfpg/2012-07-10-egypt-invitation.pdf>

More information: 202-429-2692 or programs@wfpg.org

Polka Mass

Start your Independence Day holiday week with the Polka Mass. America's polka padre, Father Frank Perkovich, arrives from Minnesota to lead the service, accompanied by the Eddie Vallus Orchestra.

When: Sunday, July 1, 2012, promptly at 1:00 p.m.

Where: SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio (located on Heath Road in Kirtland, Ohio, off Chardon Road (Route 6), three miles east of Route 306 and six miles west of State Route 44)

More information: (440) 951-6906

Art Exhibition at SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center

Art work by Dobrila Pintar, Toni Rash, Gorazd Jordan, Lynn C. Miller, and Meta Zobec Novak will be put on display on the occasion of SloveneFest.

When: July 13 through September 2, 2012; during SloveneFest, the Heritage Center will be open Friday, July 13, from 1 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, July 15, from noon to 7 p.m.; and Sunday, July 15, from noon to 6 p.m.

Where: SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center at SNPJ Recreation Center in Lawrence County, PA

More information: www.facebook.com/SNPJHeritageCenter or 724-336-5180