

Sinfo

The Best from Slovenia

I FEEL
SLOVENIA

NR. 2 / 2020



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Editor-in-Chief
Mateja Malnar Štembal

Executive Editor
Tanja Glogovčan Belančič

Editorial Board
Danila Golob, Irena Kogoj, Tea Knaflič, Katja Križnar, Polona Prešeren, Vesna Žarkovič

Design
Irena Kogoj

Photo Editor
Foto format d.o.o.

Photo on the front page
Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info

Translation
Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Translation and Interpretation Division, DZTPS

Language editing
Amidas

Copy writer editing
Paul Steed

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Photo: Bruno Toič

EDITORIAL

Like many other countries around the world, in recent months Slovenia has been fighting to contain the growth of new coronavirus cases. The government's measures have been effective and our country has been one of the most successful in its fight against the epidemic. It will soon be time, we hope, for life to start returning to normal, and for us to enjoy the many pleasures of living here again.

Slovenians have always been a nation of beekeepers, and in addition to our love of bees we have always respected nature in general. These two topics are the starting points for most of the articles in the current issue. Among other stories, you can read about good beekeeping practices in terms of raising public awareness of their value, and educating people about bees. Treating nature with respect is something that can be practiced anywhere, and it starts at home, even when you put on your slippers or open your wardrobe. But most certainly we respect nature when outside, enjoying it.

Slovenians celebrate Statehood Day on the 25 June, commemorating the country's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. With this issue we are presenting you with some of the symbols of Slovenia. They all express our love of the country and respect for all other nations.

In critical moments such as those presented by the coronavirus crisis it's important to maintain respect for the natural world and our fellow human beings, and to find new ways of realising our potential. Spring and new beginnings are in the air, and better days are coming.

Tanja Glogovčan Belančič, Executive Editor



Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info

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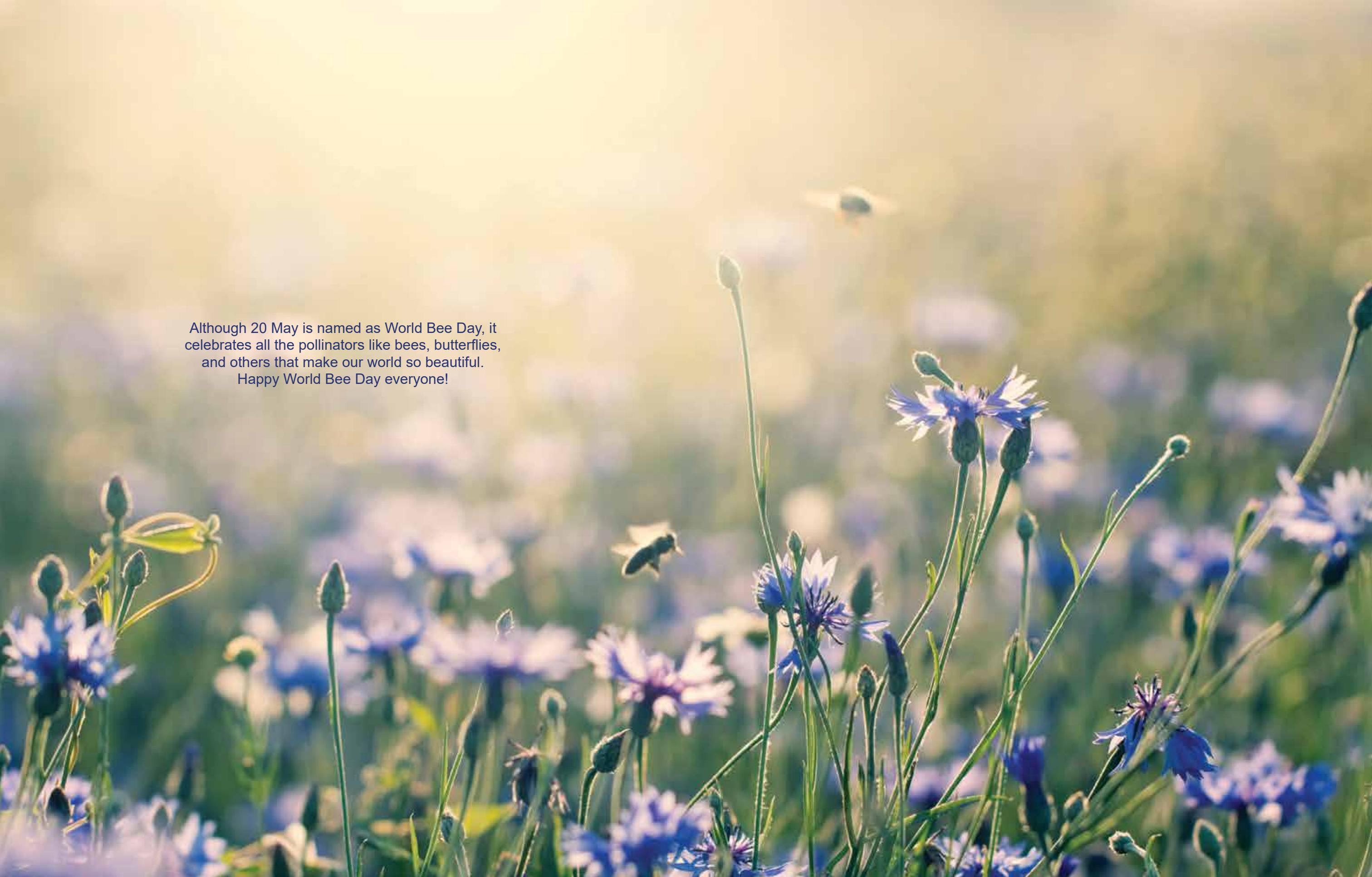
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A close-up photograph of a field of blue cornflowers. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. Several bees are captured in flight, hovering around the flowers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus field of more flowers, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

Although 20 May is named as World Bee Day, it celebrates all the pollinators like bees, butterflies, and others that make our world so beautiful.
Happy World Bee Day everyone!



Government of the Republic of Slovenia.
Photo: Nik Jevšnik/STA

TOGETHER WE CAN

WE KNOW HOW, AND WE CAN DO IT

SLOVENIA IS AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COUNTRIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

ON 12 MARCH 2020, IN VIEW OF THE GROWING NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS AND FOLLOWING THE DECLARATION OF A PANDEMIC BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, THE GOVERNMENT DECLARED A CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC IN THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA.

To curb the spread of COVID-19, the government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a number of measures that have successfully contained the spread of the virus among the population, while also preparing a package of legislative measures to help the population and economy. The government has also become intensely involved in international diplomatic, political and scientific cooperation in this regard.

THE GOVERNMENT'S IMMEDIATE MEASURES UPON THE DECLARATION OF THE EPIDEMIC

The declaration of the epidemic required immediate action and the adoption of often unpopular measures. However, these measures were necessary to reduce the uncontrolled spread of the disease and, consequently, the number of fatalities. With these measures, the government has been able to prevent the Slovenian health-care system from facing extreme operational difficulties. In all its decisions, the government relied on the opinion of the expert group for the containment and control of the epidemic at the Ministry of Health, in terms of both adopting and lifting the restrictions.

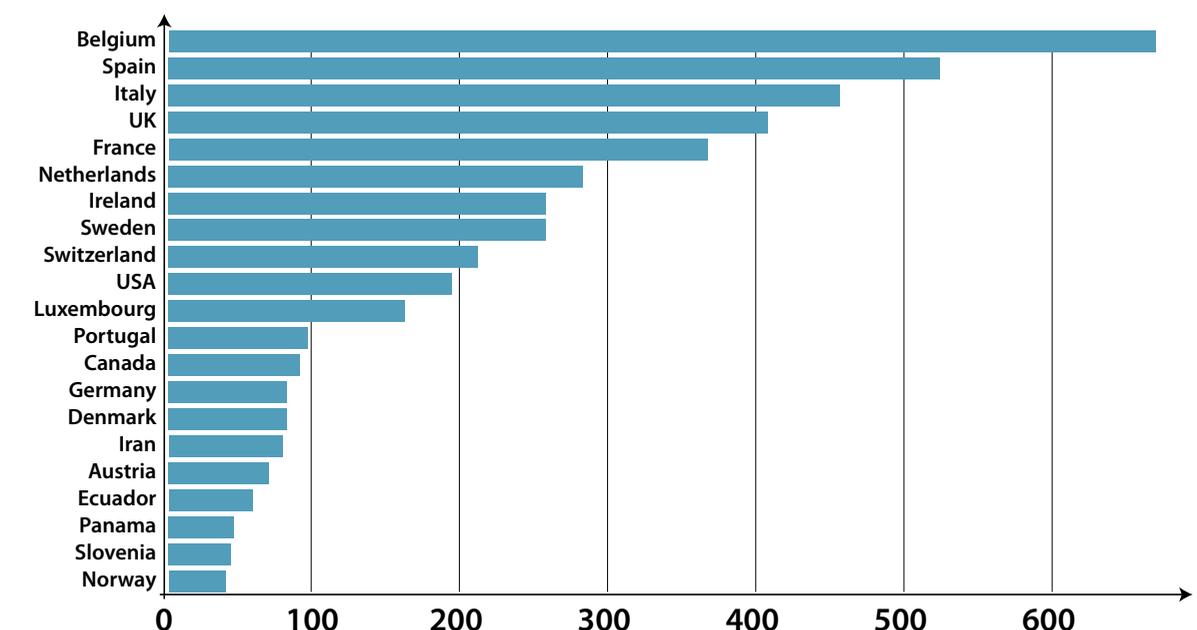
The government therefore immediately established a crisis staff, decided to increase the reserves of protective equipment and commodities, ensured the smooth functioning of the Civil Protection Service, provided new

capacities for potential patients, adopted the necessary restrictions on public life, closed all educational institutions, temporarily shut down public passenger transport, issued an ordinance on the temporary general prohibition of the movement and gathering of people in public places and areas, the prohibition of movement outside the municipality of permanent or temporary residence, and the exceptions to the general restriction.

Residents of Slovenia received the government's decisions and recommendations with understanding and cooperation, and thus prevented the uncontrolled spread of the disease.

At the onset of the crisis in March, Prime Minister Janez Janša said: "Our priority is to protect the most vulnerable, those most exposed to infection or the effects of the disease, and to guarantee the functioning of the critical infrastructure so that, in spite of the standstill of public life, sufficient commodities and other reserves can be secured. Above all, we have invested efforts to compensate for the serious shortage of protective equipment that renders certain activities impossible."

CORONAVIRUS DEATHS PER 1 MILLION PEOPLE, 29 APRIL 2020



Source: Johns Hopkins University

It is due to the government's successful measures and the cooperation of the general public and businesses that Slovenia ranks among the countries that have been most successful in containing the spread of the novel coronavirus in terms of the number of deaths per million people.

PACKAGES TO HELP THE POPULATION AND THE ECONOMY

After taking the most urgent steps to slow down and contain the coronavirus epidemic, the government, with the help of the expert group, prepared a comprehensive legislative package to help the population and economy in a matter of days.

The government made its main priority to provide rapid financial assistance.

It thus adopted measures to preserve jobs, improve the social positions of vulnerable people, provide assistance

to the self-employed and keep businesses in operation. The government also adopted measures to improve the liquidity of businesses and provide support for research projects to fight the epidemic and measures to help agriculture.

MEASURES TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY TO THE ECONOMY

With the act on providing additional liquidity to the economy, the government has preserved the production and development potential of the Slovenian economy.

Accordingly, Slovenia has undertaken to guarantee loans up to a certain ceiling for companies and individuals who are engaged in economic activities.

Taking into account the number of deaths per million people, Slovenia ranks among the countries that have been most successful in containing the new coronavirus.
Photo: Juanmonino-GettyImages/
GulliverFilm&Foto



By so doing, it has created additional loan opportunities for the Slovenian economy to help it overcome the consequences of the epidemic. In addition, the government has increased funding at the level of local self-government.

The government is also preparing the third anti-corona legislative package of measures, which is very important as it contains development and exit measures that will help the country to recover as quickly as possible after the epidemic ends. The construction industry will play an important part in this process, as it has the potential to have a number of positive effects on other activities and jobs.

EXCELLENCE IN SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY

Before the declaration of the epidemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a consular crisis cell, made up of diplomats and others from different divisions and services of the Ministry, and it is still operating today. Their main task is to convey the message: "we are here to help you".

Day after day, they received calls from Slovenian citizens stranded in different parts of the world as increasingly tight restrictions were being placed on air and road transport. Thanks to the considerable efforts and contacts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Slovenian diplomatic missions and consular posts, evacuation flights and the transport of a total of 674 Slovenian citizens and 136 foreign citizens were carried out. Including all those who returned to Slovenia on their own with our help, over 2,000 Slovenian citizens have returned to Slovenia to date.

This success is due to the personal sacrifice, kindness, and professionalism of Slovenian diplomacy, along with its diligence and extraordinary sense of solidarity and concern for others.

Of course, all this would not have been possible without the valuable and dedicated assistance of employees of diplomatic missions and consular posts, our diplomats and ambassadors around the world. To facilitate communication, a group was formed using the WhatsApp application where colleagues can easily exchange information, no matter where they are in the world.



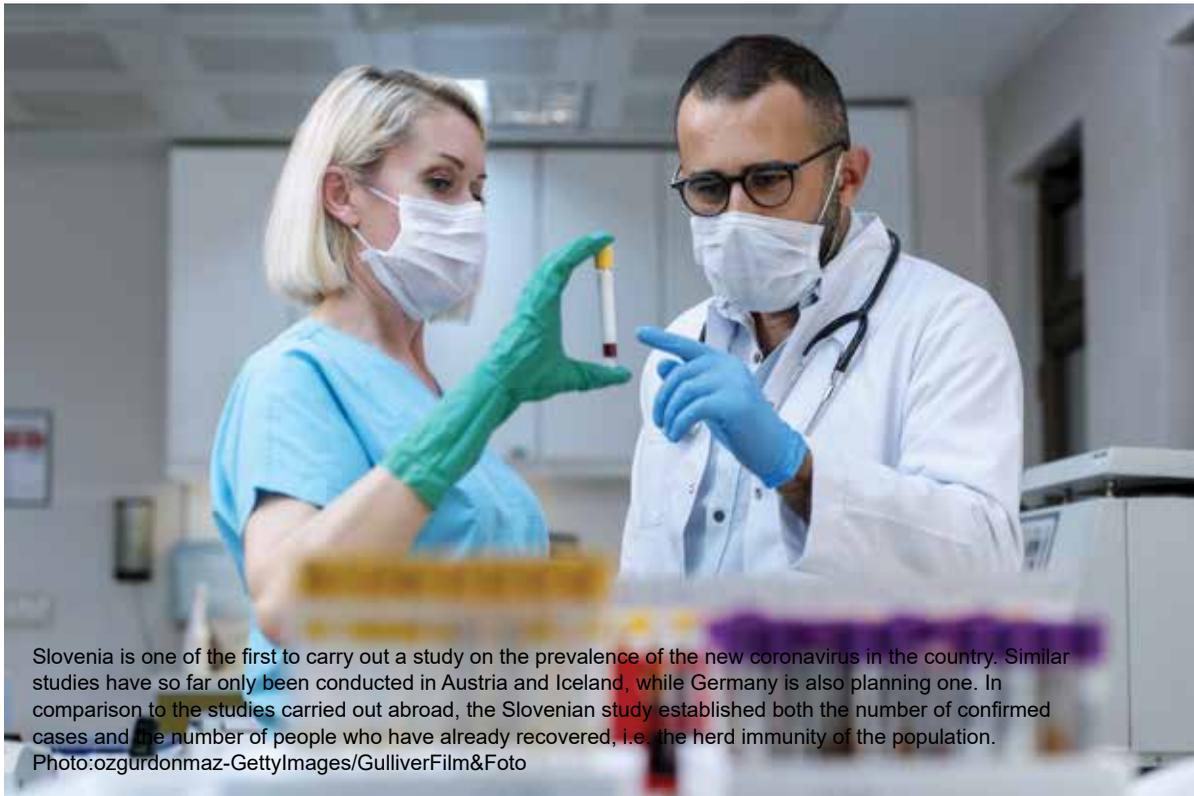
Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized evacuation flights and transport for Slovenian citizens.
Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLITICAL AND SCIENTIFIC FIELDS

Prime Minister Janez Janša, Foreign Minister Anže Logar and other ministers were also very active in international cooperation and assistance between countries. Slovenia, other EU Member States and EU institutions agreed on common projects and goals that are related to measures to limit the spread of the virus, the activities of institutions to ensure the urgent provision of medical and protective equipment, and the promotion of research and measures to tackle the socio-economic consequences of the epidemic.

Solidarity among countries is very important in the difficult time of the COVID-19 epidemic. A shipment of surgical and FFP2 masks arrived in a Hungarian government aircraft, flown from the Czech Republic to Slovenia. The Hungarian government also assisted a group of Slovenians with air travel from the United States. The Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Jakub Morawiecki offered Slovenia the assistance of Polish medical teams, should this be necessary. The People's Republic of China donated protective equipment to Slovenia, which included protective face masks, surgical masks, protective clothing, protective goggles and protective gloves.

The EU, in partnership with international partners, has already started raising funds to fund the vaccine for the novel coronavirus.



Slovenia is one of the first to carry out a study on the prevalence of the new coronavirus in the country. Similar studies have so far only been conducted in Austria and Iceland, while Germany is also planning one. In comparison to the studies carried out abroad, the Slovenian study established both the number of confirmed cases and the number of people who have already recovered, i.e. the herd immunity of the population. Photo: ozgurdonmaz-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

The European Commission has announced that it will mobilise a billion euros for such efforts, of which Slovenia will contribute EUR 13.76 million.

Moreover, for some time now Slovenian scientists from the Biotechnology Laboratory at the National Institute of Chemistry have been participating in the development of a coronavirus treatment or vaccine.

Scientists at the Jožef Stefan Institute, which conducts state-of-the-art research and technology development in Slovenia, have also joined organisations that monitor and raise awareness of the spread of the novel coronavirus. The first UNESCO-sponsored International Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI) has

already developed a tool that tracks virus announcements and updates data on the coronavirus' global spread in real time. Coronavirus Watch is a Slovenian application within the new UNESCO AI centre at this institute in Ljubljana. This tool can be useful for politicians, the media and public, helping them to observe emerging trends related to COVID-19, both in their own countries and globally.

In late April, Slovenia, in partnership with the European Commission and EU Member States, organised the first pan-European hackathon to address topics on the development of innovative solutions to various global challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The hackathon brought together representatives of European civil society, innovators, partners and investors from across Europe.

Almost 21,000 participants, 2,600 mentors, 400 jury members and over 500 volunteers from the EU and many other countries around the world participated. Of the 2,150 proposals submitted, 117 solutions were selected related to a range of topics – from health and healthy living to distance learning and work, social and political cohesiveness to digital finance.

Neža Oblak is a Slovenian member of the team that developed the winning proposal for an idea to support the art and entertainment industry in the context of Social & Political Cohesion, under the name Guide-Your-Guide: Experience culture from home.

With 250 participants, Slovenia was the third most successful country in terms of participants per capita. Teams in which Slovenians participated submitted 39 solutions, ranking the country at the very top in terms of submitted solutions per million inhabitants at 18.

GRATEFUL FOR ALL POSITIVE STORIES

Faced with these circumstances, we Slovenians have proved that we can overcome this crisis. We are able to come together in solidarity and understanding, and are willing to help our fellow human beings. We know how to express gratitude – to healthcare professionals, civil protection service members, the police, armed forces, charity organisations and all individuals who have demonstrated in these difficult times that their courage is greater than their fears. We have shown that we can comply with rules for the common good, even if such rules limit our freedom of movement.

We are able to turn difficult situations into advantages, improve the quality of our relationships, and find new ways of expressing our creativity.

The coronavirus has completely changed the world, and the future is unpredictable. European institutions are facing a major challenge.

But thanks to efficient action by the government, and people complying with the measures imposed, Slovenia has overcome the first trial, and very successfully. The current crisis will serve to encourage us in terms of what we as a nation and humanity as a whole are able to achieve.

“Everything that has happened and will happen in the coming months around the world, in Europe and Slovenia will be a test of our maturity and of whether we are

able to fairly share the burden of the consequences of the epidemic, show solidarity and seek reasonable and effective solutions on our way back to normal life,” said Prime Minister Janez Janša recently. “Thanks to adopting the right measures, Slovenia is currently among the most successful countries in managing the virus. Other than a lack of self-confidence and too much doubt about our own abilities, there are no reasons not to be successful in all other areas as well,” he added.

The US news portal Vox has put Slovenia alongside Greece, Iceland, Jordan and Vietnam as overlooked success stories when it comes to fighting coronavirus outbreaks.

In an article Vox notes that with nearly 1,500 confirmed coronavirus cases and 100 deaths as of May 5, Slovenia's relatively small outbreak is impressive, considering Slovenia is a growing tourist destination that borders Italy, one of Europe's outbreak epicenters. “Its success mainly stems from an aggressive early lockdown, quarantines of sick people, and generous government spending,” they wrote.



Photo: FilippoBacci-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

THE CRISIS SHOWS THE REAL VALUE OF
WHAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR
SOMETHING NEW

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

A CRISIS ALWAYS OPENS A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SOMETHING NEW. THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS NOT ONLY A MEDICAL BUT ALSO A SOCIAL PHENOMENON. IT IS TAKING A LOT FROM US, BUT IS ALSO PROVIDING A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND UNDERSTAND WHAT REALLY MATTERS IN LIFE.

TOGETHER WE CAN

The more we give away, the more we gain in the long run. With solidarity we make a world better.
Photo: freemixe-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

We have created a world in which greed and profit stand for strong values. However, the crisis is revealing that science, art and education are indeed of utmost importance. The situation in which we are immersed today has brought with it time to reflect on where we are, why we are here and where we are heading.

It is holding up a mirror to our actions. It has forced us to abandon activities that were, until recently, seen as indispensable, such as consumerism, and it has revived the values of solidarity, closeness and empathy.

The first activity that we have had to give up in these times is consumerism. Overnight, we had to give up our

conviction that it is difficult to live without spending, that consumption is a given and also gives purpose to our lives. Recent weeks have forced us to face the fact that this is something that we can leave behind. In a way, this is a test to see if we can find a different purpose to our lives than the one imposed on us by the current global capitalist economy and its promoters. There is no doubt that, amid the pandemic, many are wondering whether it was really necessary to make shopping, cheap travel, low-cost global destinations and more, such an integral part of our lives.

REVIVAL OF SOLIDARITY VALUES

Sociologists have observed that the coronavirus pandemic has seen the revival of solidarity. The outbreak has forced us to think of others, especially of the elderly.

There is no room for self-centeredness anymore; in fact, it has been replaced by a care for the common good.



Personal relationships have become more important than ever.
Photo: vgajic-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

Our awareness of the values of mutual help, solidarity and cooperation is again gradually growing.

It is therefore vital that we make an effort and develop this currently overwhelming sense of solidarity into a more lasting awareness that other scenarios are possible, and that helping the vulnerable is a value that ultimately leads to the betterment of us all. When the situation returns to normal, we will have a better understanding of what we took for granted and undervalued before the pandemic hit. The importance of interpersonal relationships, human contact, and physical, not just virtual, proximity will be brought back to the forefront. We are witnessing a period of significant discovery of new forms of communication, cooperation and recognition of common values. The interaction of different professions, social stakeholders, sciences and science in general will be a prerequisite for the successful management of these challenges in the future.

IN THE FACE OF A NEW GLOBAL PARADIGM

The new global paradigm should aim to respect, consider and understand diversity. Despite many difficulties, this time of crisis is also a great opportunity to learn about family relationships, tolerance and mutual understanding.

The lockdown is preventing us from running away from our closest relationships. This may come as a blow to those who, after work, used to go for a drink with friends or follow an evening workout routine, spending only a few hours a day with their families.

Such shocks are positive, since they force you to get to know yourself, to realise what it really means to live with your partner and family, and why we are often afraid of such relations.

When the exits are closed, however, such relationships actually begin to come to life and the lockdown acts as a catalyst for change.

In this context, an increase in mutual assistance has been observed. Some nurseries have offered people free lettuce seedlings while some people offer books, volunteer to buy groceries for their neighbours and much more. Crises have the power to bring humanity to the fore, and, as the saying goes, a friend in need

is a friend indeed. These days many people have realised that they have many friends.

Ever since children began staying at home following the closure of kindergartens and schools, the internet has provided a myriad of ideas for activities and ways to be creative, which points to the predicament we have found ourselves in when made to spend time with our children. Why should our day be packed with endless activities or busy schedules? Too many activities have become a substitute for genuine relationships. It is good to ask ourselves what would happen if we simply let our children lead the way and we just enjoy some quality time with them. In truth, often do not let children take the initiative, and thus in a way silence them through the use of endless activities.

We are witnessing a period of significant discovery of new forms of communication.
Photo: GettyImages-PeopleImages/GulliverFilm&Foto



TOGETHER WE CAN



Enjoy time with your kids.
Photo: Morsa Images/GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

VIRTUAL CULTURE

WHEN CULTURE IS DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME

DANILA GOLOB

SLOVENIANS ARE REAL CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS. THEATRE PERFORMANCES, CONCERTS, LITERARY EVENINGS, MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES, CINEMAS OR SIMPLY STREET PERFORMERS...THEY ALL ENRICH OUR LIVES AND WE ENJOY THEM IMMENSELY. DUE TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS ALL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN SLOVENIA WERE CLOSED, BUT THIS HAS NOT STOPPED SLOVENIANS FROM STAYING IN TOUCH WITH CULTURE, AS CULTURE CAME KNOCKING ON THEIR DOORS.

Musicians were the first in Slovenia to take action, as they performed on their balconies, in front of their open windows and in their gardens on 15 March at 18.00.

In their online invitation, the musicians stressed that this was their gift to all those Slovenians who are following instructions and staying at home because they care.

The legendary Vlado Kreslin played guitar on his balcony, the drums of Dejan Tamše, percussion player and BUMfest's art director, could be heard loud and clear, some musicians were joined by their children, forming family bands and, in doing so, thrilling their neighbours and online admirers. Another round of performances followed the next Sunday, when many musicians invited audiences into their living rooms by streaming their work online.

HOME CINEMA

In the difficult circumstances, even film fans are not left wanting. As part of the Slovenian film makers' campaign Vsi (filmi) doma (All (Films) at Home) that, in the spirit of the #stayathome movement, shows a selection of films free of charge, the Slovenian Film Centre allows people to access a selection of feature-length and short animated films. The titles are available for seven days, with new ones being added on Mondays and Thursdays.

Some of the top films were Petelinji zajtrk directed by Marko Naberšnik, Instalacija ljubezni directed by Maja Weiss, Izlet directed by Nejc Gazvoda, and, in memory of the recently deceased actor Peter Musevski, Rezervni deli directed by Damjan Kozole and which won several awards. A wide selection of films for children and young people included the hit sequel Gremo mi po svoje 2 directed by Miha Hočevar, and short animated films were also available for home screening.

The Slovenian Film Centre made the great Petelinji zajtrk available on its website
Photo: Agencija Odmev archives





Children could watch the wonderful puppet show Sapramouse on the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre's website.
Photo: Urška Boljkovac

The Slovenian Film Centre published news about the All (Films) at Home campaign through its own channels and those of the Slovenian Film Database, as well as on social media.

ONLINE THEATRE

Where could we see a play during the epidemic?

The majority of theatres provide alternative content on their platforms and social media.

The Drama Theatre in Ljubljana posted videos of its best plays on YouTube, and launched a new platform Drama od doma (Drama at home) where nearly every day well-known Slovenian theatre actors read out works of literature. The Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor also moved to the internet with its staging of Dangerous Liaisons, based on the novel by Choderlos de Laclos

and directed by Aleksandar Popovski. The Ljubljana City Theatre opened its online archive of performances called Gledališče na spletišče. The Glej Theatre also opened its online archive, the Prešeren Theatre in Kranj presented memories of its past performances, actors of the Celje City Theatre staged dramas and reciting poetry on social media, and the ensemble of the Slovene National Theatre in Nova Gorica read fairy tales to children online.

The Ljubljana Puppet Theatre also made their most popular shows available online for children, including Vihar v glavi (Brainstorm) directed by Primož Ekart, and wonderful puppet shows such as Sapramiška (Sapramouse), Zvezdica zaspanka (Little Sleepy Star), Ostržek (Pinocchio), Romeo in Julija (Romeo and Juliet). Children could also watch performances from the Maribor Puppet Theatre, while Mini Teater opened its archives too.

VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS

Slovenian museums and galleries made their collections and exhibitions accessible online, so that culture remained open to all.

The National Gallery of Slovenia included a selection of artworks that were introduced into the updated permanent collection in January 2016 in the online presentation of its permanent collection.

The Jakopič Gallery opened its exhibition Vision 20/20: Community – Contemporary Indonesian socially engaged photography online and made it available on their Facebook and Instagram pages. Each week the Museum of Modern Art prepared a selection of artworks from the Artemic Series, and posts links to recordings of guided tours of current exhibitions, permanent collections and other video documents from past events. The Slovene Ethnographic Museum offered visits to its digital collections and online exhibitions on its website. The Maribor Art Gallery also offered digital visits, while the Maribor Regional Museum and the National Liberation Museum Maribor offer a virtual overview of history. The City Art Gallery Ljubljana prepared a Facebook exhibition as a part of the Art in this time of isolation project, with 70 artworks that indirectly address the current situation.

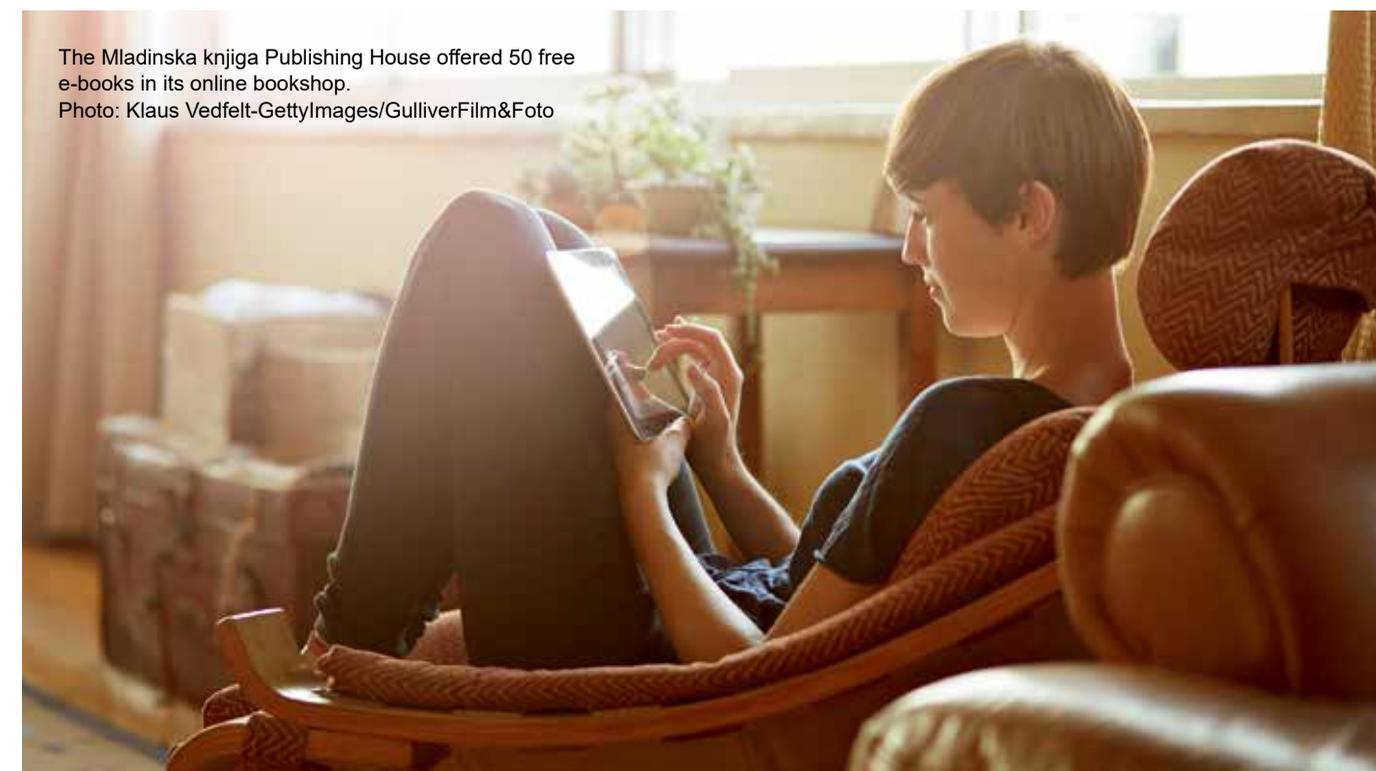
BOOKS WERE E-BOOKS AVAILABLE

If you've ran out of books at home, there were more e-books available. The National and University Library also offered online services.

Through the Biblos portal, members can borrow more than 677 titles from their 4,000 or so e-books and e-magazines in Slovenian.

The Mladinska Knjiga Publishing House also did not forget about its readers, and offered 50 free e-books in its online bookshop. The Slovenian Book Agency started an online campaign, which lasted for two weeks and sought to raise awareness of its services and invite people to visit online bookshops which offered safe and free book delivery. What about poetry? This year's celebration of Poetry Day was postponed until 23 May.

Slovenians carry our love of culture in ourselves and, if we so wished, we could brighten up our day with a theatre show, or a great Slovenian film, we could admire artworks in galleries, watch a puppet show with our children, or make ourselves comfortable on a sofa with an e-book.



The Mladinska knjiga Publishing House offered 50 free e-books in its online bookshop.
Photo: Klaus Vedfelt/GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto



Boštjan Noč

THE THIRD CELEBRATION OF WORLD BEE DAY
BOŠTJAN NOČ, PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVENIAN
BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

SLOVENIANS LIVE WITH AND FOR THE BEES

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ
PHOTO: PERSONAL ARCHIVES

It has been two years since the UN General Assembly proclaimed 20 May as World Bee Day on the initiative brought forward by Slovenia. How would you summarise this two-year period in regards to innovations and achievements?

The most important thing is that the world became aware of the great importance of bees and started to respect beekeepers' work. In the last two years, people's awareness of the importance of bees has increased, which is very important since agriculture now uses less chemical fertilisers, which reduces mass bee deaths. Furthermore, significantly more honey plants are being planted. Slovenian and foreign politicians are becoming more and more aware of the significance of bees, as evidenced by the adoption of important international documents to protect bees and pollinators. We are moving in the right direction, but still too slowly.

You will be president of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association for the next mandate of 2020–2024. You have an ambitious plan. What kind of tasks and objectives have you set for yourself?

I have been in charge of the association for fourteen years and I appreciate the support of almost all the voters. The main task and goal is that all the honey products on the EU market would bear a country of origin label, and that honey mixtures would be labelled with the exact share of the individual country of origin. Further tasks include declaring bees as an endangered species, achieving improvements in the field of bee-

keeper training, a VAT reduction for bee medications, the promotion of honey bee products and more. We are definitely not running out of ideas. Of course, we want to continue as the leading beekeepers' association in the world.

Slovenian beekeeping is certainly a global particularity, it's what we're known for in the world. Is it right to assume that, together, we are writing the fairy tale that Slovenia deserves?

The organisation of beekeeping in Slovenia is second to none. Unfortunately, natural conditions have not always worked in our favour in the last few years and our story of honey has been quite bitter.

Nevertheless, beekeepers have been writing a new chapter in the culinary field – first with the honey breakfast which has grown to become a traditional Slovenian breakfast and, later, with the Slovenian Food Day taking place each third Friday in November. You also expressed the wish that, in 2021 when Slovenia will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU, guests would only be served Slovenian food made from Slovenian produce, harvested and processed in Slovenia.

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association and I, personally, were among the first to say out loud: let's eat Slovenian food, let's eat Slovenian honey. I think it is time that we served foreign delegations in Slovenia food solely of Slovenian origin.



The Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica is the only specialised authorised national museum in Slovenia. A visit to the museum is a great opportunity to become fully acquainted with the rich history of beekeeping in Slovenia.

This way, we can showcase our excellent food to the world, which will be the best promotion for us, our food, our agriculture and our beekeeping.

I really hope that only Slovenian food will be served during our Presidency.

Previously, the store shelves of big shopping centres in Slovenia were filled with honey of foreign origin (around 80%), and only about a fifth from Slovenia. Today, it is the opposite, in spite of the fact that Slovenian honey, owing to its quality and the high regard that Slovenian beekeepers are held in, is somewhat more expensive than honey of unknown origin. Has your association played a part in that?

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association has been try-

ing to raise awareness for years that locally produced honey is the best for the consumer. Around 70% of the honey on the world market is adulterated, and therefore the best guarantee for the consumer is to purchase from their local beekeeper. Luckily, Slovenians are mostly aware of this and buy excellent domestic bee products directly from local beekeepers. They are a bit more expensive, but they are genuine natural products as made by our bees.

There are 9,800 beekeepers registered in the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, forming 210 associations and producing around 2,000 tonnes of honey. You must be happy with these numbers.

There are more than 10,000 beekeepers in Slovenia, and about 8,000 in the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association. Sadly, we produce less honey each year, although the number of beekeepers is growing. Two thousand tonnes per year is, unfortunately, not enough.

Our goal is to produce more as the Slovenian consumer deserves Slovenian honey.

But 2,000 tonnes, that's only about the half the quantity needed.

What about this winter's loss of bees? How are the bees doing in Slovenia in general and during this epidemic? What is the latest information from the field?

This year, the survival rates have been very good, but sadly the recent frost promises another below average yield.

Do you think that Slovenians are sufficiently aware of the importance of bees?

I am happy to say that Slovenians respect bees and beekeeping in general. Beekeepers are respected members of the society, and we, as beekeepers, are proud to perform this noble and valuable activity.

Slovenians are passionate beekeepers; we really are the land of beekeepers.

Bees have always accompanied us through the years. We are the homeland of the Carniolan honey bee, we have our own unique apiary, unique beehive panels, our AŽ hives, honey bread biscuits and honey bread hearts, Dražgoški kruhek – hand-crafted and decorated honey biscuits, apitourism. You cannot find these features anywhere else in the world. It's true to say that Slovenians live with and for the bees.



Noč: "Of course we want to continue as the leading beekeepers' association in the world."



For last year's World Bee Day, Slovenia gifted a beehive to the Pope.

Key facts about bees and beekeeping in Slovenia

DANILA GOLOB, DANILA MAŠIČ
INFOGRAPHIC: IRENA KOGOJ
Source: SURS



Upon the initiative brought forward by Slovenia, 20 May was proclaimed World Bee Day. This day is about raising awareness of the great importance of bees for human survival.

The famous Slovenian beekeeper Anton Janša (1734–1773), who was a pioneer of modern apiculture and one of the greatest experts on bees, was born on 20 May.

The number of beekeepers in Slovenia has increased by more than 30% in the last ten years. There are more than 10,000 beekeepers in the country, with 16 beehives each on average.

With nearly five beekeepers per 1,000 inhabitants, Slovenia ranks at the very top of the EU Member States in terms of the number of beekeepers per capita.



MY LAST
NAME IS
BEE :)

Slovenia produced the most honey in 2001, with a yield of 2,550 tonnes.



In 2017, Slovenia exported honey worth EUR 1.4 million, the highest amount since 2000.

A resident of Slovenia consumes just over a kilo of honey per year on average.

In Slovenia there are 60 people with the surname Čebela (Bee). Most of them live in the Zasavje and Central Slovenia statistical regions.

There are also six streets named Čebelarška ulica (Beekeeping Street) in Slovenia, along with an Ulica čebelarja Močnika (Beekeeper Močnik Street) and an Ulica Antona Janše (Anton Janša Street).





IN FOCUS

The photos taken by Franci Šivic tell the stories of bees.

APICULTURE IN PHOTOGRAPHY

A BEEKEEPER DOCUMENTING THE LIFE OF BEES

POLONA PREŠEREN, PHOTO: FRANCI ŠIVIC

JUST IMAGINE THE PATIENCE, THE LOVE OF NATURE AND BEES, AND THE GREAT ENTHUSIASM FOR PHOTOGRAPHY IT TAKES TO CAPTURE THE PERFECT PORTRAIT OF BEES. IT ALL ADDS UP TO AN EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENTARY OPUS ABOUT THE LIFE OF THESE IMPORTANT POLLINATORS.

At first glance it may seem that bee photography is limited to only a very small number of beekeepers and nature lovers, but the reality is quite the opposite. It is true, however, that this type of photography is not very common, as it requires a variety of virtues and skills. It includes macro shots of bees in beehives or on blooming flowers, photos of honey plants and beekeepers at work, as well as landscape and panoramic images.

A STORY TOLD THROUGH A BEEKEEPER'S LENS

One of the best-known bee photographers in Slovenia is Franci Šivic. As a university graduate in forestry, he is not only a passionate beekeeper but foremost a nature lover who knows how to capture stunning images of bees. He took an interest in photography when he was a child.

While studying in Switzerland he bought his first camera and a book about the techniques of macro photography of small animals, plants and objects to get him started.

He says that in a few months he made good progress in learning the principles of close-up photography. The knowledge he gained proved to be essential, and helped him win numerous awards around the world for his photos of bees and beekeeping.

"Photography comes second only to beekeeping on my list of interests," adds Šivic. "Over the years I focused my lens on beekeeping: bees on flowers, the biology of bees, Slovenian beehives, diseases and enemies of bees, the history of apiculture, breeding of queen bees, transport to pastures, the past and present habitats of bees, honey plants, the lives of important Slovenian beekeepers and so forth."

He has met many interesting people, and has never stopped learning about photography and anything even remotely connected with bees. To get the perfect shot of a bee landing on a blossoming flower, he does not mind the cold or the heat. This, too, is part of his love for bees and photography. You often have to wait – wet, cold or sweaty – but in the end you are rewarded with an outstanding photo. Šivic has received many awards for his work. He is especially fond of the gold medal presented to him at the Apimondia congress in Montpellier, France, for his image of a blooming dandelion on the slope of Jamnik.

The photos taken by Šivic tell the stories of bees and his personal story as a beekeeper and nature enthusiast, but above all they are a testimony to his great dedication to these small creatures. He wants people to experience the largely unknown yet amazing world of bees. "I am pleased to see that my photos are published not only in Slovenian but also foreign magazines and books, as this is also my contribution to the promotion of Slovenia around the globe. I consider such promotion to be of great importance."



Apiculture photography takes a lot of patience.

Furthermore, Šivic, in his work as a tourist guide focused on beekeeping, believes that Slovenian apiculture has considerable potential for the growth of this particular kind of tourism.

"Beekeeping photography provides important teaching material for my lectures. For example in my PowerPoint presentations for beginner's courses in Slovenia or my lectures in neighbouring countries, most frequently in Italy," says Šivic.

He appreciates the fact that more and more beekeepers have taken up photography. This is also thanks to the popularity of digital photography, which made the hobby less costly. "I think that the number of young bee photographers will continue to rise, as they are increasingly more interested in taking photos of everything to do with bees."



Šivic's photo gallery in Šempas attracts many visitors.



Franci Šivic with a beard of bees.

Šivic works closely with the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, which has only recently closed this year's competition for the best beekeeping photo. It is their 13th contest and Šivic is a member of the jury. Competitors are classified according to themes depicted in their photos: bees and plants, the life of bees, beekeeping work and products, traditional or modern beehives and standing places for grazing bees, World Bee Day, and a theme added this year for the first time, the bee beard.



IN FOCUS

Apitherapeutic beehive in which you can relax surrounded by air from the hive and observe the bees at work.
Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info

Apitherapy symposiums are also held at the Apimondia International Apicultural Congress, which takes place every two years.

Since 2006 the Apimedita & Apiquality international congress has also been held every second year, dedicated to achievements in apitherapy. To date, the aforementioned congresses were held in Greece in 2006, in Italy in 2008, in Slovenia in 2010, in China in 2012, in Turkey in 2014, in Italy in 2016, and in Romania in 2018. Two congresses have been held in Slovenia, the 2003 Apimondia International Congress and the 2010 Apimedita & Apiquality, which shows that Slovenia's work and achievements in this area are recognised globally. Several apitherapy symposiums have also been held in Slovenia, and since 2007 they have been regularly conducted by the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association and the Maribor Beekeeping Association.

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association is in charge of a training programme for apitherapists, which has been implemented by the Maribor Beekeeping Association since 2014. More than 200 participants have concluded the apitherapist training to date, and 44 participants (the 6th generation) are currently undergoing training, to be concluded at the end of September 2020. Together with the Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association is drafting the Catalogue of Standards of Professional Knowledge and Skills required for an apitherapist. The association wishes that Slovenia will regulate apitherapy in a similar way as Germany and Romania.

Slovenian apitherapists collaborate with those in many other countries – in Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Russia, Austria and elsewhere.

PARTICULARITIES OF SLOVENIAN APITHERAPY

A particular feature of Slovenian apitherapy is treatment in a bee house. Slovenian bee houses are unique in the world.

APITHERAPY IN SLOVENIA

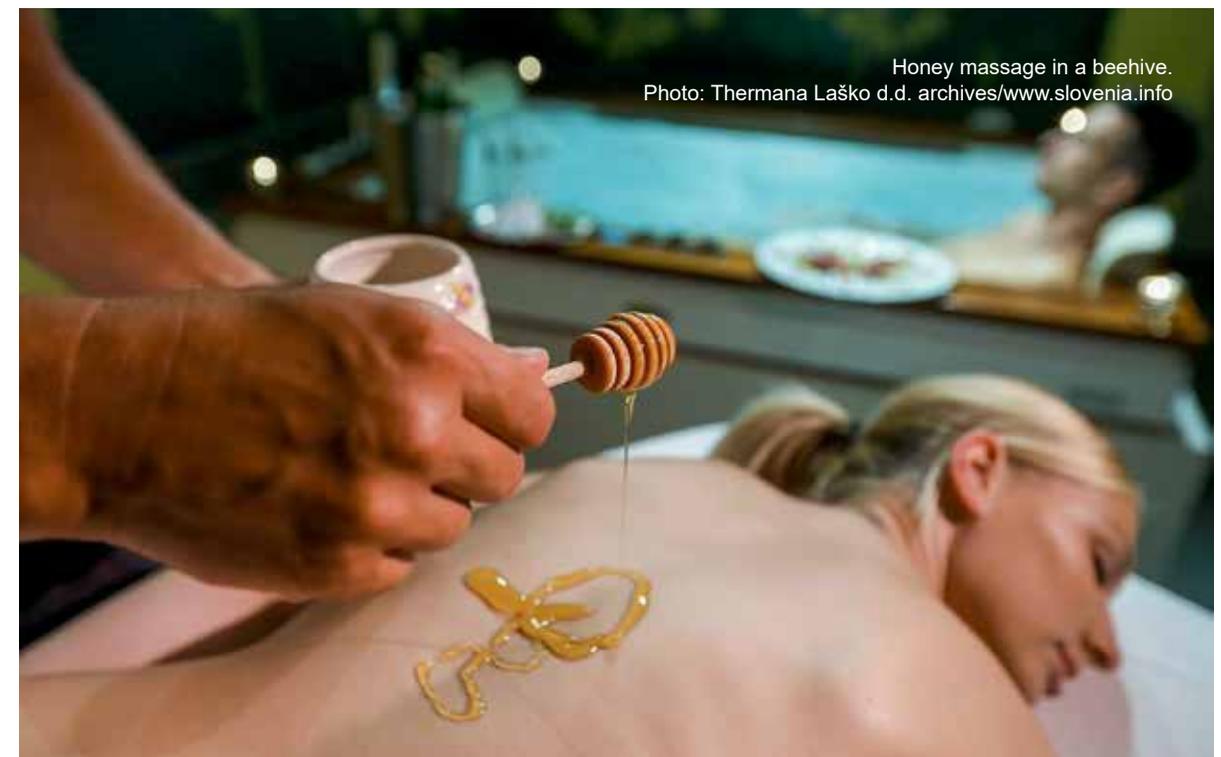
THE GREAT HEALING POWER OF THE LITTLE BEE

ANDREJA KANDOLF BOROVSŠAK

THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON FOR APITHERAPY IN SLOVENIA AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY WAS DR FILIP TERČ, A DOCTOR OF CZECH DESCENT PRACTISING IN MARIBOR. AS EARLY AS 1879 HE STARTED THE EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT OF RHEUMATIC DISEASES WITH BEE STINGS (APITOXIN). HE TRIED THIS THERAPY ON 660 PATIENTS AND IS CONSIDERED THE PIONEER OF MODERN APITHERAPY IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND BEEKEEPING.

Every year in March, an international apitherapy symposium is held in Passau in Germany. And in 2006 the Apitherapy Congress decided to declare 30 March, the

birthday of the pioneer of modern apitherapy, Dr Terč, International Apitherapy Day.



Honey massage in a beehive.
Photo: Thermana Laško d.d. archives/www.slovenia.info

They are something that is typically Slovenian, like hayracks and vineyard cottages.

Bee houses also used to be common in other parts of Europe, particularly in the German-speaking countries, but in the second half of the 19th century they started to disappear, due to so-called progress and the expansion of box hives. Now, apart from Slovenia, they can only be found in some German-speaking Swiss cantons. Even there, however, the Swiss bee houses are quite different from Slovenian ones. In regions where they do not have bee houses, special masks are used in apitherapy to allow patients to breathe beehive air. But in Slovenia a patient can simply lie down on a comfortable recliner or bed above beehives and relax without any mask being necessary. Beehive air has a favourable effect on our respiratory system, and the buzzing of bees relaxes us. Some apitherapists also offer honey massages and thermal beeswax therapy in their bee houses.

RESEARCH

Several important studies related to apitherapy have been conducted in Slovenia. The Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana carried out two studies of the antibacterial effects of Slovenian honey. The first (Kralj Kunčič et al., 2012) researched the possibility of treating open wounds with honey, the second (Podržaj, 2011) the possible antibacterial activity of honey on periodontal pathogenic bacteria in dental plaque. In the first study, Slovenian chestnut honey was found to be the most effective in laboratory tests. Following an extensive clinical trial, the sanitary products manufacturer Tosama put on the market two products under the name Vivamel: honey in a tube and alginate dressing with honey. Both products are now officially and successfully used in hospitals for treating wounds and burns.

The Division of Neurology at the Ljubljana University Medical Centre started a study on the incidence of Parkinson's disease in beekeepers. It has been noted that even in old age many beekeepers are still of clear mind, eager to learn and interested in any new developments in beekeeping at home and abroad.

Slovenian researchers have also conducted a clinical study on the effects of royal jelly on systemic inflammation, which gave very satisfactory results.



Straw baskets for bees and hotels for other pollinators.
Photo: Karl Vogrinčič/www.slovenia.info



IN FOCUS

The Carniolan honey bee is popular among beekeepers mainly because it is gentle-natured, hard-working, resilient, a good user of forest honeydew flow and a modest consumer of winter food. You will recognise it by its extremely long proboscis and brown-grey hairy thorax. Photo: Nea Culpna, Mankica Kranjec/www.slovenia.info

SLOVENIAN HONEY

A SYMBOL OF THE SLOVENIAN BEEKEEPING TRADITION

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

IN ADDITION TO BEING THE ORIGINAL HOME AREA OF THE CARNIOLAN HONEY BEE, SLOVENIA CAN ALSO PRIDE ITSELF ON HAVING SLOVENSKI MED – OR SLOVENIAN HONEY – WITH PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION, WHICH GUARANTEES CUSTOMERS THE PURCHASE OF NATURAL, GENUINE HONEY PRODUCED IN SLOVENIA.

Such honey must meet all the criteria laid down by the applicable national and European legislation and the Rules on the Use of the System of Slovenski med with protected Geographical Indication. The holder and owner of the Slovenski med protected geographical indication is the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, which, with their internal controls, take organised care of the quality and safety of the honey produced.

HONEY OF HIGH QUALITY AND KNOWN ORIGIN

Slovenski med is honey of the highest quality, the product of pristine nature, the gift of the Carniolan bee and the thousands of diverse plants that grow in Slovenia. Premium honey must ensure traceability, controlled production and assured quality. All this is made possible by the Slovenski med brand.

Traditional methods are used in making Slovenian honey with geographical indication.

In order to ensure its characteristics, it is necessary to follow special production processes, which means that at extraction the honey has to contain less than 18.6% water. It is liquefied and stored under such conditions that the HMF value does not exceed 15 mg/kg. It is also recommended that the honey is heated only up to 40°C and stored in a cool, dark place. Appropriate beekeeping technology helps to ensure that the quality of the honey on the shop shelves is practically the same as in the hive. Honey achieves its original quality in honeycombs, which means that beekeepers cannot subsequently improve it.

WITH A TASTE OF SLOVENIA

Slovenski med with protected geographical indication contains the pollen of plants growing in Slovenia, and thus may include the pollen of alien species growing in parks, agricultural plantations and botanical gardens in the country.

Try some Slovenian honey, which carries a protected geographical indication, and products with protected designation of origin such as Kočevje forest honey and Karst honey. Photo: Boris Pretnar





Slovenian beekeepers produce good quality and safe honey. Internal control is performed during processing and our beekeeping is performed in accordance with the guidelines in good hygiene practices in beekeeping, which are based on the principles of the HACCP system. Besides this Slovenian beekeepers offer a wide variety of bee products. Photo: ZTR Temeniške in Mirnske doline archives/www.slovenia.info

The production, extraction, storage and decanting of the honey is also carried out in Slovenia. In addition to the beekeeper's name, there is also the exact origin of the honey indicated on the packaging of Slovenian honey. Slovenski med of premium quality can be bought from beekeepers who are included in quality schemes.

The most common types of Slovenski med include acacia honey, spruce honey, forest honey, silver fir honey, chestnut honey, floral honey and linden honey.

Acacia honey is liquid, almost colourless or slightly yellow, mild in taste and lacking a distinct smell, which is why some people call it ladies' honey. It is regarded as an excellent spread for bread and an indispensable sweetener for tea, coffee and fruit cakes. This type of honey has a sedative quality and helps in treating insomnia, menopause problems and children not want-

ing to eat. Spruce honey, in its liquid state, is reddish brown and fairly dense. It has a resinous taste and is very rich in minerals. It goes well with dairy dishes and spreads and with various sauces. It has similar characteristics to silver fir honey. Forest honey comes in different shades of brown, as it is a natural blend of the types of honey obtainable from the forest. It is especially delicious on brown bread and in cottage cheese dishes, and is essential in many sauces and toppings. Since it is rich in minerals, especially iron, it is recommended for anaemia and for boosting the body's immune system. Silver fir honey is of a darker green-brown hue, is fairly dense and does not crystallise easily. This type of honey is almost odourless and has a very pleasant, mild taste. It goes perfectly with brown bread, milk drinks and dried fruits. It is rich in minerals and terpenes, which help to soften mucus in respiratory diseases. Consumers rate it highly, as it is considered an excellent remedy for coughs and bronchitis. Chestnut honey has a darker amber colour and a smell reminiscent of wormwood and is to a greater or lesser extent bitter. This bitterness stems from the pollen grains to be found in a large quantity in this type of honey. The vitamin content of chestnut honey is therefore higher than that of other types of honey. It is very often used in baking pastries. It has a beneficial effect on digestive and metabolic disorders, and also

a sedative value. Floral honey is gathered by bees from meadow flowers and other blooming plants. The colour of floral honey varies from light yellow shades to yellowish-brown. It crystallises sooner or later depending on the type of plant it is derived from, while the crystals are of different sizes for the same reason. Floral honey is delicious on bread or in pastries and is suitable for the preparation of light meat dishes and various beverages. It strengthens the heart and blood vessels. Linden honey, in its liquid state, is yellow with a greenish opal reflection. It has a pleasing scent of linden blossom. Its aroma is intense, very characteristic of menthol, linden blossom, herbs or fresh nuts. The crystallisation is usually slow and uneven, the crystals being relatively large. Linden honey is an excellent spread for bread, a widely enjoyed tea sweetener and is also used in baking pastries.



Slovenian beekeepers produce good quality and safe honey. Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info

Less common are cicada, dandelion, maple, cherry, buckwheat, sage and rapeseed honeys.

So the next time you're buying honey, look for Slovenski med on the label! Its full taste, energy value and beautiful colour will also give you a feeling of what Slovenia is like.



Slovenians on average consume 1.1 kilograms of honey per capita annually, so the fact that between 1,300 and 2,550 tonnes of honey are produced per year means that the country generally produces just enough to be self-sufficient. Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info



IN FOCUS

PLANTING HONEY PLANTS

LET US TAKE A WALK ALONG A BEE-FRIENDLY PATH

TOMAŽ SAMEC, FOOD SAFETY ADVISER AT THE PUBLIC ADVISORY SERVICE ON BEEKEEPING
ALEŠ BOZOVIČAR, FORECASTING AND WARNING SERVICE

WE ARE NOT MINDFUL ENOUGH OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS IN NATURE ALL AROUND US. OUR ANCESTORS KNEW THAT EVERYTHING YOU TAKE FROM NATURE YOU MUST SOMEDAY RETURN. IF YOU GIVE BACK, THE BALANCE IS MAINTAINED AND NATURE FILLS YOU WITH POSITIVE ENERGY.

In 2015, motivated by a love for beekeeping, care for the beekeeping tradition and the symbolic importance of beekeeping for the preservation of life, the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association invited all Slovenian municipalities to give a bee-friendly tree seedling to parents or a family as a gift at the birth of a child.
Photo: Rosana Rijavec/STA

However, in modern times intensive agriculture and monocultures are becoming widespread. More and more agricultural land is planted with monocultures, which are constantly under attack by pests and diseases. Our ancestors fought against this with natural methods, using crop rotation to avoid such troubles.



It is important to care for nature, it is important to respect bees, and it is certainly our responsibility to care for life on our planet.
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

We can also work together and with positive action help preserve the nature in which we live.

One way to contribute to the survival and conservation of bees and other pollinators is to plant native honey plants, as the flowers of these provide nectar and pollen, which are vital for pollinators. And then in the autumn these same plants will reward us with fruit we can enjoy until the next spring.

CHOOSING A HONEY PLANT

Much depends on where we intend to place our honey plants. In a flowerpot on a balcony, in a small garden, in a field or even a public area. There are a great many bee-friendly plants to choose from that are suitable for even a flowerpot, both herbs and aromatic plants. Examples are basil, thyme, lemon balm, short stem sunflowers, coneflowers and many more.

When we have a large area available, we can also decide to plant a bee-friendly tree, such as wild cherry, chestnut, maple or lime.

In a garden we can plant some shrubs – roses, for example – in addition to herbs and aromatic plants. This will make the garden a rich pasture for many pollinators. There are also many options for planting honey plants in a field, such as sunflowers, pumpkins, buckwheat, poppies, oilseed rape, heliotropes or clover.

RAISING AWARENESS AMONG CHILDREN

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association is aware of the importance of biodiversity and its benefits for plants and animals, including our bees and other pollinators.



Alpine flowers and herbs.
Photo: Bohinj Tourist Association archives

Therefore, it carries out various projects to show people how important bee-friendly plants are for nature. In 2015 it started distributing bee-friendly tree seedlings on various occasions and through various sources. But the greatest success in the long run will be if it manages to inspire our children. In view of this aim, the Association, together with the Slovenian Forest Service, distributed more than 1,000 lime and cherry seedlings to kindergartens and schools around Slovenia in 2017. In that way, children can help plant the tree, watch it grow and listen to the buzzing of the bees in its crown when it flowers. In collaboration with Semenarna Ljubljana, the Association distributes seeds of flowering plants, ideal for adorning gardens and windowsills. The Association has also been very successful in encouraging municipalities to give bee-friendly tree seedlings to parents of newborns. If a family has no place for a tree at their home, they can plant it in a public area, so that the tree grows together with the child. The project is supported and implemented by more than 50 municipalities, which give a bee-friendly tree to the parents of each newborn at various municipal events. This year, the planting of honey plants was upgraded to include roofs. Green roofs have many positive effects and, in addition to brightening our environment, they

are also a food source for bees and other pollinators. The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association planted such a garden on its roof this year. A green roof really makes a house look nice!

LET US ALL PLANT A HONEY PLANT

When planting a bee-friendly plant where we live, we provide pasture for bees and other pollinators and increase the variety of fruit and vegetables on our tables. Furthermore, we contribute to the preservation of nature for future generations.



Urban gardening.
Photo: chabybucko-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto



The flora in the mountains are very diverse.
Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik/www.slovenia.info



Planting honey plants enriches our environment.
Photo: yulkaplova-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto



IN FOCUS

Cocoa
Photo: Paolo Picciotto-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

A CURE FOR A BAD DAY

CHOCOLATE WITH PROPOLIS IS HEALTHIER THAN ANY OTHER CHOCOLATE

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

CHOCOLATE IS A SWEET WE FIND VERY DIFFICULT TO RESIST. EACH OF US HAS A FAVOURITE TYPE. SOME LIKE MILK CHOCOLATE, OTHERS DARK CHOCOLATE, SOME PREFER IT WHITE OR WITH WHOLE NUTS, FIGS, MARZIPAN, OR MORE. HOW CAN ONE RESIST CHOCOLATE WITH SO MANY CHOICES?



Honey
Photo: pederk-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

It is a comfort when we have had a difficult day, are stressed, ill, anxious, or have romantic or other problems. Chocolate is a remedy for everything.

CHOCOLATE WITH PROPOLIS

Chocolate with propolis is something very special, though. It combines the positive effects of two ingredients: cocoa and propolis.

Cocoa protects the nervous system, lowers resistance to insulin, decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease, strokes and certain cancers, while propolis has a positive effect on the human (and animal) organism and is a natural antibiotic. Propolis is a substance that is active against more than one hundred species of bacteria, fungi and viruses.

In apitherapy, chocolate with propolis is considered a very useful product that provides energy and disinfection, and is used locally both as a preventative and as a food supplement in the treatment of ulcers and digestive problems, acute and chronic respiratory diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, inflammations of the ureter, and prostate problems.

Propolis reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, strokes and some cancers, lowers blood pressure, slows the ageing process and improves one's mood.

RECIPE

for Chocolate with Propolis (for 1000 g)

300 g butter (cocoa, coconut, vegetable, animal – or a combination of two or more thereof)
 320 g cocoa powder (or in combination with cocoa paste or dark or milk chocolate)
 200 g caster sugar (or honey – flower or other – or a combination of sugar and honey)
 120 g milk powder (almond, rice or coconut milk or powder is recommended)
 20 g propolis (soft propolis, but use propolis powder when making chocolate for children)
 10 g lecithin
 20 g pollen (finely ground) for dusting

You'll need a stove, a laser thermometer, a pan, a spoon, and silicon moulds for chocolate.



A variety of fresh and dry cocoa beans from cocoa pods with chopped dark chocolate and cocoa powder.
 Photo: Natasha Breen-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

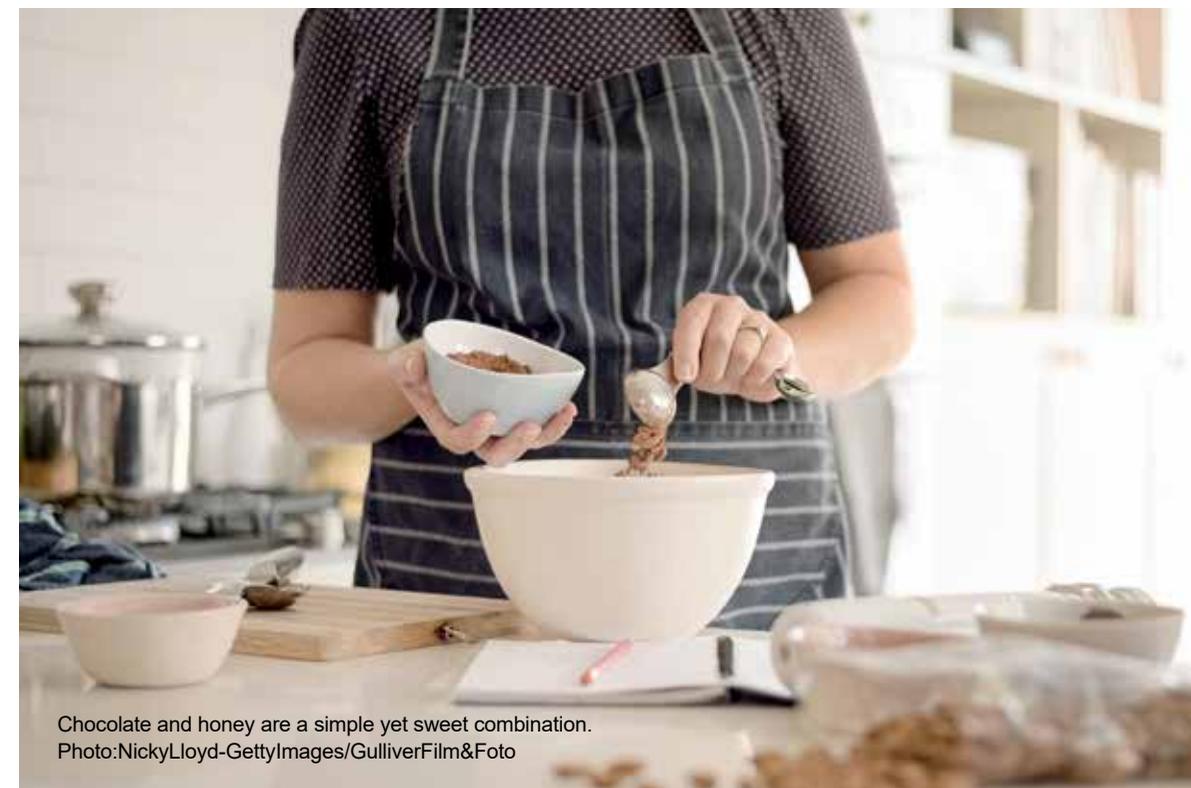
Preparation (about 30 minutes):

1. Place the cocoa and coconut butter in a pan and heat to 60°C and stir until melted. You may add soft propolis – previously heated to 60°C.
2. Mix all the powdery ingredients (cocoa, lecithin, propolis, sugar, milk powder, pollen) in a pan at room temperature.
3. Heat them to 31°C and stir until completely smooth (if your lecithin is liquid, add it now) and continue to stir for at least 5 minutes.
4. When the mass is to your taste and smooth and dense but still flowing, pour it into the silicon moulds and dust with pollen.
5. Allow the chocolate to cool for several hours until it hardens.

A CURE THAT PUTS A SMILE ON YOUR FACE
 A healthy daily dose of this chocolate is 50 g for adults and 25 g for children.

This is not a type of chocolate one finds in a corner store; it is a medicine, so the dosage must be measured with the utmost care and any allergies taken into consideration.

Apiterapevtski nasveti (Apitherapy Advice), a book by Vlado Pušnik, is a good source for tips, recipes, recommendations and guidance. We recommend you read it, and encourage you to learn how to make chocolate with propolis. It's the ultimate comfort food, and is a guilt-free indulgence.



Chocolate and honey are a simple yet sweet combination.
 Photo: NickyLloyd-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

IN FOCUS

DRAŽGOŠE HAND-CRAFTED HONEY COOKIES

DRAŽGOŠKI KRUHEK

ANKA PELJHAN

The basic shape of the pastry is additionally decorated with flower motifs (e.g. edelweiss, carnation, orchid, ears of corn, small leaves, and tendrils). Traditional forms and motifs are used in the making of models for small bread imprinting. The most common model shapes are the heart, rhombus and circle, decorated with varied flora (e.g. flowers, ears of corn, grapevine, carnation), Christian (e.g. Christ's monogram IHS, Holy Virgin Mary, different saints, angels), and other figurative motifs (e.g. cockerel, fish, baby, etc.). Photo: Darinka Megušar/www.slovenia.info

Originally from Škofja Loka region, the art of making this delicious ornament has been best preserved in Poljanska and Selška valleys. Back in the old days, these cookies were made as gifts during religious and other holidays, as a symbol of love, respect and friendship. The design was altered according to the specific purpose, yet the most popular forms were a heart, circle, half-circle and star. By using two varieties of flour, the makers would achieve a more colourful effect on their hand-crafted products.

Making small honey bread is a traditional handicraft characteristic of the Škofja Loka area and its surroundings – the Selca Valley (especially Železniki and Dražgoše), and to a lesser extent also the Poljane Valley. Photo: UKOM archives

Ingredients:

50 dag (1 fl oz) honey
1 kg (2.25 lb) wheat flour
1 tsp ground cloves
1 tsp ground cinnamon
0.5 dl (16 fl oz) water

Preparation:

1. Mix the ingredients into a smooth dough and leave for 30 minutes.
2. Roll the dough 0.5 mm thick, cut and decorate the ornaments.
3. Bake at 165° C for 10 min.
4. Coat with honey while still warm.
5. If different flours are being used, use one to make the base and another for the ornaments, to achieve a colourful effect.

GREEN CORNER



Logarska Valley
Photo: Darinka Mladenovič/www.slovenia.info

MEMORANDUM

GREEN SLOVENIA HAS BEEN THE VISION OF SLOVENIA'S DEVELOPMENT FOR 100 YEARS

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

SLOVENIA IS A MOSAIC OF PRISTINE NATURE, LUXURIOUS BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY. SLOVENIANS HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE BEAUTY OF NATURE MUST BE PROTECTED. THIS YEAR MARKS 100 YEARS SINCE THE INITIATIVE FOR NATIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION WAS LAUNCHED – THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEMORANDUM.

In January 1920, thirteen distinguished individuals of various professions, namely experts from the Nature Conservation Section with the Ljubljana Museum Society, presented the Memorandum. This was an initiative urging the Provincial Government of Slovenia, the main Slovenian authority in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, to follow the example of other countries and launch a protection policy for Slovenian nature.

In their initiative they laid down four requests, or rather proposals. The first was to establish alpine, upland (woody) and marsh conservation parks by following the model of similar parks in other countries.

The second referred to the protection of animal and plant species typical for Slovenia. The third required that the cave world with its fauna and flora be protected and monitored, and that only representatives of science be allowed access. They also perceived the importance of making people aware that nature conservation is an important value. All of their proposals became guidelines for

the laws and regulations that went on to govern this area. Slovenians have taken on a social commitment, both at the national and EU levels, to protect natural heritage of national and global importance. The protection of nature is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, and extensive legislation was adopted and enforced as part of joining the EU.

Today, 56.9% of the sea and land of the Republic of Slovenia is covered by nature protection measures; in the European Union, Slovenia ranks first by the share of the country's Natura 2000 area (over 37%). We are successful in knowledge exchange and intersectoral cooperation, in which nature conservationists, biologists, foresters, farmers, water managers and other relevant stakeholders take part.

ALPINE, UPLAND AND MARSH CONSERVATION PARKS

Triglav National Park was established to protect a part of the Alps. The Triglav Lakes Valley has been protected continually since 1961 as part of Triglav National Park, and also as the Triglav Lakes Valley natural monument. It is a symbol of the protection of Slovenian nature.



Triglav Lakes Valley
Photo: Aleš Zdešar/www.slovenia.info



Planika (*Leontopodium alpinum*) - a beautiful flower found in the Slovenian Alps.
Photo: Aljoša Rehar/STA



An Alpine ibex
Photo: Aleš Zdešar/www.slovenia.info



Postojna Cave's olm.
Photo: Postojna Cave archives

Today, the protection of nature in Slovenia is provided within one national park, three regional parks, 49 landscape parks, 56 nature reserves and 1,164 natural monuments, which together comprise 13% of the Slovenian territory.

Since 2011, the country's natural parks have united in the Community of Parks of Slovenia.

Fifteen protected area operators are bound by a common interest in preserving nature and keeping the balance between effective nature protection and cultural heritage involving various activities. The members of the Community of Parks are: Triglav National Park, Kozjansko Regional Park, Notranjska Regional Park, Škocjan Caves Regional Park, Debeli rtič Landscape Park, Goričko Landscape Park, Kolpa Landscape Park, Ljubljana Marshes Landscape Park, Logar Valley Landscape Park, Pivka Intermittent Lakes Landscape Park, Radensko polje Landscape Park, Sečovelje Salt Pans Landscape Park, Strunjan Landscape Park, Tivoli, Rožnik and Šišenski hrib Landscape Park, Škocjanski Zatok Nature Reserve, Ormoške lagune Nature Reserve.

PROTECTED PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

There are about 19,000 animal and 4,000 plant species in Slovenia, of which more than 2,000 species are on the red lists of endangered species.

Among others, the protection covers almost all species of amphibians, reptiles, and birds, all bats, all large carnivores, cave beetles, all kinds of beetles and butterflies above the forest line. More than 200 animal and more than 20 plant species are protected within the Natura 2000 network.

UNDERGROUND CAVES

All underground caves have been state-owned since 2004. As regards the rules of entry, they are divided into open type with free entry, open type with controlled entry and closed type caves, in which, due to their sensitivity and vulnerability, entry is allowed



Škocjan Caves
Photo: Jošt Gantar/www.slovenia.info

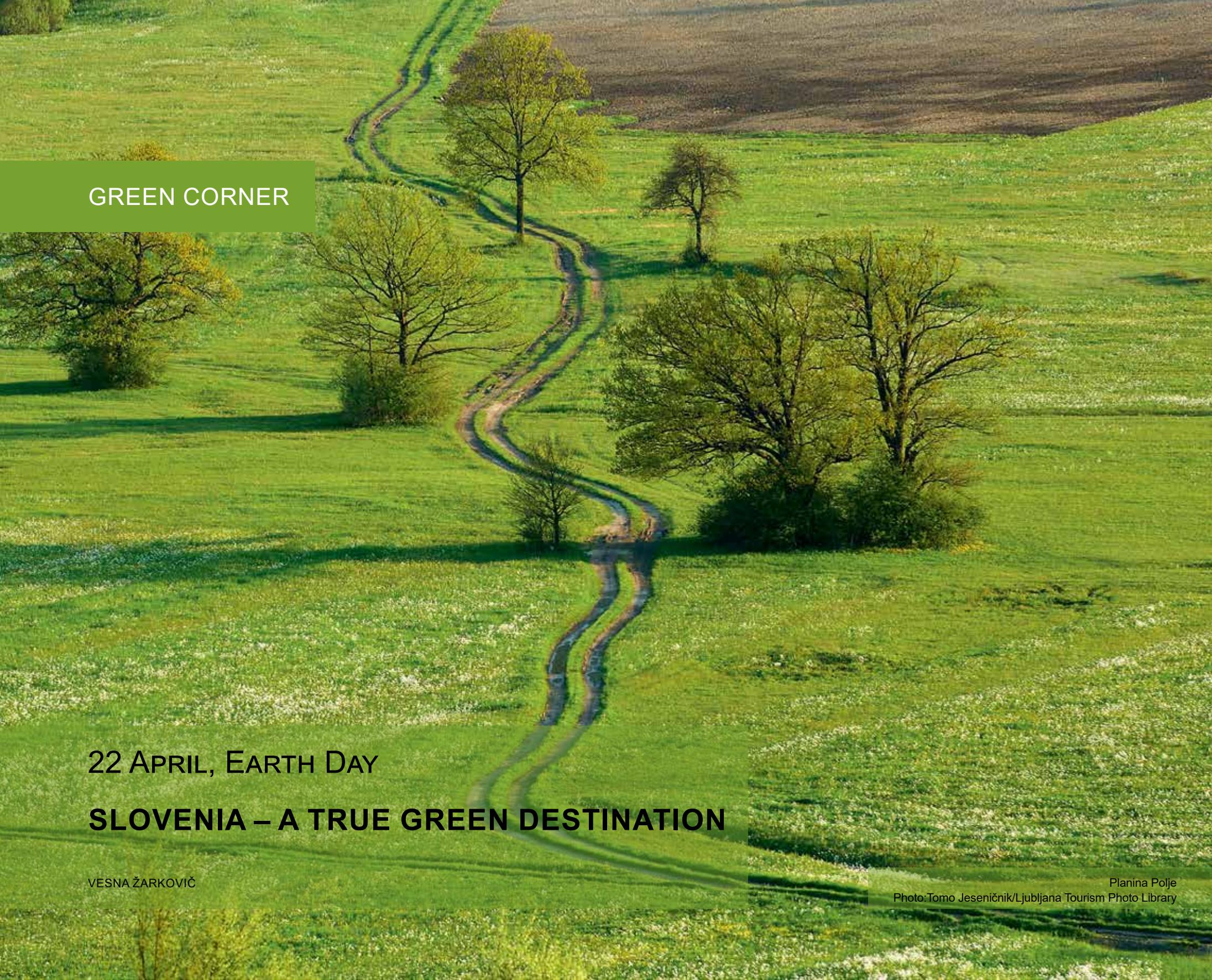
only exceptionally for scientific purposes with permission and under professional supervision. All species of cave beetles are protected, and the law prohibits hunting, killing and taking away animals that live in caves or occasionally stay therein.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE STATE AND ITS PEOPLE

Nature is a value, so it is only right that it is respected. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and protected areas operators are in charge of it at the state and legislative levels. A range of activities is carried out by non-governmental organisations engaged in various fields of nature protection, and a number of activities are also carried out within LIFE projects.

Even on an individual level, Slovenians are increasingly aware that the cleanliness and richness of nature should not be taken for granted, and that nature must be respected.

Yale University ranked Slovenia as the fifth greenest country in the world, while National Geographic ranked it as the first. Slovenia also ranks fourth in the Legatum Prosperity Index for the environmental sector. This year, thanks to its sustainable development efforts in tourism under the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism managed by the Slovenian Tourist Board, Slovenia is among the winners of the 2020 Sustainable Top 100 Destination Awards.



GREEN CORNER

22 APRIL, EARTH DAY

SLOVENIA – A TRUE GREEN DESTINATION

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

Planina Polje

Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library

“Be proud of your country and together make sure that five years from now you will be proud of what it has achieved in preserving its character and its green, clean, authentic offer for travellers,” said the President of the Green Destinations international organisation, Albert Salman, to Slovenians a few years ago in Ljubljana. Slovenia was the first country to fulfil the international Green Destinations criteria and become the first green destination of the world. Several places in Slovenia have also been declared green destinations.

In 2016 Slovenia was rated the fifth greenest country by Yale University. Among 180 countries, Slovenia ranked fifth, following Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Denmark, with regard to the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) calculated by Yale University. The results were presented at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. The EPI is calculated according to the country's activities in the care for human health and ecosystems. Within these two areas the index evaluates the achievements of a country in ten categories on the basis of more than 20 indicators.

SLOVENIA PRESENTING ITS BEST AT THE DUBAI EXPO

The World Expo to be probably held from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 in Dubai is an opportunity for countries to present themselves with the best they have to offer.

The title of Slovenia's exhibit will be Slovenia – Green Smart Experience. The brand is not only aimed at tourism but also at entrepreneurship, technology, sports, science, culture and digital content.

These will be shown in the Smart Green Room, where emphasis will be put on wood, water and the green environment. Slovenia aims to present itself to visitors as a nation of inventors.

24 NEW DESTINATIONS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS WITH THE SLOVENIA GREEN LABEL

At last year's celebration of the Green Day of Slovenian Tourism promoting sustainable tourism practices, 24 new destinations and service providers were awarded the Slovenia Green label. There are now 88 holders of this label

under the Slovenian green tourism scheme and the Slovenian Tourist Board continues to pursue the aim of a 100% green Slovenia.

Slovenia is known around the world as a true green destination. The Slovenian green tourism scheme is a certification scheme integrating efforts for the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia under the umbrella Slovenia Green label.

It provides tools for destinations and service providers to assess the current state and improve sustainable operation, while the awarded labels can help tourists who want to reduce their adverse impact on the environment make decisions.



Park Tivoli in Ljubljana.
Photo: Dunja Wedam/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library

The top five posts on Instagram usually include the images of Lake Bled, Ljubljana, Bohinj and the Soča River, while videos invite visitors to Slovenia as a destination for active, urban and wellness experiences.

LJUBLJANA PLANTS TREES EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF AN EPIDEMIC

The City of Ljubljana is carrying out various activities to improve the environment even in the middle of the new coronavirus epidemic. One of these activities is tree planting. At the initiative of residents, two new avenues of trees have been planted in Bežigrad and Nove Fužine and the row of horse chestnuts at the Plečnik Market in the city centre is being revitalised. In its press release the City of Ljubljana reminded the public that every spring, between World Water Day on 22 March and Earth Day on 22 April, the City of Ljubljana runs the For a More Beautiful Ljubljana spring campaign during which it, together with its residents, carries out many activities to keep the city clean and tidy.



Triglav National Park
Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

SLOVENIA ON THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL AS A LAND OF HEALTHY WATERS

Last year, a four-month campaign was launched on the National Geographic channel for the promotion of Slovenia as a land of healthy waters. With this campaign, which ran on television programmes in Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, the Slovenian Tourist Board aimed to raise awareness of Slovenia as a green and sustainable destination where visitors can experience exceptional natural beauty, including unspoiled water resources and healing waters.

All the holders of the Slovenia Green Destination quality brand are among the world's 100 most sustainable destinations.

In addition to Slovenia, the greatest number of top sustainable destinations are in the Netherlands, Croatia, Portugal, Canada, Chile, China, Spain and Great Britain.



The farm has two full-time employees.
Photo: www.slovenia.info archives

GREEN CORNER

KATJA TEMNIK

**WE ALL ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE WORLD WE LIVE IN**

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

KATJA TEMNIK IS A FORMER CAPTAIN OF SLOVENIA'S BASKETBALL TEAM. SPENDING THREE YEARS IN SPAIN AND ANOTHER THREE IN ITALY AS A PLAYER, SHE NEVER IMAGINED THAT HER NEW CAREER AFTER RETURNING TO SLOVENIA WOULD BE IN AGRICULTURE. NOW SHE IS A SUCCESSFUL HERBALIST AND BIODYNAMIC FARMER, WHICH LED TO HER RECEIVING THE 2019 INNOVATIVE FARMER TITLE.

The Union of Slovene Youth in Rural Areas, in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry (KGZS), organised the 12th all-Slovenian Innovative Young Farmer selection in 2019.

The expert committee selected Igor Paldauf from Vučja vas, while Katja Temnik from Žiče was the winner of the online poll.

Katja is very proud of this achievement: "Getting the most votes at the Innovative Young Farmer competition organised by the KGZS together with the Union of Slovene Youth in Rural Areas is an extraordinary and unexpected recognition. Although it may not always seem so, Slovenians have proven their high appreciation of organic farming and farmers who, through their work, show a respectful attitude not only toward their crops, but also toward our traditions and connections to the land, nature and environment. The award is a great incentive, and proof that we are on the right track."

MAJNIKA HERB GARDEN

The garden dates back to 2004, when her mother Majda retired and began planting herbs and growing sprouts, became a local tourist guide and started using biodynamic farming methods. She did all this out of a joy and interest in this kind of cooperation with nature. She then passed her expertise onto her daughter.

In Katja's words: "My mother is an extraordinary treasure chest of working and living experience. A chemical technology engineer by profession, she worked in the development departments of large companies and as a secondary school teacher for the last few years of her career, as well as a local tourist guide. She is very knowledgeable and all of this is invaluable for our business, because she taught us how to create and develop processes. For example, she has developed a method of organic sprout production that I believe is the best in the world. I hope we get a chance to verify it scientifically. It is true that a lot of manual labour is required, but this – the active participation and interest of the person who works, who creates – is one of the essential factors for the quality of the food produced. Healthy food can only be made only by people, for people; machines and factories cannot do it."

Katja and her mother want to set up their farm so that it will include, in addition to basic production and processing, permanent or temporary accommodation for people of different ages and interests.

The aim is to create a quality living and working environment – the former for pensioners and people living on the farm and commuting to work, the latter for workers on the farm.

This community would be as self-sufficient as possible, meaning that most of the food and energy would be produced on the farm, and one of the members would take care of the cooking. Anyone would be able to take part in the farm work, in the cultivation of herbs and vegetables. Such a community is based on relationships that show respect for each resident as an individual with their own needs and abilities, while all the residents contribute to the quality of life and work on the farm.

In addition, the farm plans to offer accommodation for persons on either shorter or longer vacations.

They will offer the opportunity to stay in the peaceful haven of a biodynamic farm with high biodiversity and top quality food, as well as various training courses, seminars and therapies offered by trained professionals (e.g. healing eurhythmic, bioresonance, exercises for cardiac patients, etc.).

THE FARM WOULD ALSO LIKE TO WELCOME VULNERABLE GROUPS

It will be a farm with added value, showing visitors that even in these modern, extremely fast-paced and stressful times, it is possible to live differently: living and working in harmony with nature, enjoying good-quality food that gives us the power to develop all our potential, and benefiting the wider community by understanding one another and knowing people's realistic potential to contribute to the whole.



Katja with her mother.
Photo: Personal archives

Although Katja is aware that this will be a significant challenge in terms of organisation as well as finance, she is convinced that it is worth a try.

As she says, “Each new crisis or state of emergency makes it clearer that we need to transform our way of life in order to survive as individuals and humanity. I am not an advocate of revolutions but of gradual transformation in the spirit of Friedrich Schiller – replacing the wheel while the cart moves. This is a great challenge, but one we are capable of dealing with.”

Their first customers were family members and friends, work colleagues and acquaintances, many of whom

have remained regulars. Katja says that things have changed in recent years: “They are now mostly our regular customers who have made our products (kitchen herbal salt, herbal teas and sprouts) part of their everyday diets. These customers are well aware that quality food is very important for their health and development. And our range of customers grows precisely because of the spread of this awareness in society.”

She is certain that agriculture can be a way to make a living in Slovenia: “Definitely. However, some conditions have to be met. Firstly, it should be a way of life, not a conventional job, because a farm requires your full dedication. Secondly, the farm must be multifunctional, which means that in addition to production and processing, it sells finished products and provides services, which generate the highest added value. And thirdly, as a farmer you should constantly develop, enhance your understanding of the processes in nature, have a respectful attitude and interest in people, animals and plants – because nature will appreciate it and reward you with an abundance of crops.”

SOCIAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE SHOW US THE NEW WAY

The challenges ahead will not run out because Katja is very ambitious: “We want to develop the production and processing of Slovenian organic herbs, to create a self-sufficient biodynamic farm for cohabitation and rest, to join Slovenian organic herb growers in a cooperative and to develop the concept of (small) herb farms that can generate high added value and offer good jobs in rural areas, to work as mentors in transferring knowledge among Slovenian farmers. There are many possibilities to explore. Above all, I want to develop a biodynamic farming style that, in my own experience, has invaluable potential for the agriculture of the future, in times of great climate and social change that have already begun, and reveal the limitations of the deeply ingrained practices of conventional farming, and general narrow-minded unrestrained hunger for profit.”



Katja dreams big and has goals.
Photo: Miha Matavž Photo& Video - Dan Briški, Rogla-Pohorje



Their best-known products are the kitchen herbal salts Majnika and Majnika Premium, sprouts, herbs and herbal teas (Domači čaj Majnika, Za lepe sanje, Krehec, 5 limonc, Korenjak).
Photo: Personal archives

KAAITA SLIPPERS HOME IS WHERE THE SLIPPERS ARE

DANILO GOLOB

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING WE DO WHEN WE GET HOME? WE TAKE OFF OUR SHOES AND PUT ON OUR SLIPPERS. HOWEVER, VISITORS MAY FIND IT ODD WHEN THEY ARE ASKED TO TAKE OFF THEIR SHOES AND PUT ON SLIPPERS – DID THEY DO SOMETHING WRONG? DEAR GUESTS, DO NOT FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE. YOU ARE VERY WELCOME. WEARING SLIPPERS AT HOME IS JUST ONE OF OUR CULTURAL HABITS THAT HAS BEEN PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

Photo: Katherine Heath

Plus, it really feels nice and cosy when you put on warm and soft slippers. Particularly if they are the very special Kaaita slippers.

Kaaita has been around for 16 years, and its history is a true testament to the company's success in pursuing a green and sustainable vision.

The company favours handmade products, sustainable materials and techniques, as well as fair business relations.

Responsibility towards the environment and the people involved in our work are two important aims we pursue, notes Alenka Repič, the founder and creative director of Kaaita, a "creative manufacturing" firms. "The driving force behind the company's development is innovation in terms of a sustainable organisational structure, supply chain, and particularly in terms of the range of products offered to help the most ambitious hotels in Europe find sustainable solutions to their problems", Ms Repič adds.

WHY SLIPPERS IN PARTICULAR?

About a year ago, the company produced more than twenty different products. Today, their focus has shifted exclusively towards the manufacturing of sustainable hotel slippers.

"It was high time that the market was offered a better alternative to cheap, white, non-eco-friendly slippers", says director Repič.

"The idea for developing slippers may indeed have originated from the habit of wearing them in Slovenia. I associate slippers with the warmth of home. Interestingly, we designed them as a New Year's gift with the accompanying greeting card saying: 'Home is where the slippers are'. We set to work very seriously on this

project, and it took us one year to develop the product. The designer borrowed wooden feet from a shoemaker and designed a slipper in a shape that perfectly fits the foot. We have also substantially upgraded the classic model of slippers in terms of environmentally friendly improvements. Our dedication to developing the product is still paying off today," notes Ms Repič, with some pride.

Alenka Repič, the founder and creative director of Kaaita.
Photo: Manca Jevšček





Kaaita Felt Plus Light slippers. The soles have silicon prints to prevent slippage. Photo: Manca Jevšček

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Kaaita products are made of Slovenian materials. They are manufactured by a team of Slovenian craftsmen and artisans who, to the best of their abilities, contribute to the continuous improvement of the same product. At first glance, Kaaita slippers may appear to have remained the same since 2009.

Yet their composition and material quality are being constantly improved, as well as their manufacturing method, the quality of the non-slip print on the soles, and the packaging that is no longer simply waste but can be re-used.

Indeed, another important goal of the company is to minimise waste whenever possible. “We have been given strong support in terms of creativity and the recycling of waste slippers. Our buyers are sustainably minded hotels that are more than willing to work with us and support the initiatives such as ‘Throw away is so uncool. Enter take away.’ Or, for example, the recycling of used slippers in their local environment”, Ms Repič points out.

Kaaita slippers are made of felt produced from recycled plastic bottles. The production process follows the principles of simplicity and minimalism: one pair of slippers is sewn from one piece of fabric and one type of material, which makes recycling much easier, minimises the number of seams as well as the number of different sizes. The designers have made sure that the upper part of the slipper fits the foot well, so that the sizes M and XL cover most people’s needs. “The shape is very special, a recognisable form that represents our company. Rather than modern women’s or men’s slippers, I deliberately wanted a design for unisex, timeless slippers,” Ms Repič explains. Needless to say, Kaaita slippers come with plastic-free packaging. A simple paper band is enough to keep each pair together; the slippers are also sent in packaging that

is just a slipper bag, or an envelope serving as a gift package.

The Kaaita Lux slippers are enhanced by the addition of a natural fragrance. The sole is made with an extra layer of fabric and a handful of lavender flowers that are sewn into the ergonomic part, which feels like a nice foot massage.

“The idea to add lavender was born out of my enthusiasm for its fragrance and the challenge of what to do with the large quantities grown by my mother-in-law near Ankaran, and my father who grows lavender under the hot sea sun on the Croatian coast. To meet demand we have also successfully grown lavender in central Slovenia for the second year in a row now,” adds the creative director, who never seems to run out of ideas.

WITH KAAITA SLIPPERS ACROSS THE WORLD

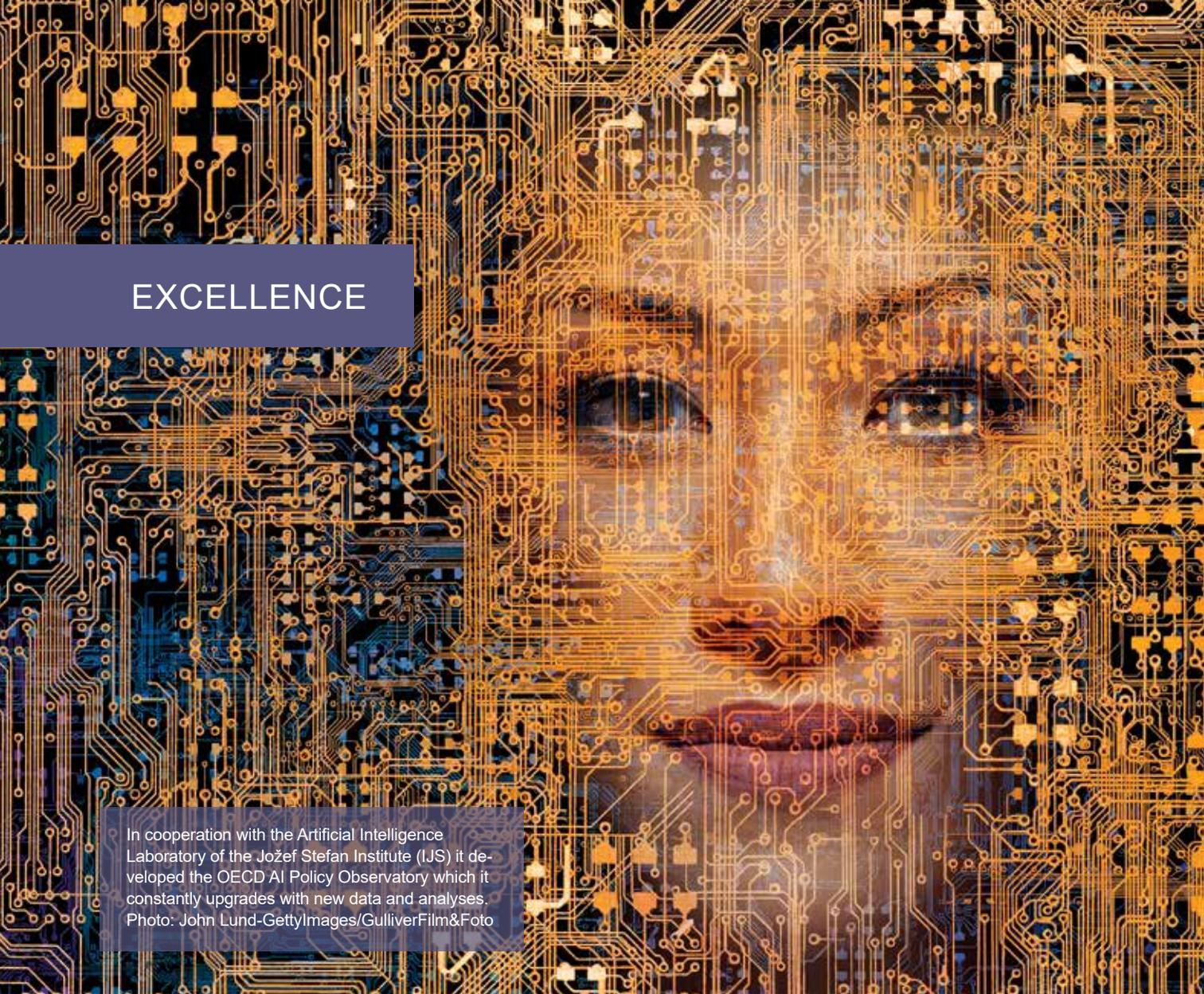
Kaaita slippers are mainly sold to hotel customers across Europe.

Individual buyers can also choose their favourite pair of Kaaita Slippers to purchase online. The slippers are sold all over the world, particularly in Great Britain, with many loyal customers who appreciate the intriguing design, sustainable orientation and comfort of Kaaita products.

What are Kaaita’s further plans and aspirations? “To grow our business to a size that will still be able to provide personal and effective support to our customers in offering their guests sustainable hotel slippers. From that point on, we will continue to grow, but in terms of quality, rather than size,” says Alenka Repič, a successful entrepreneur in a very Slovenian business.



Kaaita slippers are gentle on the foot and respectful of the environment. Photo: Katherine Heath



EXCELLENCE

In cooperation with the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the Jožef Stefan Institute (IJS) it developed the OECD AI Policy Observatory which it constantly upgrades with new data and analyses. Photo: John Lund-GettyImages/GulliverFilm&Foto

IRCAI

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN FULL SWING

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

ONE MONTH AFTER ITS ESTABLISHMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (IRCAI), WHICH OPERATES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO, IS FULLY OPERATIONAL.

The Centre has already achieved global recognition, it cooperates closely with UNESCO and is receiving invitations for cooperation from the OECD, WHO and other international organisations.

In addition to the setting up of programme units for the centre, the establishment of international advisory and management committees across different thematic units and the establishment of the relevant IRCAI international infrastructure, the centre is already involved in a number of activities and projects. In cooperation with the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI), it developed the OECD AI Policy Observatory which it constantly upgrades with new data and analyses. Information on this tool is available at <https://coronaviruswatch.ircai.org/>.

MONITORING ARTICLES ON THE CORONAVIRUS BY MEANS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The IRCAI is also actively cooperating in the development of an observatory and analytical environment for the monitoring of the spread of the new coronavirus. The entire analytical environment used by the centre was developed within a week. The service, currently available at <https://coronaviruswatch.ircai.org/> is being constantly upgraded with additional data sources, analyses and projections. The portal has already generated a lot of interest and the IRCAI received an invitation from UNESCO a few days ago to participate in the building of a global service for similar crisis situations.

They have also been contacted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Marko Grobelnik, researcher at the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and Slovenia's digital ambassador: "We obtain data from the World Health Organization (WHO),

which are globally refreshed with a certain delay. We use WHO data in order to avoid any errors. This results, of course, in a certain delay. Typically, each country has their own data on total infections, deaths and recoveries before the WHO, which collects these data once per day and publishes them on its website from which we then source them."

ETHICAL CRITERIA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Within the X5Gon project, financed from the Horizon 2020 Programme and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, the IRCAI has developed a global platform for collecting, processing and structuring open access educational resources (OER) into a unique global library with open access for all.

The IRCAI is participating in the preparation of a draft text of a recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence and in the system of mechanisms for accreditation and certification of AI solutions (OECD).

The process is formally led by Slovenia through the Council of Europe and is one of the most important policies that will assess the adequacy of AI tools and mechanisms.

In line with the centre's programme and idea of building a network of similar centres around the world that will form the backbone of an international network of independent research centres in the field of artificial intelligence, the IRCAI continues its intensive talks with two governments that were first to express interest in setting up such centres, i.e. the Government of the UAE and the Government of Ghana. The centre is receiving numerous invitations for participation in international forums.

FORBES: SLOVENES PIONEERING THE WORLD IN AI

Forbes magazine has recently published an article praising Slovenia's science, pointing out that the country was developing IA technology and understanding its strategic importance as far back as in the early 1970s. Already at that time the necessity of adapting the educational system to AI technologies was put forward; however, research on neural networks, data modelling and statistical analysis was prioritised.

Ivan Bratko, quoted as the father of artificial intelligence in Slovenia by Forbes, said that after gaining independence, there was a strong ambition in Slovenia's scientific sphere to make Slovenia the centre of artificial intelligence development and research.

The establishment of the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI) under the auspices of UNESCO is confirmation of the excellent work carried out in the field of AI.

SLOVENIA'S GOOD PRACTICES FOR ENHANCING THE GLOBAL DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

The Forbes article points out the useful practices developed by the Jožef Stefan Institute and currently used in Slovenia. One is the concept of the "digital twin"— a technology for decision making and modelling for enterprises, already used by the Qlektor company. A project of the "global digital twin" is being considered that would enable the monitoring and the understanding of activities globally.

Forbes also highlights the AI Observatory, developed by the Jožef Stefan Institute for the OECD, which enables the monitoring of the evolution of worldwide AI developments.

It also mentions the EventRegistry System enabling global real-time or time-delay media monitoring. EventRegistry is a spin off of the JSI and is now an independent company.



STATE

The Slovenian flag
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

STATEHOOD DAY THE BIRTH OF INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA

DANILA GOLOB

ON STATEHOOD DAY, CELEBRATED ON 25 JUNE, WE WILL PROUDLY REMEMBER HOW SLOVENIA BECAME INDEPENDENT 29 YEARS AGO. ON THE EVE OF THE HOLIDAY, THE SLOVENIAN FLAG WILL FLY IN TRG REPUBLIKE (REPUBLIC SQUARE) IN LJUBLJANA AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ZDRAVLJICA (A TOAST) WILL RING OUT.



Raising the flag of the Republic of Slovenia and inspecting a guard of honour in Trg republike.
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

On 25 June 1991 Slovenia formally became independent. The Declaration on the Independence of Slovenia and the Basic Constitutional Charter on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Slovenia were adopted on that day, and solemnly declared on the next day, 26 June, in Trg republike in Ljubljana. Two days later, on 27 June, the Slovenian War of Independence began with an attack by the Yugoslav People's Army, in which the new country defended its sovereignty.

We also show our respect for the country through respect for its symbols. The coat of arms, flag and national anthem of the Republic of Slovenia are symbols that indicate affiliation with the country. The develop-

ment and appearance of Slovenian national symbols were influenced in particular by historical circumstances: the struggle of Slovenians for independence and for a geographically united Slovenia, the aspiration to preserve the Slovenian language and the fight for fundamental political and human rights.

The foundations for Slovenia's national symbols were laid in the 19th century, in the spirit of national awakening.



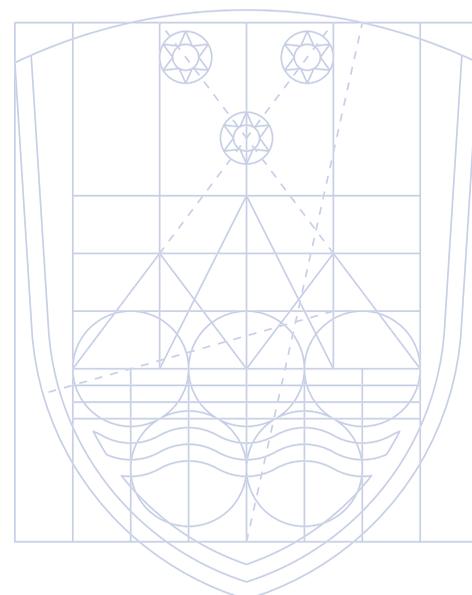
7 April marks Slovenian Flag Day.

COAT OF ARMS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Slovenia lies at the crossroads of the Alpine, Mediterranean, Pannonian and Dinaric regions.

The diversity in such a small area is also reflected in the symbolism of the Slovenian coat-of-arms.

The coat-of-arms of Slovenia has the form of a shield. The centre of the shield depicts Mount Triglav, as a white emblem on a blue background, with two wavy lines below it symbolising the sea and rivers, and three six-point stars arranged above it in the shape of a point-down triangle. The shield has a red border on the left and right sides, so that it has all three colours which also make up the flag. The lower part of the coat-of-arms symbolises the Slovenian landscape, which encompasses Alpine peaks in the northwest, the Primorska region in the south and the Pannonian Plain in the east. The coat-of-arms was designed by Academy-trained sculptor Marko Pogačnik, who describes it as a 'cosmogram' of the Republic of Slovenia.



SLOVENIAN FLAG

The national flag became established as a symbol of Slovenian identity back in the 19th century. The Slovenians determined the colours (white, blue and red) based on those featured in the coat of arms of the province of Carniola, and submitted them for the approval of the then ruling Austrian administration in Vienna, where the colours were accepted. The first national flag was hung by Slovenian students in Vienna in March 1848 during a period of revolutionary tumult.

In Ljubljana, the flag was first raised on the building of the Zlata riba inn at Wolfova ulica 8 on 7 April 1848 by the patriotic student Lovro Toman and his like-minded colleagues.

With the appearance of the Slovenian tricolour flag, he was responding to the display of the German flag on the tower of Ljubljana Castle. In memory of this act we commemorate 7 April as the day of the Slovenian flag. The national flag was finally formalised on 24 June 1991 by the Slovenian National Assembly. Immediately before Slovenia gained independence, the new Slovenian national flag replaced the old flag of the Republic.

SLOVENIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

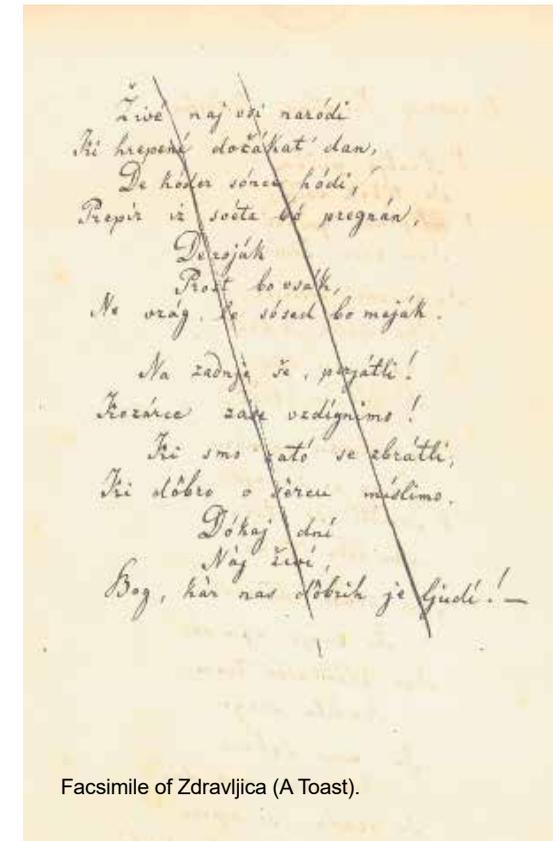
Slovenia acquired its official national anthem, Zdravljica, only in 1990, just a few months before the December plebiscite on independence. The text is the seventh stanza of Zdravljica (A Toast) by Slovenia's greatest and most celebrated poet, France Prešeren, and the melody of the anthem is from the choral work of the same name by Stanko Premrl.

Zdravljica was written in 1844 during the Spring of Nations in Europe, in the context of the United Slovenia movement, which was very active in the cultural and political spheres of national awakening.

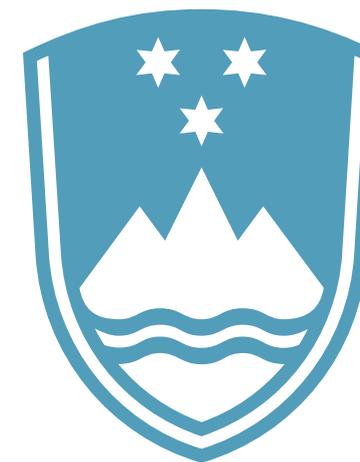
The poem is about the co-existence of nations and is a toast to all good-hearted people.

Zdravljica stands out among European anthems in a positive way. Its message goes beyond nationalism: in particular in the seventh, penultimate, stanza ("May all peoples thrive and prosper") the poem reaches its culmination in praising the values of peace, tolerance and cooperation among nations.

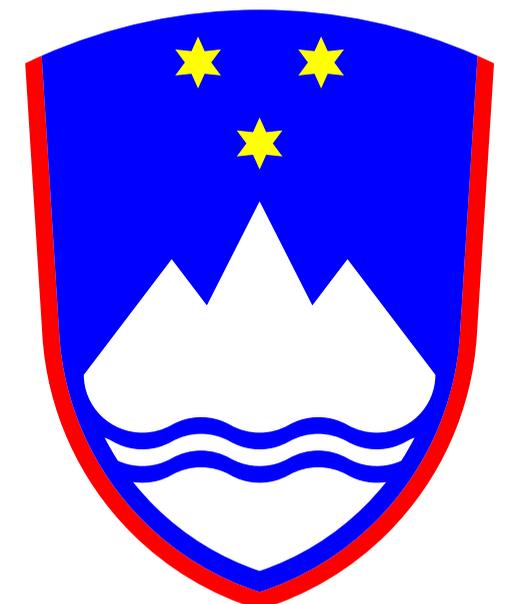
In March 2020, the European Commission awarded the European Heritage Label to Prešeren's Zdravljica.



Facsimile of Zdravljica (A Toast).



The coat-of-arms is designed in accordance with a set standard of geometry and colour. The gold stars recall one of the colours of the historical flag of the province of Carniola.





An illustrated version of A Toast by Damijan Stepančič.
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

STATE

A TOAST

30 YEARS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT

ANDREJA KRIŽ

THE LAST DAYS OF MARCH MARK THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE THE THEN ASSEMBLY OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA ADOPTED THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT.

This was when the seventh stanza of Zdravljica (A Toast) by France Prešeren, set to a piece of music of the same name composed by Stanko Premrl, became the Slovenian national anthem. The journey to the final decision was long. According to historian Božo Repe, Zdravljica is one of the few non-militant national anthems.

To date, the Slovenian people have lived in four great supranational formations: the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (or the German Empire for short), the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Yugoslavia and now the European Union. In each of these periods, we had a different anthem.

But only in 1990 did we get our own official Slovenian anthem, Zdravljica.

Prešeren's Zdravljica is in essence a toast and is one of the few non-militant anthems that were influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and liberation, and combines the national idea with internationalism.

The Slovenian anthem rejects wars and disputes and emphasises ties and friendship among nations.

Although the poem was written as far back as 1844, it has proven to be topical time and again. Particularly so in the current crisis, when humanism is again tested, at both the national and international levels.

Zdravljica stands out among the European anthems, in a positive way. Its message transcends nationalism, and in particular in the stanza before last ("God's blessing on all nations") the poem reaches a culmination in praising the values of peace, tolerance and cooperation among nations.

THE SLOVENIAN POEM ZDRAVLJICA RECEIVES THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL

Zdravljica, a poem written in the 1840s by Slovenia's France Prešeren to celebrate peace, freedom and fraternity, has been awarded the European Heritage Label.

The European Commission conferred the honour on ten pieces of heritage which testify to European ideals, values, history and integration.

The seventh stanza of Zdravljica, or A Toast in English, set to music by Stanko Premrl in 1905, was chosen to be Slovenia's national anthem in March 1990.

The winners of the European Heritage Label were chosen by a jury from among entries sent in by EU member states, the European Commission said.

In addition to cultural heritage, a total of 48 sites have so far been given the title, two of which in Slovenia: the WWII Franja Partisan Hospital and the Church of the Holy Spirit on Javorc.



A Toast.
Photo: Anže Malovrh/STA



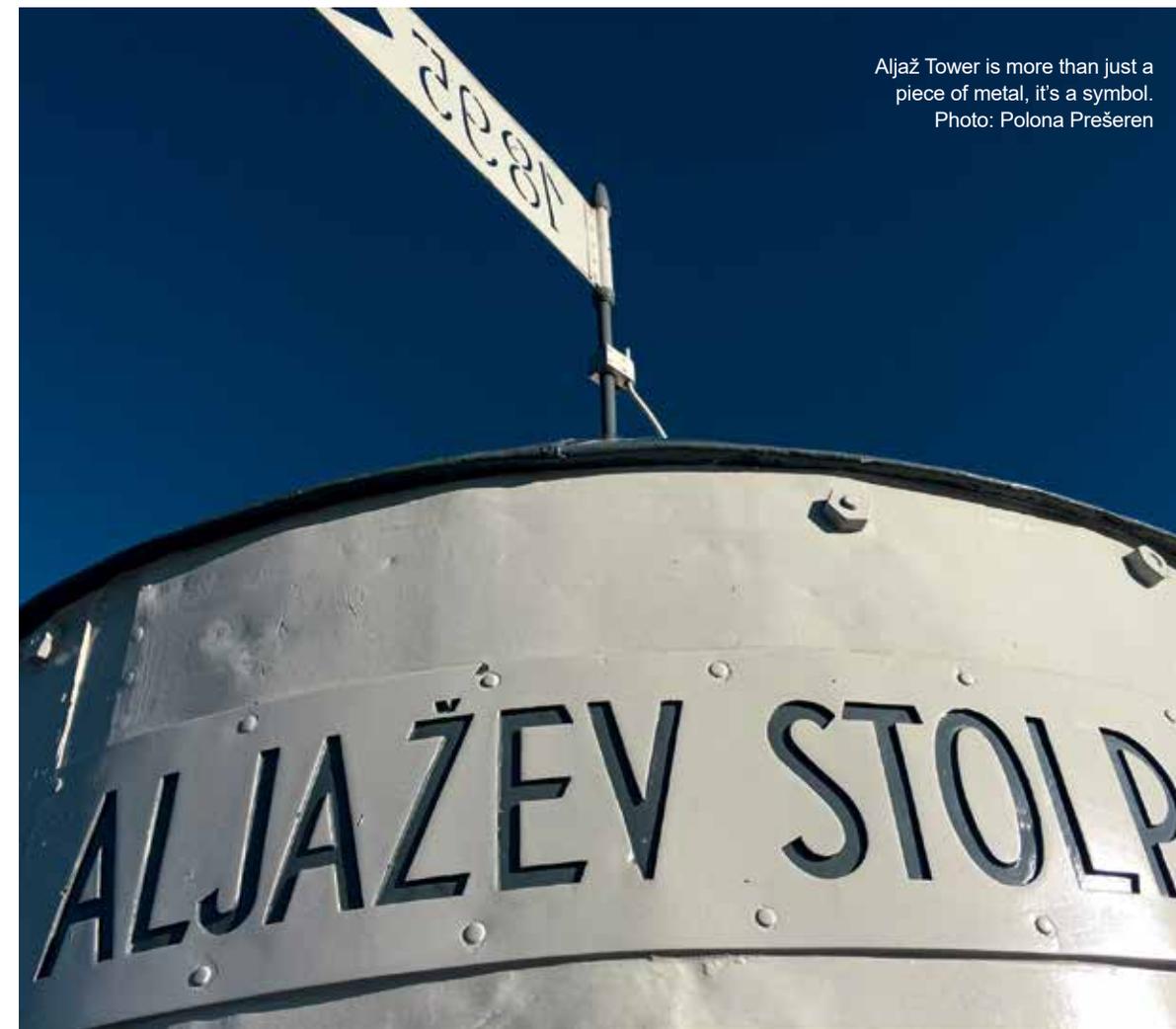
STATE

Numerous mountaineers and weekend climbers visit Triglav each year.
Photo: Polona Prešeren

THE ALJAŽ TOWER METAL WITH A SOUL

POLONA PREŠEREN

AUGUST THIS YEAR WILL MARK 125 YEARS SINCE THE ALJAŽ TOWER WAS ERECTED ATOP THE SUMMIT OF TRIGLAV AT 2864 M ABOVE SEA LEVEL. DURING ALL THESE YEARS, THE TOWER HAS DEFIANTLY WITHSTOOD THE OFTEN CRUEL WEATHER CONDITIONS, WARS AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST A GREAT NUMBER OF MOUNTAINEERS WHOSE GOAL WAS TO CONQUER THE HIGHEST PEAK IN SLOVENIA. OF ONE THING WE CAN BE SURE: THIS METAL HAS A SOUL!



Aljaž Tower is more than just a piece of metal, it's a symbol.
Photo: Polona Prešeren

Slovenia's highest peak, located in the heart of the Julian Alps, is a mountain that has become a symbol of the Slovenian identity.

Indeed, it is commonly believed that you are not a true Slovenian unless you have climbed Mount Triglav.

As an enthusiastic mountaineer, Triglav was thus on my bucket list for a long time. I have always had a deep respect for the mountain, because an ascent of Triglav is

not easy. It takes approximately 6 hours to walk from the starting point at the foot of the mountain to the top; in particular, the last part is extremely challenging, regardless of the route you choose – either the one protected by steel ropes or the unprotected option. I decided to climb Triglav when I was in truly good physical condition. I was also equipped with the appropriate mountaineering gear – a helmet and a self-protection (via ferrata) kit. The feeling after you reach the summit is extraordinary, and taking a photo in front of the Aljaž Tower is a must. Moreover, the sight of the tower certainly does not disappoint.

THE TOWER ATOP TRIGLAV

The tower at the top of Triglav was erected by Jakob Aljaž, a priest and a great patriot from the village of Dovje near Mojstrana, who wanted to resist the Germanisation of the

Slovenian people in the 19th century. At that time, the Slovenian territory still belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy.

As Triglav was considered a symbol of the Slovenian identity even then, the dedicated priest wanted to preserve it as such.

He purchased the summit of Triglav for one Austro-Hungarian gulden with the purpose of erecting a tower there. He also designed the plan for the tower, which was then constructed by his friend Anton Belec, a tinsmith from the village of Šentvid near Ljubljana. Belec built the tower in six parts made from thick galvanised steel sheets. The parts, each weighing from 15 to 20 kilogrammes, were carried to the summit of Triglav by six porters within one week. Unlike the land on which it stood, the tower was rather expensive, and Aljaž paid 300 Austro-Hungarian guildens for its manufacture and erection at the top of Triglav. Two original inscriptions are still visible on the tower today – the year and the name of the tower – ‘Aljažev stolp’, which was the first inscription in the Slovenian language on Mount Triglav and in its surrounding area. The grand opening took place on 7 August 1895.

The erection of the tower at the top of Triglav also had some legal consequences for Aljaž – some German organisations filed a legal dispute with the goal of demolishing the structure. After the matter was settled, Aljaž

gave the tower to the Alpine Society of Slovenia, which took on the responsibility of managing it. This important society continued to maintain the tower even after 1948, when its name was changed to the Ljubljana Matična Alpine Society and the Alpine Association of Slovenia was established. Today, the Aljaž Tower is a cultural monument of national significance.

SPECIAL STORIES

There are many stories related to the history of the Aljaž Tower. At first, the Germans wanted to pull the tower down, but they did not succeed. After World War I, a real “painting war” took place. First, the Slovenians painted the tower in their national colours, then the Italians in theirs. After World War II, the tower was painted red, and later it was painted white as part of a film set. The results of an X-ray analysis show that the Aljaž Tower has been covered with at least a dozen different layers of colour.

Two years ago, for the first time in its history, the Aljaž Tower left Mount Triglav as it needed urgent maintenance and restoration work. The tower was transported by a military helicopter to the valley, where it was renovated by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and returned to Triglav.

Until its renovation the tower was in rather poor condition, as it had never been repaired before. The restorers established that damage had not only occurred on the tower’s surface, but also to its structure. Experts repaired it according to the latest conservation standards in the controlled environment of a restoration workshop. There, the metal parts were restored and the damage to the tower repaired. In the meantime, while the tower was in the workshop, another group of experts prepared the ground and the anchor point for the tower to be set up again on the top of Mount Triglav.

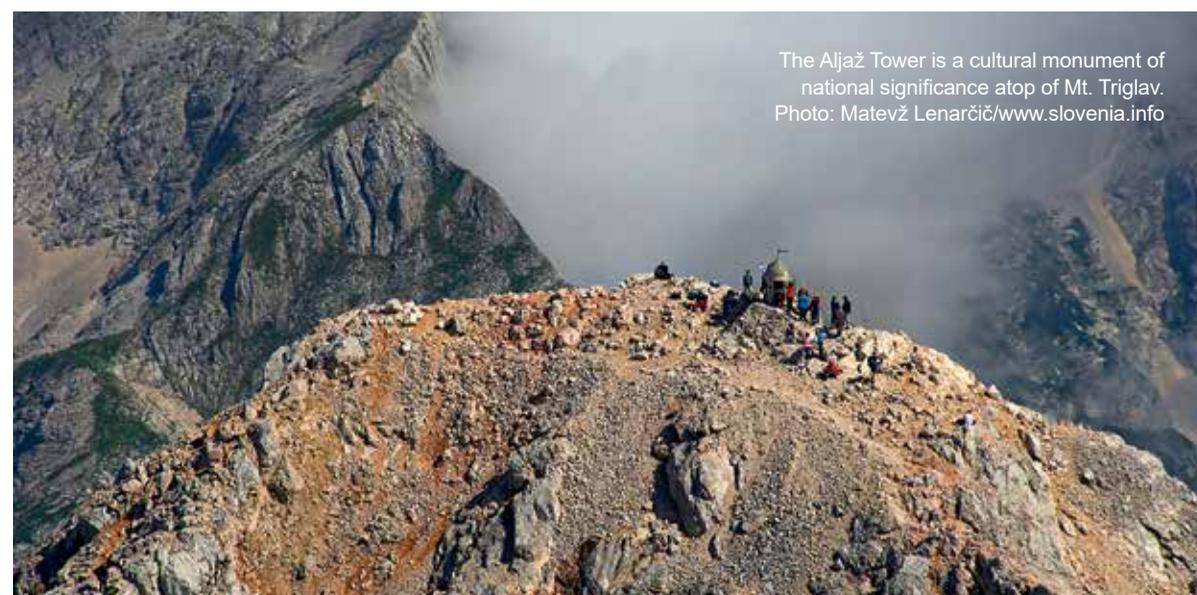
The symbolic significance of the Aljaž Tower differs from that of Triglav itself, which as the highest mountain in Slovenia watches over the country.

The Aljaž Tower represents the significance of standing on top of Mount Triglav and lets us know that this is our Slovenian soul.

And yes, when you stand there, you can feel its power. This tower, this metal structure, really has a soul.



Two years ago the Aljaž Tower went through careful renovation. Photo: Aljoša Rehar/STA



The Aljaž Tower is a cultural monument of national significance atop of Mt. Triglav. Photo: Matevž Lenarčič/www.slovenia.info



It left Mt. Triglav for the first time since 1895. Photo: Tinkara Zupan/STA



CULTURE

TWO NOMINATIONS FOR ENTRY ON
THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST
**PLEČNIK'S LJUBLJANA AND LIPIZZANER
HORSE BREEDING TRADITIONS**

DANILO GOLOB

IN SLOVENIA, WE HAVE A TRUE TREASURE TROVE OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THAT WE CAN BE VERY PROUD OF. ONE OF MAJOR TREASURES WE WANT TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT IS OUR CAPITAL CITY LJUBLJANA, WHICH IS ADORNED WITH THE WORKS OF ARCHITECT JOŽE PLEČNIK. THE LIPIZZANER HORSES WITH THEIR LONG TRADITION ALSO HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR CULTURE.

The Lipizzaner horse is characterised by a long life, excellent endurance, good and strong character, learning skills and athletic ability.
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

The natural and cultural features on the UNESCO World Heritage List include more than 1,000 sites, of which four are located in Slovenia (two natural and two cultural), thus ranking Slovenia at the very top of the protection of treasures of humanity relative to its population. Slovenia's exceptional features are also on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. At present, there are four of these.

LJUBLJANA, THE TIMELESS, HUMAN CAPITAL DESIGNED BY JOŽE PLEČNIK

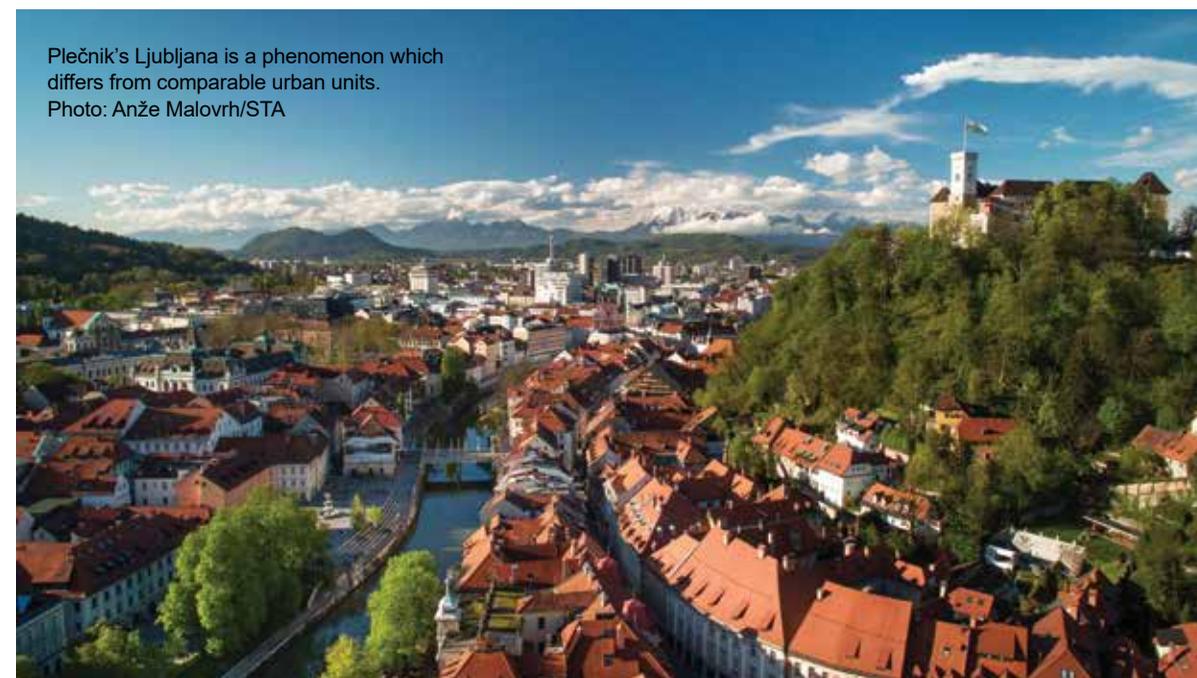
"Plečnik's Ljubljana" is one of the most important comprehensive works of art of the 20th century.

The famous architect Jože Plečnik retained the centuries-old character of the space in his transformation of Ljubljana.

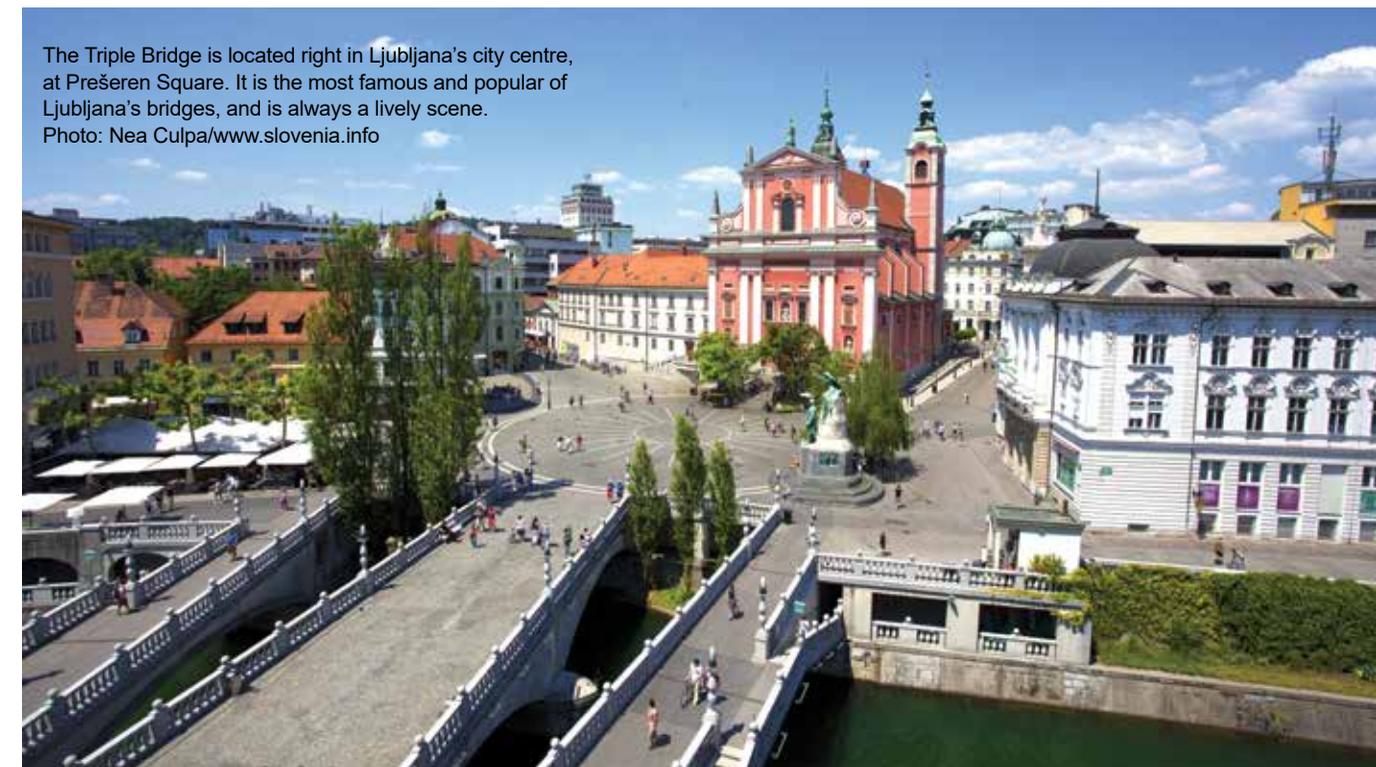
With each of his additions to the city Plečnik respected the historical context and topographic features, and

enriched the space with new motifs, buildings and functions. He reinterpreted the city centre and developed it into a series of public spaces (squares, parks, streets, promenades, bridges) and buildings. Through his work, Plečnik primarily linked individual points into the architectural features and arranged larger spatial units. Even today's developments take place in his spirit. The city's development of its embankments and streets is based on a related approach, responding to the changing needs of modern society.

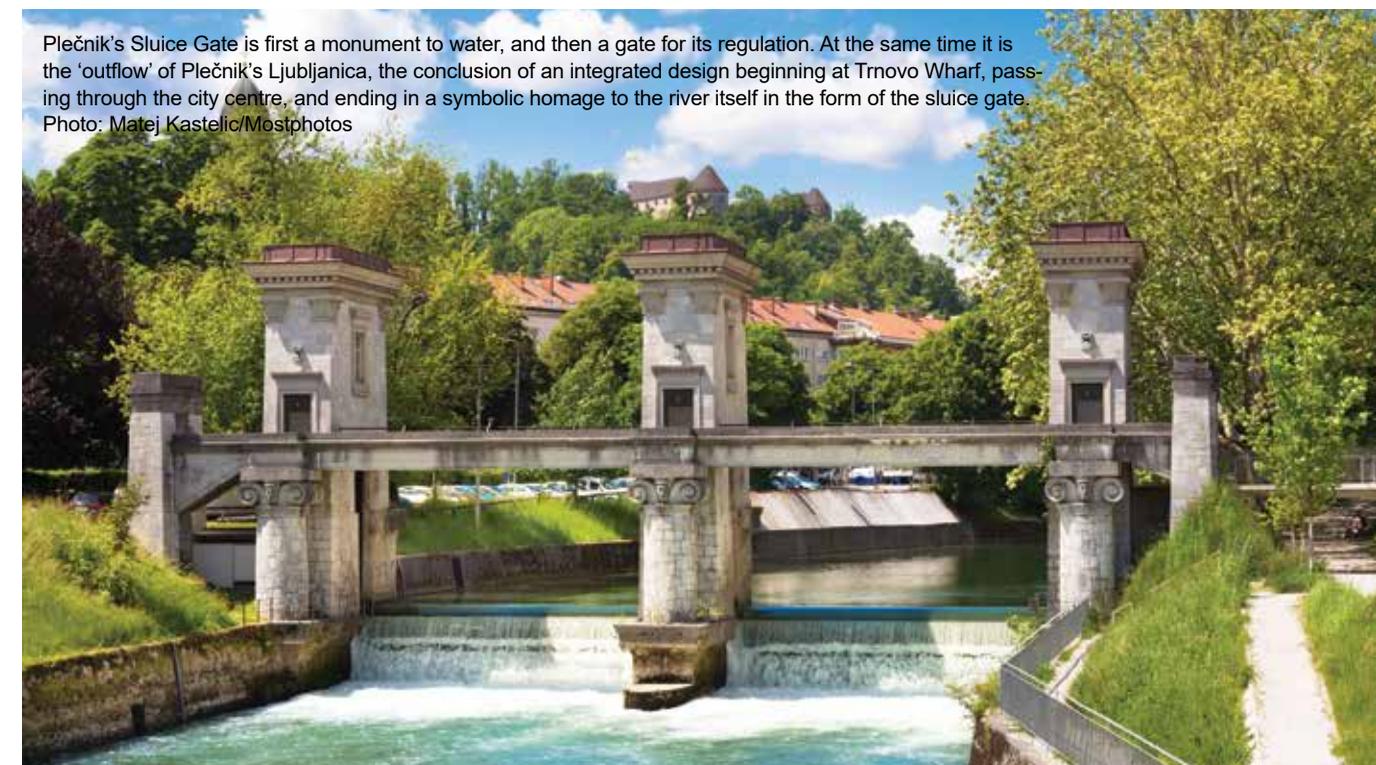
The Working Group appointed for the preparation of the Nomination File for the inclusion of Plečnik's architectural and urban development works on the UNESCO World Heritage List has produced a file containing 760 pages. The Working Group, headed by the Ministry of Culture and coordinated by the Museum for Architecture and Design, cooperated with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, the City of Ljubljana, the Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana and other external associates. The nomination focuses on broader spatial arrangements and highlights the contemporary valuation of space, its functions and quality as well as the importance for its inhabitants. The nomination of Ljubljana as a timeless capital on a human scale designed by Jože Plečnik is an important step towards the international appreciation and recognition of the architect's creativity.



Plečnik's Ljubljana is a phenomenon which differs from comparable urban units.
Photo: Anže Malovrh/STA



The Triple Bridge is located right in Ljubljana's city centre, at Prešeren Square. It is the most famous and popular of Ljubljana's bridges, and is always a lively scene.
Photo: Nea Culpa/www.slovenia.info



Plečnik's Sluice Gate is first a monument to water, and then a gate for its regulation. At the same time it is the 'outflow' of Plečnik's Ljubljanica, the conclusion of an integrated design beginning at Trnovo Wharf, passing through the city centre, and ending in a symbolic homage to the river itself in the form of the sluice gate.
Photo: Matej Kastelic/Mostphotos

MULTINATIONAL NOMINATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF “LIPIZZANER HORSE BREEDING TRADITIONS”

A wide range of cultural and social practices, knowledge and skills, oral traditions, rituals, celebrations and equestrian sports related to Lipizzaner horse breeding encouraged Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to jointly nominate “Lipizzaner Horse Breeding Traditions” for inclusion on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. A request for the multinational nomination was submitted by Slovenia on behalf of the eight participating countries.

The representatives of state stud farms and private breeders, experts in intangible heritage, cultural experts, researchers and local communities participated in drafting the nomination. The process was coordinated by the Ministry of Culture.

The primary purpose of rearing the famous Lipizzaner horses is linked to classical dressage and equestrian sports, with which all participating countries identify.

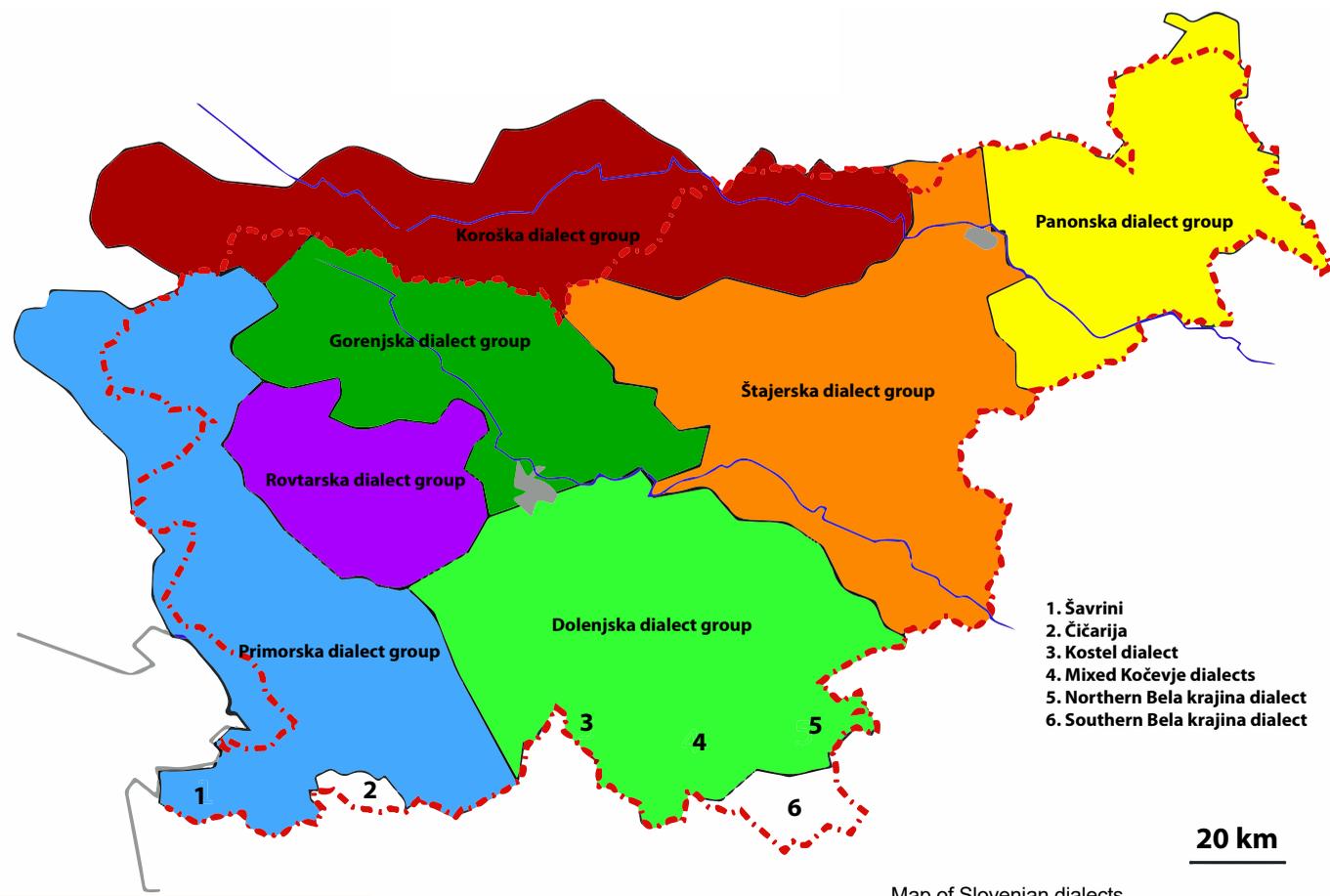
In some countries the purpose was also extended to the daily lives of village communities, where Lipizzaner were working horses. Such horses appear at numerous events and celebrations, and have had an important symbolic role in all eight countries for centuries. The increasing visibility of Lipizzaner horses is linked to sustainable tourism and equine therapy. An important aspect of all these activities is the special relationship between humans and horses.

The joint nomination from eight European countries recognises the value of this common European heritage and places it in an international context.

It emphasises the common protection of the heritage of “Lipizzaner Horse Breeding Traditions” across linguistic and national borders, thus supporting mutual dialogue and understanding.



Years to decades of training and knowledge transfer are necessary to obtain the skills and knowledge of a Lipizzaner horse breeder.
Photo: Lipica Stud Farm archives



Map of Slovenian dialects

20 km

CULTURE

EVERY VILLAGE HAS ITS OWN VOICE

DIALECTS ENRICH THE SLOVENIAN LANGUAGE

DANILO GOLOB

SLOVENIA IS A SMALL COUNTRY, BUT REMARKABLY DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC. ITS COLOURFULNESS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE SLOVENIAN LANGUAGE, WHICH PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS MANY DIALECTS. THE DIALECTS REFLECT THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF INDIVIDUAL SLOVENIAN REGIONS, THEIR CULTURE, AS WELL AS LINGUISTIC AND ETHNOGRAPHIC HERITAGE.

The Slovenian language is the most divided in terms of dialects among the Slavic languages, having around 50 dialects that are classified into seven dialect groups: the Gorenjska, Dolenjska, Štajerska, Panonska, Koroška, Primorska and Rovtarska dialect groups.

DEVELOPMENT OF DIALECTS

The Freising Manuscripts dating from 972 to 1039, which are considered to be the oldest known preserved records in Slovenian, do not yet display any dialectal features. However, the Rateče/Celovec Manuscript from the 14th century and the Stična Manuscript from the 15th century contain words that prove that the language was already fragmented into dialects at that time.

The dialectal diversity of Slovenian is due to geographical, political, historical and social factors.

The emergence of dialects was influenced by the settlement of the territory of present-day Slovenia, geographical barriers and transport routes, which often ran through the middle of the dialect group and led to larger cities. In the past, people did not often cross high mountains and hills, nor did they migrate to cities on a daily basis and have regular contact with the inhabitants of other areas, but remained in their parishes and formed language communities different from their neighbouring ones. Thus, the Slovenian language began to differentiate and it acquired new dialects. Triglav and the Karavanke Mountains with the hilly surroundings in the west of Slovenia separate the Koroška, Gorenjska, Rovtarska and Primorska dia-

lects. The Ljubljansko barje separates the Gorenjska dialect from the Dolenjska dialect, and the Sava river represents a landmark between the Štajerska and Dolenjska dialects.

The languages of the neighbouring countries of Hungary, Italy, Austria and Croatia had a great influence on Slovenian dialects.

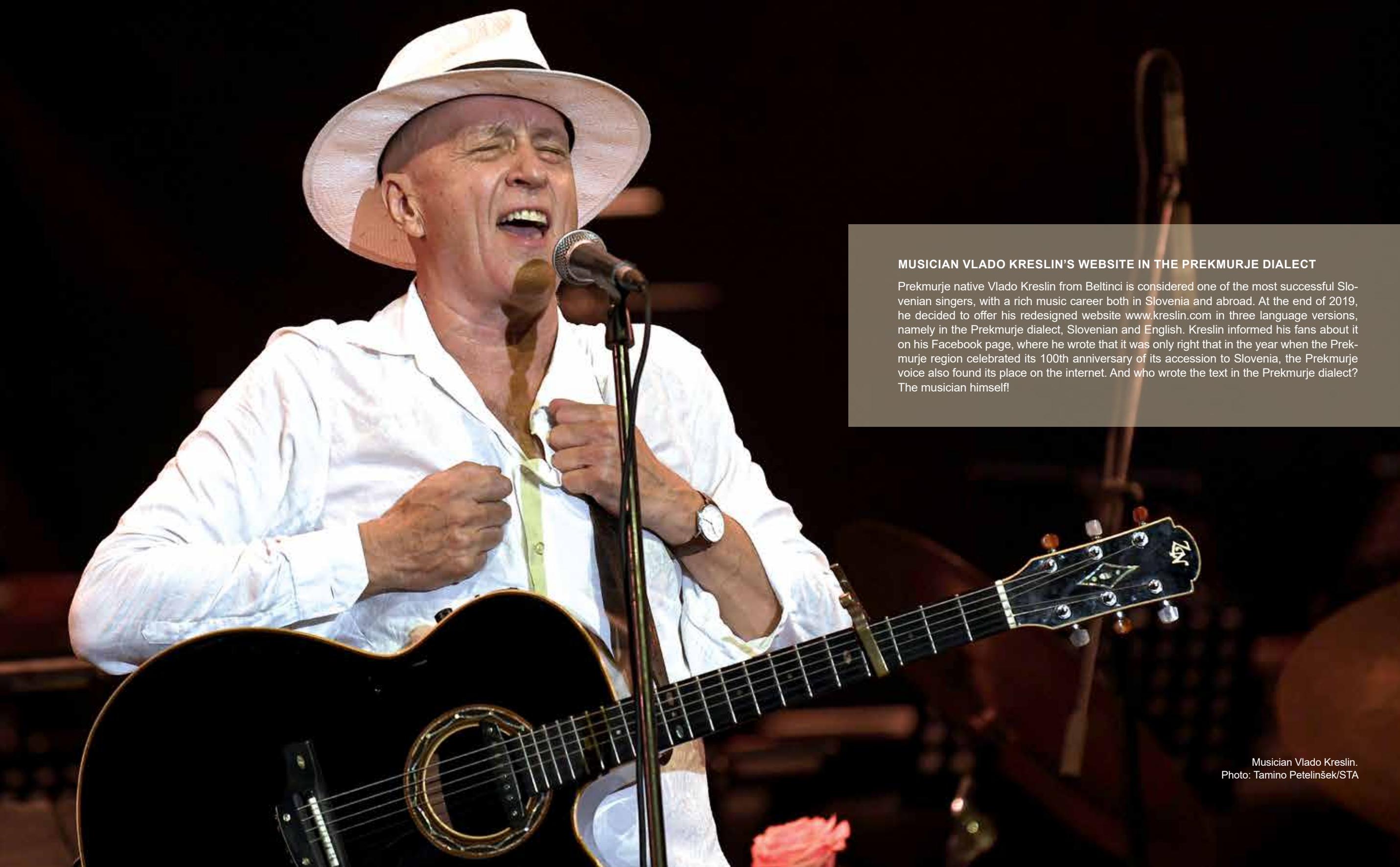
The dialects bordering on the neighbouring languages have assumed many of their words. In the Primorska dialects, Italianisms are used, in the Štajerska and Panonska regions Germanisms, in the Panonska dialects in the Prekmurje region or along the border with Hungary, many words from Hungarian are present, and the Dolenjska dialects have more Croatian words than other dialects.

OUR HERITAGE

A dialect vocabulary is more sonorous, fluent, melodic and more vivid than the Slovenian standard language. It is important for us, as Slovenians, to be aware of the specific features of individual dialects, to respect and preserve them.

Slovenian dialects are so different from each other that often two Slovenians who come from other ends of our country have considerable trouble understanding each other.

However, our dialects are also very interesting and connect us even more. Yes, it can be fun when the prekmurska gibanica dessert and Cviček wine from the Dolenjska region meet at the same table and speak to each other in their own dialects.



MUSICIAN VLADO KRESLIN'S WEBSITE IN THE PREKMURJE DIALECT

Prekmurje native Vlado Kreslin from Beltinci is considered one of the most successful Slovenian singers, with a rich music career both in Slovenia and abroad. At the end of 2019, he decided to offer his redesigned website www.kreslin.com in three language versions, namely in the Prekmurje dialect, Slovenian and English. Kreslin informed his fans about it on his Facebook page, where he wrote that it was only right that in the year when the Prekmurje region celebrated its 100th anniversary of its accession to Slovenia, the Prekmurje voice also found its place on the internet. And who wrote the text in the Prekmurje dialect? The musician himself!

Musician Vlado Kreslin.
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



CULTURE

Metka Krašovec: There came a day at Summer's Full, 2016

GREEN CUT

GREEN, HOW I WANT YOU GREEN

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ, PHOTO: EQUINA GALLERY ARCHIVES

“VERDE QUE TE QUIERO VERDE,” WROTE THE VERSATILE SPANISH POET FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA (1898–1936) IN HIS WIDELY CITED POEM, WHICH HAS ADDRESSED AND INSPIRED PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD.



Tomaž Gregorič: Periferija 81, 2006

Less well known is its sequel, translated by Aleš Berger into Slovenian as follows: “Veje in zeleni veter. / Ladja na širokem morju, / na planini iskri žrebec. / Na balkonu ona sanja, / v pas se ji lovijo sence, / koža in lasje zeleni, / oči hladno posrebrene. / Ljubim te, zeleno, ljubim. / Pod ciganskim svetlim mescem / ves čas gledajo stvari jo, / nje oči so zanje slepe.” The translation of the same lines in English by William Bryant Logan reads as follows: “Green, how I want you green. Green wind. Green branches. The ship out on the sea and the horse on the mountain. With the shade around her waist she dreams on her balcony, green flesh, her hair green, with eyes of cold silver. Green, how I want you green. Under the gypsy moon, all things are watching her and she cannot see them.”

In nature, green is the colour of plants, meadows, forests, gardens, and so on.

In May, we witness the lush growth of vegetation that literally dresses the surroundings in vibrant green, sprinkled with a decoration of spring flowers.

American astronomers claim that the entire universe is a light green colour, and not black, as initially assumed.

In addition to red and yellow, green is one of the most visible colours. In transport, for example, green stands for safety. A pedestrian crossing showing a green light invites you to start walking again.

GREEN CUT: LANDSCAPES, PLANTS, OBJECTS, SURFACES, FLATS AND EDGES ...

Just before the quarantine was declared due to the coronavirus epidemic, the Green Cut exhibition opened at the Equrna Gallery on 12 March, which also included the Shelter for Discarded Plants with its Green Point, where plants could be adopted.

The first task of this exhibition is thus to examine how green fits into contemporary art. For example, what is its path "back to nature"? This is still the major mimetic sphere where green continues to reign. The second task concerns its independence; that is, how green expresses itself in an abstract space and what shades of green are favoured today. Green also shows itself to be a social and societal colour, in terms of what surfaces, objects and figures it covers and how it becomes established in the media environment. And last but not least, green is the colour of ecology.

Let's make a spring cut through contemporary fine art: let this cut be the "colour green" in its different positions, meanings, appearances and functions, the authors of the exhibition write.

Green as a secondary blend of blue and yellow has infinite shades in both nature and art. Therefore, the naming of colours is always only an approximation, which can be measured accurately in a technical sense, whereas in artistic practice we deal with the most unusual mixtures, which can hardly be described by

words. Green has a life-like sensuality that we experience in nature, and an artistic value that is appropriate for both symbolic and design practices.

However, Slovenian modern art is less "green" than we might imagine. It is true that painters are bound by the natural image, but now they paint nature and the green therein by making us first appreciate the aesthetic and expressive application of colour and composition; we look at nature, but what we really get is art.

The more modernism develops, the more the colour green disappears, or manifests in "unnatural" positions and meanings. This implies the transformation of a natural colour into a signifying colour, and then into its symbolic and media use. In doing so, the very idea of green as a colour changes, as if we no longer believe green if it is created by means of artificial intelligence. Former ideas about the peaceful, content and tame green (the painter Ivan Šubic still entertained such a concept of green in the 19th century, and recommended its use in apartments) have been replaced today by shiny, sharp shades that draw attention, which is just the reverse urban image of formerly natural chlorophyll mimicry: green as a way to become even more visible!

Green is also a fashionable colour, which is reflected in clothing, personal care products, interior design, and the production of green goods and tools.

The scope and nature of its expressive status and range in painting, photography and video is demonstrated by the exhibition entitled "Green Cut: Landscapes, Plants, Objects, Surfaces, Flats, Edges."



Zmago Jeraj, 2003VIII

The curators of the exhibition are Tomaž Brejc and Arne Brejc. The following people and organisations are participating in the exhibition: Nina Slejko Blom and Conny Blom, Beti Bricelj, Nina Čelhar, Vuk Čosić, Gustav Gnamuš, Josip Gorinšek, Tomaž Gregorič, Herman Gvardjančič, Zmago Jeraj, Anja Jerčič Jakob, Aleksij Kobal, Metka Krašovec, Tugo Šušnik, the Shelter for Discarded Plants, Mojca Zlokarnik, Zdenka Žido and Uroš Weinberger.

CULTURE



Photo: elenaleonova-GettyImagesFilm&Foto

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

MUST READ

ANJA KOVAČ

THIS TIME OUR RECOMMENDED READING COMPRISES A CULT WAR NOVEL BY VITOMIL ZUPAN, WHO HAS BEEN HAILED AS THE SLOVENIAN HEMINGWAY, AN INSPIRATIONAL BIOGRAPHY OF THE TRAVELLER AND WRITER ALMA M. KARLIN, THE FIRST WOMAN TO TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD SOLO, AND A LYRIC NOVEL BY THE CONTEMPORARY SLOVENIAN WRITER DUŠAN ŠAROTAR, WHO DEPICTS THE LAST DAYS OF WORLD WAR II IN A SMALL TOWN IN THE EAST OF SLOVENIA.

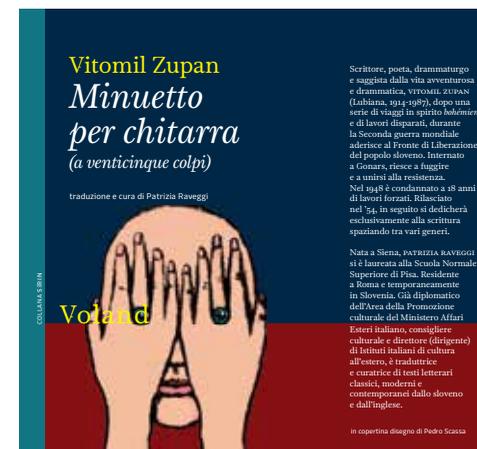


Photo: JAK archives

Vitomil Zupan: *Minuet for Guitar (in Twenty-Five Shots)* (Voland Edizioni, 2019, translated by Patrizia Raveggi)

Minuet for Guitar (in Twenty-Five Shots) is an intense exploration of the horrors of war, on par with Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*, a modern Slovenian classic filled with philosophical ruminations and told in Zupan's casual, ironic and even seductive voice – using his life experiences for much of the action in the novel. The latest translation of the book is into Italian, published by Voland Edizioni under the title *Minuetto per Chitarra*, but you can also read it in English, Spanish, Arabic and, soon, German.

Jerneja Jezernik: *Alma M. Karlin (Mit Bubikopf und Schreibmaschine um die Welt)* (Drava Verlag, 2020)

Between 1919 and 1927 Alma M. Karlin (1889–1950), a writer and world traveller, journeyed around the world by herself and without financial support to visit all seven continents. An exceptionally popular writer in her time, well-known and read all over Europe, she was almost forgotten for many decades after her death, but we are now witnessing her remarkable rebirth. This biography, penned by Jerneja Jezernik in German, presents the entirety of Alma's life and work placed in a historical context – Alma M. Karlin was a member of the German-speaking community in the then ethnically mixed Slovenian town of Celje, which was by no means spared the trials and tribulations of the first half of the 20th century.



Photo: JAK archives

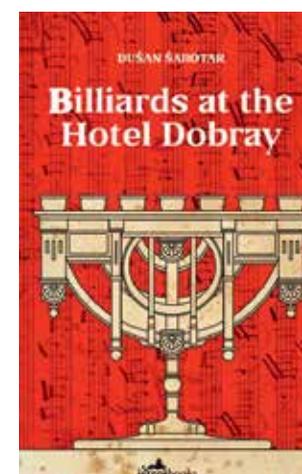


Photo: JAK archives

Dušan Šarotar: *Billiards at the Hotel Dobray* (Istros Books, 2019, translated by Rawley Grau)

This novel by Dušan Šarotar, who is compared by foreign reviewers to W. G. Sebald, was published last autumn by the British publishing house Istros Books and has since received enthusiastic responses from critics and readers alike. A remarkable storyteller, Šarotar masterfully captures the atmosphere of the last days of World War II in a small forgotten town in Prekmurje on the edge of the Pannonian Plain, at the intersection of the national and historical currents that produced the pre-war ethnic diversity of this corner of the world. The novel is also available in Spanish, Polish, Hungarian and Croatian.



Tina Logar Bauchmüller.
Photo: Personal archives

DESIGNER TINA LOGAR BAUCHMÜLLER

THE GREEN STORY OF MILA.VERT

TANJA GLOGOVČAN BELANČIČ

TINA LOGAR BAUCHMÜLLER IS THE FOUNDER AND DESIGNER OF THE MILA.VERT BRAND. IN HER FASHION DESIGN SHE FOLLOWS THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND FAIR TRADE. SHE IS A SLOVENIAN BUILDING A BRAND WITH A GREEN FUTURE.

Tina Logar Bauchmüller has always been interested in living a sustainable lifestyle, and over the years she has become increasingly aware that it is the duty of every individual to try to reduce one's negative impact on the environment as much as possible. She also feels that it is hard to change one's habits. Her brand name, Mila.Vert, combines her daughter's nickname (Mila) and the French word for green (vert).

GREEN AND ETERNAL FASHION

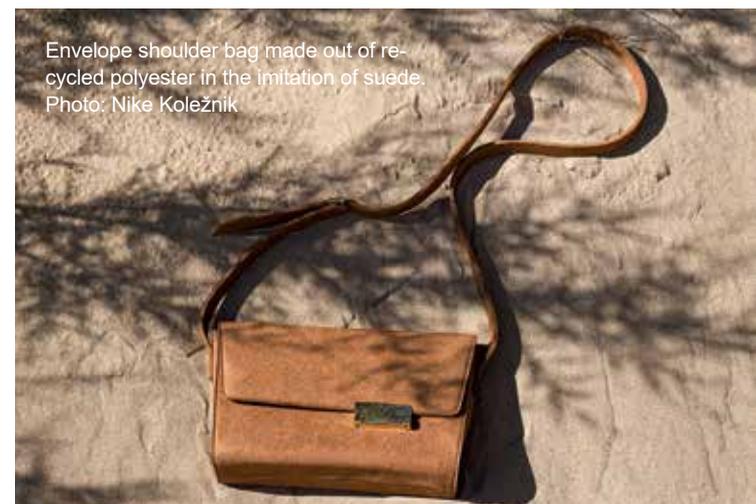
Her pieces of clothing look simple and have clear lines. The brand comprises garments made of high-quality eco-friendly materials manufactured in accordance with the strictest certification standards, such as GOTS (The Global Organic Textile Standard) and IVN Best. She cooperates with two Slovenian sewing companies, a knitting studio with a long tradition of manufacturing high-quality knitwear and a manufacturer of bags and accessories.

The clothes have a classic cut, but by adding details they can be made contemporary and brought into the present time.

Due to the high-quality materials and manufacturing process, sustainable clothing is priced slightly higher than conventional items. A lower price would simply not cover the costs of the manufacture of the clothing and other activities required for the management and development of the brand. "However, given that we do not need a pile of cheaply made clothing, but instead can buy a few quality-made pieces, the amount spent on the latter might not make a difference in the end," says Tina Logar Bauchmüller.

The advantage of her clothes is that they fit all types of women. Tina has proved this with her campaign WomenWearingMilaVert, in which she presented the stories of women wearing her clothes.

Her products also hold the PETA Certificate, which confirms that Mila.Vert's products are cruelty-free.



Envelope shoulder bag made out of recycled polyester in the imitation of suede.
Photo: Nike Koležnik



Elegant bags.
Photo: Nike Koležnik



Knitted relief sleeveless top made of 100% organic cotton. Photo: Robert Ribič

Products awarded this certificate do not contain any elements of animal origin. "By using materials manufactured in accordance with strict standards (GOTS, IVN Best), we demonstrate that our fashion does not exploit people, because in addition to the high requirements regarding the reduced environmental impact, these certificates also ensure that everyone involved in the process of manufacturing the materials – from the producers of the raw materials, for example cotton, to the fabric manufacturers – is guaranteed good working conditions and fair pay for their work. We therefore make clothes in Slovenia and in cooperation with business partners whom we can trust to take good care of their employees," explains Tina.

Twice a year Tina Logar Bauchmüller visits the Munich Fabric Trade Fair, because materials are her greatest inspiration. In her experience, this also makes the very process of making clothes from eco-friendly materials easier. This means that she first needs to look for materials, because there is still a lack of eco-friendly fabrics on the market. "For example, it has happened that I already had an idea for a collection design, but had to abandon it because I could not find the right fabrics," Tina explains. She visits her production partners after she has developed a conceptual design. The partners make a prototype of a given garment, which she and her colleagues try on to figure out which adjustments are needed. Then the final version of the garment is made.

THINK ABOUT YOUR PURCHASES

People buy many pieces of clothing and also get rid of them quickly. Mainstream fashion brands are affordable and therefore encourage consumerism.

Despite having a closet full of clothes, people often still feel they don't have anything to wear.

That is because we usually buy without a vision and because we are fond of a certain piece of clothing at a given moment. "My advice is that we should think about every purchase and ask ourselves whether we really need a particular piece of clothing. If we want

to be sustainable, we should avoid buying clothes we do not really need. However, if we decide to buy a piece, we should choose from among sustainable clothing brands as there is already a big choice available on the market. We should also consider whether we can wear the garment together with another piece from our closet, and therefore ensure that we always have the possibility to combine various garments and create different styles with certain pieces, and thus dress beautifully and appropriately for different occasions," advises Tina Logar Bauchmüller.

Her favourite material is knitwear. "In winter, I definitely prefer knitwear – our sweaters and dresses made of eco-friendly yarn."

However, when it gets warmer, I can hardly wait to wear a lightweight dress made of Tencel – a material that, in addition to its elegant appearance, is comfortable for working from home," she explains.

SPRING-SUMMER COLLECTION

Tina Logar Bauchmüller is currently working on a new collection of leisurewear and work-from-home clothes. "We always listen to our customers and try to adjust to their needs as best as we can. Currently, these types of clothes are in the highest demand," says Tina.

And where will they present their collection this year? "To date, we have presented our products twice at the Neonyt international fair for sustainable fashion in Berlin. There, we addressed multi-brand stores regarding the concept of sustainable and ethical fashion. Due to the epidemic, the summer show has been cancelled and now we are devoting most of our time to improving our online store and other digital channels through which we can reach customers. We are optimistic and also want the epidemic to bring about something good – maybe we can now take more time to reflect on each potential purchase and also support smaller ethical fashion brands that focus most of their efforts on the local, fair, and sustainable manufacture of their own products."



Knitted relief long cardigan made in collaboration with a knitting studio with over 90 years of craftsmanship expertise. Photo: Robert Ribič



TOURISM

CHARMING STORIES
WHEN THE STREETS START TO TALK...

VESNA ŽARKOVIČ

THE STREETS OF LJUBLJANA
HAVE MANY AN INTERESTING
STORY TO TELL, AND MANY
OF THESE STORIES BEGAN
WAY BACK IN TIME.

Photo: Andrej Tarfila/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library

They have been around for centuries and have endured wars, occupations, earthquakes, long winters and changes in political regimes, only to be revived through cultural events, new buildings, tourist visits, planting arrangements and studies. Some of these stories are presented below.

KRIŽEVNIŠKA STREET (KRIŽEVNIŠKA ULICA)

The once dark and rather drab street in the old centre of Ljubljana has in the past ten years become one of the most beautiful and photographed in the city, thanks to director of Mini Theatre, Robert Waltl. Pictures of the street circulate around the internet and can be found in various tourist publications, but its inner beauty, reflected in the social ties among its residents, is even greater than its appearance suggests.

In the afternoons and evenings the street's residents gather spontaneously, with everyone bringing something to eat or drink. And once a year (on 26 June) they organise a fun event called Križevniški sosed ("A neighbour from Križevniška Street"), which is supported by Ljubljana Tourism as one of the best tourist events in the city, and to which all Ljubljana residents and guests are invited. Križevniška Street was once home to fishermen, who fished the Ljubljanica and dried their nets on the street. Many notable figures also lived, worked or pursued their creative endeavours here, including the family of Blaž Crobath, father of poet Luiza Pesjakova and friend and patron of France Prešeren, who used to come here to visit his friend. Indeed this is where Prešeren met his wife, Ana Jelovškova, with whom he had three children.



Križevniška street
Photo: Dunja Wedam/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library



Rožnik- one of many different places where Ivan Cankar lived.
Photo: Matej Povše/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library

A WALK ALONG THE CANKAR TRAIL

The Slovenian writer, poet and playwright Ivan Cankar (1876–1918) lived in many different places in Ljubljana. Why not go on a guided literary tour and learn about some of these, walk past the buildings where Cankar lived and worked, and listen to stories and anecdotes from his life and the lives of other important residents of Ljubljana at that time? The trail takes us from Krek Square (Krekov trg) to the Poljane Embankment (Poljanski nasip), Streliška Street (Streliška ulica), Vodnik Square (Vodnikov trg), through Old Square (Stari trg) and Breg all the way to Congress Square (Kongresni trg), where Ivan Cankar spent his last days. The trail ends in front of the National Gallery on Cankar Street (Cankarjeva cesta), where on 11 December 1918 mourners paid their last respects to the great Slovenian writer.

THE LJUBLJANA OF VALENTIN VODNIK

A walk around Ljubljana in the time of Valentin Vodnik will take you to the buildings where the Slovenian poet

(1758–1819) lived, created, was educated and gained the experiences that changed his life. It takes us along the streets of the city, in the footsteps of the poet, revealing many interesting stories about Ljubljana from the days when Vodnik lived and worked here, along with tales of his life and contemporaries.

LJUBLJANA FOR POETRY LOVERS

Take a guided tour to visit Ljubljana's well-known squares (Prešeren Square, Vodnik Square, Town Square, Old Square, Congress Square and Square of the Republic (Trg republike)), along with some other locations around the city, where the tour guide will present a poet related to each place. Those on the tour will learn about France Prešeren, Kajetan Kovič, Svetlana Makarovič, Valentin Vodnik, Ciril Zlober, Lili Novy, Srečko Kosovel, Ivan Cankar, Oton Župančič, Ivan Minatti and Tomaž Šalamun, as well as their poems, recited by the tour guide, or even the participants themselves if they wish.

THE OLDEST LINDEN TREE IS ALMOST 400 YEARS OLD

The green lungs of Ljubljana conceal many stories of their own. Many of the trees have survived for centuries, surviving wars, droughts, and harsh winters. Although they cannot speak, there are many interesting facts about them which bring their stories to life. There are more than 180 species of tree in the capital. They contribute to the beauty of the city, which prides itself on having won the title of European Green Capital, but beyond their appearance the presence of trees is vital for life in the city. A mature tree absorbs 2.3 kg of carbon dioxide per hour and produces 1.7 kg of oxygen, which is enough for ten people to breathe. Data in the digital register of city trees kept by Snaga shows that the tree with the largest circumference is the London plane on the lawn in front of Cankarjev Dom, with a circumference of 638 centimetres. But this is only one of the many prominent trees to be admired in the city centre. A number of the trees are several hundred years old, having released over six tons of oxygen into the air during each century of their growth.

POVŠETOVA STREET (POVŠETOVA ULICA) – KNOWN ONLY FOR ITS PRISON

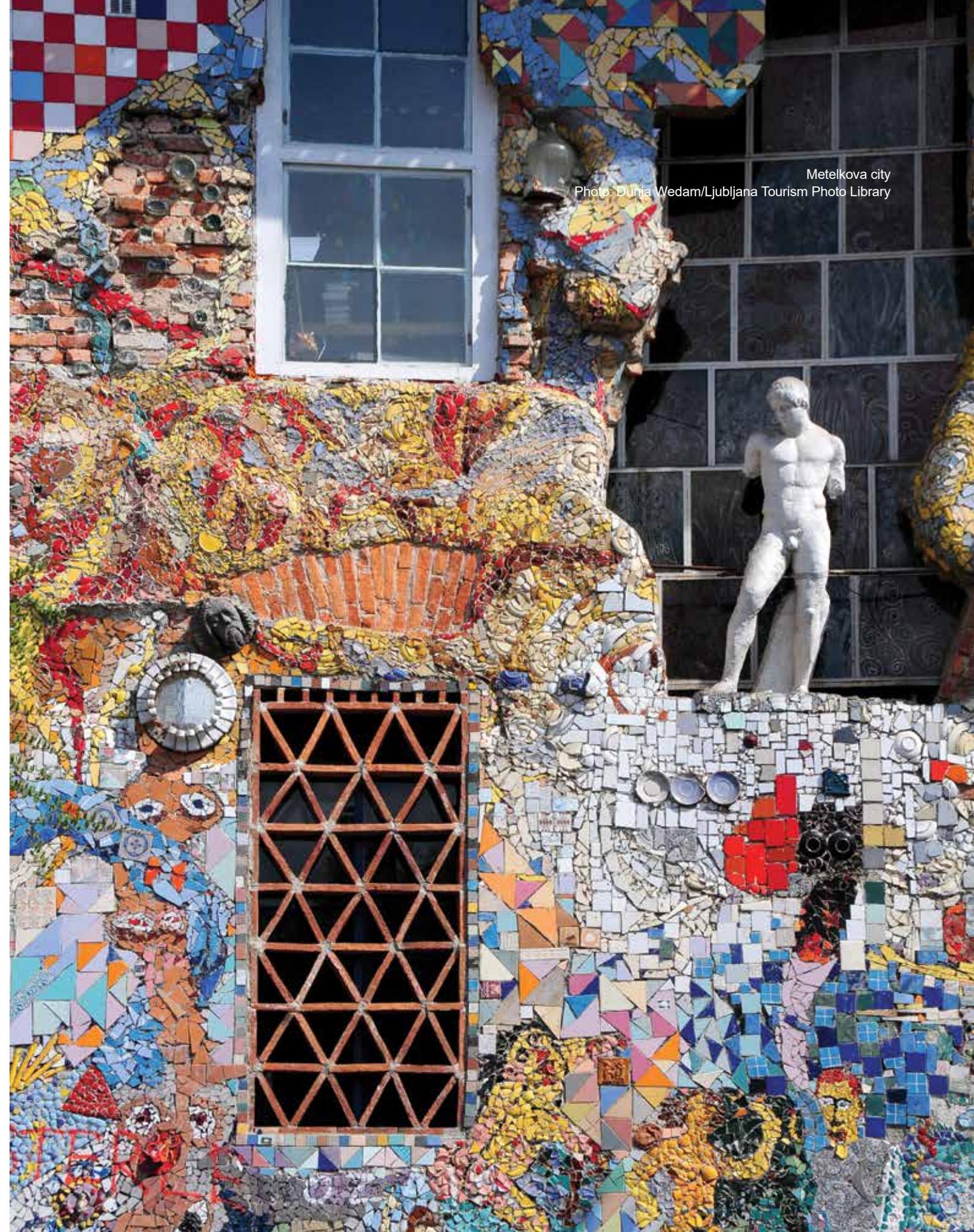
The association between Povšetova Street and the prison is so deeply rooted in the minds of Ljubljana residents that when somebody uses a phrase like “I’m going to Povšetova Street” or “he’s in Povšetova Street”, this actually implies that somebody is in or is going to prison. But Povšetova Street is in fact a very pleasant street. The residential part, which runs through the district of Kodeljevo, is lined mostly with apartment buildings and family houses surrounded by gardens built before the Second World War. And it is a very green street in more ways than one, the second being the reuse centre (Center ponovne uporabe), one of the most popular Slovenian recycling points, located at the very beginning of Povšetova Street in the part within the area of the city centre. With the prison getting all the attention, Fran Povše, after whom the street was named, has been somewhat overlooked. The decision to name the street, previously called Ulica Kodeljevo and before that Cesta na Kodeljevo, after the agricultural expert and politician Fran Povše, who was interested in all types of agriculture, including silkworm breeding, and played a very important role in the development of fruit-growing in the Goriška region, was made back in 1937. Thanks to Fran Povše, cherries and peaches from the Goriška region were sold as far afield as Vienna.

MAŠERA–SPASIĆ STREET (MAŠERA SPASIĆEVA ULICA)

Mašera–Spasić Street was named after two national naval heroes, Mašera and Spasić, in 1974. Slovenia does not have many naval heroes, but the first name on the street, Sergej Mašera, is remembered in the history of all Yugoslav nations for his heroic deed performed together with his colleague and schoolmate from the Yugoslav Naval Academy, the second name on the street, Milan Spasić. Together they served on board the destroyer Zagreb, owned by the Royal Yugoslav Navy. When the country surrendered in 1941, their ship was docked in the Bay of Kotor and they were ordered by their superiors to turn it over to the Italians. But the crew decided to sink the ship instead. Some of the accounts of the developments on 17 April make dramatic reading indeed. It was a rainy and foggy day in the Bay of Kotor, and Mašera and Spasić refused to hand over the ship, as did the rest of the crew. They placed explosives in two carefully chosen areas below the deck. After the rest of the crew had left, they went inside the ship and lit the fuse. They then stood at the stern in full combat gear, tore off their insignia, hugged each other and looked towards Mt Lovćen... and then the explosion ripped the ship apart. The remaining crew and others on the shore saw their bodies being thrown high up in the air, and then the ship sank. Mašera and Spasić were aged 29 and 31, respectively. Subsequently there were certain interpretations according to which the sinking of the ship was the result of an accident rather than an intentional detonation. Despite this, they were officially recognised as war heroes in 1973, and a number of streets in the former state were named after them.

ZVEZDARSKA STREET (ZVEZDARSKA ULICA)

Some of the streets of Ljubljana are so short and so atypical of a city street that they could be hardly recognised as such. One of these is Zvezdarska Street, which runs from Levstik Square (Levstikov trg) or Karlovška Street (Karlovška ulica) to Rožna Street (Rožna ulica). A walk down the street brings you to the part of the city called Žabjak. The name of Žabjak originates from the 16th century, the reason being the marshy ground on which it was built. Žabjak later became a kind of autonomous zone, at least according to the local lads who competed with their peers from Prule to be recognised as “the biggest kid on the block”. The rivalry came at the end of the 1960s, when new settlers were moving into apartment blocks in Prule, while Žabjak residents were considered city-dwellers of longer standing.



Metelkova city
Photo: Dunja Wedam/Ljubljana Tourism Photo Library



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