

The voice- Of Slovenia

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The Present Is Remarkable for Slovenia

Polona Prešeren/Government PR and Media Office

Speaker of Parliament Borut Pahor talked about Slovenia's accession to the EU and NATO, the changes membership will bring about, the future role of the Slovenian and the European Parliaments, and the future of the EU.

Slovenia recently signed the Accession Treaty with the EU, plus NATO accession protocols were signed to be ratified by NATO member states. What is the importance you ascribe to these events?

These are not merely historic, but also turning point events for Slovenia. It seems to me that the present generation is not even well aware of how important these moments are for Slovenia. We will become aware of this in years, or maybe decades. I think that by joining the EU and NATO, we have made a logical step forward since independence. We want to be an open society, a competitive society, and at the same time live in an environment where European solidarity is being built. We want to be in the club of safe countries. Slovenia's integration in the Euro-Atlantic environment is changing, one could say upgrading, the country's political, economic and social environment.

There have been complaints that Slovenia has given up part of its sovereignty, after all it has changed its Constitution.

It is a question of whether complete sovereignty, which in the contemporary world is a synonym for isolation, is our society's goal; whether this had been the goal of independence, I say no. Our goal is to enable our country to become part of contemporary European integration. This demands co-operation between countries in an economic area and intense political co-operation, which necessitates that part of sovereign rights are transferred to common bodies. Therefore, I don't think we have become historically disabled because of that, on the contrary, I think that together with Europe we can be even more successful in taking charge.

Slovenia has already harmonised a great portion of its legislation with the acquis. What are the priorities in the future?

You have mentioned constitutional changes, which in Article 3 were not important just because of the legal basis for accession, but also served as important grounds for political consensus in light of the EU and NATO referendums. A unified stance in Slovenia's politics was much more important for Slovenia's EU and NATO accession than it was for the war in Iraq. The most important fact was that Slovenian politicians were of one mind. In the last six years we passed an exceptional volume of legislation as part of the harmonisation with the acquis. We still have about 50 laws to adopt by the end of April 2004. The fact is that the government, which proposes the bills, will have to be somehow encouraged to send the bills to parliament as soon as possible.

Slovenian MPs will sit in the European Parliament this year as observers. This time they will be appointed, but next year seven MEPs will be elected. How do you see the role of Slovenian representatives in the European Parliament?

First I have to commend the work of our MPs who are participating in the Convention on the future of Europe. I don't mean just MP Alojz Peterle, who has the hardest job as a member of the Convention's presidency, but others as well - MPs Miha Brejč, Jelko Kacin, and Feri Horvat. I am very pleased with their work and proud, as speaker of parliament, when I hear compliments from counterparts and high representatives of the EU. I am certain that the same will apply for the seven observer MEPs, who are soon to start their work in the EP. They will remain MPs in Slovenia but they will be observers in the EP and we are bound to miss them here - especially when there will be foreign policy issues, since

they are very familiar with this topic. Seven people are very important in a 90-member parliament. I will try to have them back every time important foreign policy issues are on the agenda. They will do good work in the European Parliament, they will participate in committees, address others, take part in deputy groups, be present at parliament sessions and learn the operations of the parliament - the habits, the work, the statutes. In a way they will be forerunners in the spirit of preparation for membership, so that directly elected MEPs will do their work successfully and according to the expectations of the voters.

What will Slovenia's EU membership mean for the Slovenian parliament? Will its role change?

In light of Slovenia's membership in the EU, we are preparing a lot of changes to the organisation and methods of the National Assembly. A change is being drafted, to be put down in a bill, regarding the relation between the government and the parliament once Slovenia becomes a member of the EU. This will be a major and difficult undertaking but the interest of the National Assembly, which also appears in Article 3 of the Constitution, is to preserve and even strengthen its role. We are aware that the role cannot be defined in such a rigid way that it would hinder the government's work once Slovenia is a full-fledged member. But it is the parliament's very clear interest not to end up in a position where all decisions in Brussels are taken by the government only and the parliament would only be notified of them later. So we expect that the National Assembly will have a rather important role in adopting such decisions.

How do you see the future of the European Parliament in regard to possible decisions in the Convention on the future of the EU?

I will answer this question as a political scientist and will take a little more freedom in risking an assessment, because as a politician I usually avoid guessing about the future. In the 1990s, and at present, Europe has been at a crossroads where it has to decide whether to go towards unification with the Maastricht Treaty, the Nice Treaty and even the Athens Treaty. Everything shows that it wants to go in that direction. It slowly strengthens what it has in common and gradually reduces what is different. I think that in the next ten or twenty years, this will surely lead to some sort of European federalism. This is my personal view, not a political stance, but an expert opinion. In case of the contrary, it could happen that the process of European integration will slowly come to an end and stagnate. I believe that Europe wants to play a certain role in the global international community as an economic, political and, at some point, even a military centre. That will necessitate the strengthening of common functions, which can be possible through federalism. However, the time has not yet come for that, which is also shown in the Convention and in the great reservations of many Europeans toward the transfer of sovereignty; but time will tell. If it happens, the function of the executive branch of power - the European Commission - will grow, and so will the importance of the European Parliament as a legislative branch. Perhaps there will be a question of a sovereign EU representative, namely a president. I think that at this point, the Convention cannot entirely answer all these questions.

What is your assessment of Slovenia's position in the international community today and its geo-political placement? Where do you see the key foreign policy directions in the future?

As to the geo-political placement, joining the Euro-Atlantic integrations is crucial. Glancing quickly at the wheel of history of the last 15 years, starting with our place in the decaying Yugoslavia

and its nationalist, political and economic spasms, and then spin the wheel forward through a democratic process, independence and economic reform, we see Slovenia today in another world. It seems that we can be absolutely thrilled with this development. Slovenia has dramatically changed its geo-political position - from a part of a crumbling state it has become a vital part of the region - part of the Northern Atlantic environment. This was a turning point and there is no doubt about it. What will happen in the future? In a way Slovenia has torn itself away from Southeastern Europe. It has become a part of the Euro-Atlantic environment and therefore has a great opportunity to also have some goal in the environment it has torn itself away from. It can't just take, it has to give as well; without that, there is no influence. If we want to act as a country with an active foreign policy, not just a policy of passive adaptation, we have the chance to do so. Slovenia has an image in the wider region of Central Europe. It is recognised as a small, adaptable, successful country, (though sometimes too egotistic) and that is related to success. This means that we are so successful, that we could help others more. We can take a look at Slovenia from another perspective - we are the westmost part of the Slavic world. For other Slavic nations, especially the Russians, this is very precious and what is important too is strengthening ties with the eastern part of Europe. Entering the Euro-Atlantic environment facilitates that even more. Shortly, we have to find our place, our goal should be to become another Luxembourg, to increase per capita income, open up our society and economy, as well as encourage creativity, know-how, and the ambitions of younger generations.

Udba.net stirs up Controversy

Honorary Consul to Australia and New Zealand, Dušan Lajovic, aroused quite a controversy by arranging for the on-line publication of lists of alleged collaborators and monitored persons of the former Yugoslav secret police UDBA.



After a web site appeared with the names of Slovenians who allegedly collaborated with the former Yugoslav secret police (known as UDBA), the issue found its way onto the agenda of the cabinet session. Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel asked for an additional two to three days to make a decision on whether the Honorary Consul to Australia and New Zealand Dušan Lajovic - who provided the UDBA records on a web site run through a server in Thailand - should remain in office. Around one million alleged UDBA collaborators and persons monitored by the secret agency appeared on the Internet in mid-April, but the Slovenian authorities immediately blocked access to it on the suspicion that it violated privacy rights. The measure has stirred up controversy and was labelled censorship. The media published the names of some top Slovenian politicians who supposedly appeared on the list, but they all denied having collaborated with UDBA. The coalition SLS and opposition NSi responded to the ban on access to the web site from Slovenia: SLS thought that banning access could lead to manipulations, while NSi was convinced that such a move was unlawful.

Comments from the press

TV Slovenija

A TV panel (Apr. 22) shared the view that the recent disclosure of alleged collaborators and monitored persons of UDBA was inappropriate, yet it posed no threat to Slovenia's stability. As historian Jerca Vodušek Staric told TV Aktualno, the public has the right to know what its politicians are doing. She therefore does not consider the publication of the data about incumbent public figures on the web a violation of the personal data act. Ljuba Dornik Šubelj of the Slovenian Archives explained that out of a total of one million alleged names that have recently appeared on the Internet, files of only some 3,000 people exist. A record of a person from the list means nothing, said Drago Ferš, the director of the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency (SOVA) from 1993 to 2000. As he explained, this is "merely a record which also changed over time, it is not a written file which would say who exactly that person was and what they did". According to Dornik Šubelj, the Slovenian Archives received the documents of security and intelligence services in the period from 1991 to 2000. "We first received files of some 860

deceased people, and then an additional 2,000, which makes it around 3,000 files altogether in hard copies," said Šubelj.

DELO

Delo (Apr. 25) says the government should have probably dismissed Lajovic as Slovenia's honorary consul. The post of an honorary consul is not a professional post. Less strict rules apply for them and their duties should be fulfilled for honour, not for the money. The post is not connected to diplomatic privileges; there is no such level of protection as for a professional consul and there is no immunity from criminal prosecution. An honorary consul does not represent a country. However, according to the Vienna Convention, an honorary consul protects interests of a country and its citizens. The main question therefore, is not whether Lajovic acted against the law on the protection of personal data, but whether his act is compatible with the principle of an honorary consul's responsibilities - to protect the interests of a country, and not to jeopardise them.

DNEVNIK

Dnevnik (Apr. 23) also believes it would be somewhat unusual if the government did not respond to Lajovic's "provocation". Lajovic finally lived to see the moment when he can provide lessons in democracy to his homeland and present accusations against Slovenia's leading political elite, which is supposed to be the successor of the former totalitarian regime. He has obviously established that he does not have much time anymore to wait for his dream to come true, namely that of replacing the liberal-left government by a government of a different colour - in this case obviously one run by the Social Democrats (SDS). The publication of files is a well known tool of Slovenian political intrigue, the aim of which has not always been clear. Instead of resolving the issue back in 1991, the story of secret dossiers has been recurrent, each time taking on a bigger and more grotesque form. The reason may be the fact that some politicians were indeed collaborators of UDBA, which can be relatively easy to cover up by publishing new dossiers over and over again.

MAG

Mag says the UDBA files should have been brought to light in 1990. "The Internet records - which experts right away confirmed were authentic, whereupon police sowed the seeds of doubt as to their authenticity - show that Slovenia has not ceased to be a para-police para-state. The consequences of this notion are as terrifying as was the Internet event itself surprising; it pleased numerous freedom-loving Slovenians and angered as many Slovenians with dirty hands." The paper also criticises the ban on access to the udba.net web page and labels it "censorship". "Man's right to be informed about who was their hangman is superior to the manipulation of protective legislation. The lists are not fiction, they are a snapshot of reality in 1988."

PRIMORSKE NOVICE

Censorship on the Internet is only known in a few totalitarian states, such as China or Iran, says the Koper-based daily Primorske Novice (Apr. 19). It is not difficult to guess what foreigners will think of the latest Slovenian version of censorship on the Internet. Politically - particularly in terms of international politics - the news is really a disaster, as it shows the country as a skillfully masked parliamentary democracy in which, even now when it is entering the EU and NATO, old personnel from totalitarian times truly hold the levers of power. The measure is a disaster tactically, because the censorship has only raised interest in the dusty, actually desperately boring, bureaucratic lists of names. Among them, one can probably find those that are responsible for the censorship, directly or indirectly. Technically, the measure is stupid, as a skillful Internet user can avoid it easily. The most unbelievable things can be found on the Internet, from Mein Kampf to lists of alleged collaborators of the former East German secret police Stasi. Yet nowhere in Europe has access to such sites been blocked. Slovenia is the first country to do so, and what is going on is shameful.

MLADINA

The news that the Slovenian president has found himself on the list of collaborators of the former Yugoslav secret police is most unpleasant, even if it were only an allegation, Mladina notes (Apr. 22). The man who arranged for the documents to be published on the net is Honorary Consul Dušan Lajovic, appointed by Janez Drnovšek when he was still prime minister. Lajovic is a supporter of the Slovenian "spring" (centre-right) parties. "Yet it would be too simple to say that the release of the records was an orchestrated campaign of the 'spring-opposition'", because Lajovic seems to have harmed right-wing politicians, who are on friendly terms with Drnovšek, as much as he did those in power. Secret files work only as long as they do not become public; the proof of this is that the names of some influential members of the "spring camp" also appear in the files. There are dirty details behind every file and these may be even more unpleasant than the mere fact of the file's existence. Yet the logic of the opposition's operation requires matters to be cleared up and, in case of the files' authenticity, a demand for the president's resignation and an early election.

“PLAMEN” choir from Canada tours Australia



The middle of March 2003 was a very eventful one in our Slovenian community. The female choir Plamen from Canada under the guidance of Mrs Marija Ahacic entertained the Slovenian community in Geelong, at St Albans and at SDM. Some of the choir members had to already leave early Sunday morning but a few members remained and sang some hymns at 10am mass at Kew. The tour was organised by SNS Vic and the quality of the singing was outstanding! They presented a very full and professional program of songs ranging from traditional Slovenian songs to traditional African song arrangements. The group was extremely professional under the capable guidance of their choir leader Mrs Marija Ahacic who also sang with the popular Avsenik band at one stage. What is even more special is that most of the choir members were born and bred in Canada.

Therefore they were mainly 2nd generation Slovenians just like we are. After their concerts at St Albans and SDM, the band Veseli Slovenci entertained the crowd with music late into the evening. Whilst the functions were well attended, it is a shame that there were not more members of our younger generation in attendance. The performances were very well publicised. The question begs to be asked whether our youth really shows an interest events such as the Plamen choir. It is saddening especially considering that none of these girls were born in Slovenia and yet they use their involvement in the choir to show their Slovenian identity. We wish the Plamen Choir all the best in their future endeavours! Whoever did not attend their concerts really missed out!

Lenti Lenko OAM

Festival at Victoria Market

Our Slovenian community was well publicised to the Australian public at the annual senior citizens festival held at Victoria Market in the city on Monday March 17th. Mr and Mrs Ivo and Helena Leber have successfully organised this event over the past few years. However they were after a break this year and so appealed to other members of our community to take over. SNS Vic decided to take over the organisation of this event with Mr Stefan Merzel as main coordinator. Thanks to the lovely hot autumn weather, a large crowd turned up at the main stage when it was the Slovenian community's time to perform and 'strut their stuff'! Myself along with Evelyn Kojc performed on stage with other members dancing in national costume. We received an excellent response! As a matter of fact people from the audience came up to me and said that we were by far the most entertaining group. We promoted the Slovenian community in Melbourne, the fact that 4 clubs exist in Melbourne with 1 club in Geelong. We have a modern Slovenian Religious Centre with it's own church, hall and hostel. We have an old aged hostel and other organisations that proudly exist within our community. We promoted Slovenia as a tourist destination in Europe saying that for such a small country, it has a lot to offer and at very reasonable prices. The people are friendly and that nobody would regret visiting Slovenia. We promoted our Slovenian community as establishing itself to be a well-organised ethnic group that has integrated very successfully into our multicultural Australian society. May I take this opportunity to congratulate everyone who played a part in making the event such a success. Such events give us the perfect opportunity to promote our proud community and it's achievements. We promoted Slovenia, it's beauty, it's lively music and it's happy people. We promoted our Slovenian community in Australia! The Slovenian Art and Craft Stall set up near the main stage provided excellent promotion throughout the day. Let us hope that our Slovenian community can get more involved in such events as they only serve to promote us in a positive light to the general public.

Lenti Lenko OAM

SBS “ON WHEELS”



On March 8, 2003, the SBS outdoor broadcasting bus was located at the Adelaide Central Market for the opportunity of showcasing various multicultural groups. As SBS studios are located in Melbourne and Sydney, the broadcasting group aims to visit other capital cities on a yearly basis with it's outdoor broadcasting bus to stay in touch with these communities.



Amongst the diverse atmosphere and flavour of the Central Market's assortment of food from the world, Elica Rizmal (Slovenian program presenter SBS Melbourne) hosted a spirited hour of Slovenian music and singing, from 11.30am – 12.30pm.

A warm thank you to the people from the Adelaide Slovenian community who attended and the following who participated :

Alda Batista, Ivan Benc, Emil Borlak, Mimi Božanič, Danilo Dodič, Karlo Filipič, Franc Goyak, Tone Gustinčič, Jože Jerebica, Franc Končina, Ivan Burnik Legiša, Ana Likar, Ernest Orel, Davor Pavlin-Premrl, Rosemary Poklar, Laura Premrl, Anita Schneider, Justina Schneider, Peter Schneider, Cassandra Vatovec, Eric Vatovec, Polda Vatovec and Adrian Vatovec.

The national SBS Slovenian program is broadcast every Tuesday into Adelaide from 9.00am – 10.00am on 106.3FM. You can listen to the broadcast on SBS's website as well, www.sbs.com.au

Adrian Vatovec



SLOVENIA NEWS

Slovenia as EU Observer — Dress Rehearsal

Slovenia, together with nine other EU candidate countries, signed the Accession Treaty last April and is to join the Union following the ratification process in the parliaments of the incumbent and future members on May 1 2004.

Slovenia has now begun a sort of apprenticeship in which its representatives participate as observers in the work of all European institutions. This gives them the right to take full part in debates, but not in the decision-making. The right of vote will not be granted to the newcomers until their actual accession to the Union.

Slovenian Ministers Attend Council Meetings

The ice was broken by Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, who took part in a two-day informal meeting of EU foreign ministers on the Greek islands of Rhodes and Kastellorizo on May 2 and 3. He said that he felt "very good" in the role of an active observer. In a relaxed atmosphere in the format of 25 (from now on valid for meetings of all EU bodies and institutions), the ministers discussed the most burning international concerns. As Rupel put it, the problems "that until now had been seen as the problems of others - let's say Iraq, Iran, Syria, the Middle East, and Transatlantic relations - have now become our problems". Despite the fact that Slovenia will not become a full-fledged EU member until next year, Ljubljana participates in EU debates as an equal partner even today, Rupel explained. According to him, Slovenian officials can freely air their views and make proposals and, the EU is especially interested in Slovenia's opinions on matters with which the country has rich experience.

Last week saw a number of so-called technical ministerial councils in session in Brussels, where the ministers of the fifteen were also joined by their counterparts from the ten acceding countries. Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Slavko Gaber, and Culture Minister Andreja Rihter took part in a meeting of ministers for education, youth and culture. The extraordinary session of health ministers, which focused on measures in the fight against the spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), was attended by Slovenia's Dušan Keber, while the session of Justice and Home Affairs Council was attended by Justice Minister Ivan Bizjak and Interior Minister Rado Bohinc. Meanwhile, the Chief of Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces, Ladislav Lipic, took part in the regular, half-year session of the EU Military Committee as military representatives of the acceding countries joined their EU counterparts for the first time as observers.

In late April, Slovenia for the first time took part as an observer in regular sessions of both committees of the permanent representatives of the member states or COREPERs. Permanent representatives are Brussels-seated ambassadors of the member states, whose most important job is to prepare Council meetings. COREPER thus adopts a number of decisions in advance, or at least brings the views of members closer together, so as to provide for efficient decision-making at the ministerial level. Due to the ample work it has to cover, the committee is divided into two parts, the more important being COREPER II, which adopts political and institutional decisions, while COREPER I is in charge of technical fields such as agriculture, the environment, energy and the internal market. COREPER II is, as a rule, composed of the heads of national missions in Brussels, that is ambassadors, while their deputies attend sessions of COREPER I.

Slovenia was represented in the committee sessions by Ambassador to the EU Ciril Štokelj and his deputy Marjeta Jager. As observers, the officials represented their country's views on each of the topics under discussion, but they were not able to participate in the adopting of decisions. It is therefore impossible to work on behalf of Slovenia's interests on COREPER in this respect - if the country wishes to put forward any change, it will have to start a procedure of information and consultation. This is a mechanism that enables the newcomers to influence the adoption of European legislation even before their actual membership. The system is also intended to resolve possible problems.

Observer Status Also Granted to MPs

Similar to the government officials, the signing of the Accession Treaty also began the observer status for seven members of the National Assembly, who will represent Slovenia in the only directly elected European institutions until elections for the European Parliament in June 2004. The National Assembly selected the seven MPs who will represent the country in the European Parliament and its working bodies in the interim period at the end of March. The legislators are Roman Jakic, Ljubo Germic, Jelko Kacin (all three members of the senior ruling coalition party, Liberal Democracy - LDS), Feri Horvat (ruling coalition member, United List of Social Democrats - ZLSD), Janez Podobnik (the ruling Peoples' Party - SLS), Miha Brejc (opposition Social Democratic Party - SDS) and Alojz Peterle (opposition New Slovenia - NSi).

The number of members of the European Parliament increased to 788 lawmakers at the beginning of May, when 162 lawmakers from ten acceding countries began serving as observers. While these were appointed to their posts, they will be succeeded by elected representatives in June of next year. The lawmakers from acceding countries will not have a voting right until their countries become full-fledged members on May 1 2004. They will be able to take part in sessions of parliamentary working bodies, at which they will be able to participate in the debates. While they will be able to observe the work of the incumbent 626-member European assembly, the newcomers will not have a chance to speak at plenary sessions. The number 788 is only a temporary one. After the next European elections, the number 162 will remain unchanged - as many legislators will be elected in the ten new members - but the number of legislators from the incumbent members will change as the Nice Treaty limits the number of seats in the European Parliament to 732. It is interesting that about a third of the incumbent 626 MEPs are women, while Slovenia did not send any woman observer legislator to Brussels.

The newcomers had a busy schedule right from the start, as meetings with political groups were held throughout last week to agree in detail on how observing members should participate in the parliament's work. The observers were able to take part in the first plenary session of the European Parliament between May 12 and 15. The legislators from the ten acceding countries will be the most active within parliamentary working bodies, where they will be able to take part in debates.

Slovenia sent quite a strong line-up to the European Parliament, including members such as the chair of the parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee, Jelko Kacin, the Head of the European Affairs Commission, Lojze Peterle, the head of the Slovenian part of the EU-Slovenia Parliamentary Committee, Roman Jakic, and Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Miha Brejc. The legislators will need to spend quite some time in the European Parliament, but they say that their work at home will not suffer as obligations in the National Assembly will be given priority. The European Parliament holds a four-day plenary session in Strasbourg and a two-day plenary session in Brussels every month, with two days a month reserved for the work of parliamentary bodies and the rest of time for the work of political groups. Last week, the European Parliament opened an info office in Ljubljana.

A series of events aimed at bringing Slovenian citizens closer to the process of European integration were held in the run up to Europe Day, May 9. Organised by the European Commission delegation to Ljubljana and the Government PR and Media Office, European Week took place for the sixth year in a row. The Chamber of Commerce and the Economics Ministry staged a European Business Week which focused on economic aspects of EU accession. The public was able to view various European films and taste culinary treats of the EU and candidate countries. The EU was discussed at schools and there were also specialised events for the disabled, entrepreneurs, the retired and children. In the Ljubljana Europe Centre, Europe Minister Janez Potocnik and EU Ambassador Erwan Fouere launched a clock counting down to the day of Slovenia's full-fledged membership on May 1 2004.

NATO Accession US Senate Okays NATO Expansion

Washington, The US Senate unanimously backed the expansion of NATO to Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. In a 96:0 vote, the US comes as the third country to ratify the enlargement after Canada and Norway. The ratification ceremony was attended by foreign ministers of all seven newcomers, including Slovenia's Dimitrij Rupel. He voiced surprise at the unanimous support expressed by the Senate, since senators were much more sceptical in 1999 when NATO expanded to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The foreign ministers also met with US Secretary of State Colin Powell and attended a reception at the White House. US President George Bush told them that their respective countries have already proved themselves allies with their past actions, and expressed the conviction that they would make NATO even stronger.

Mass Grave Discovered in Eastern Slovenia

Ptuj, (STA) - A mass grave has been discovered in eastern Slovenia after a farmer ploughing a meadow for the first time in 58 years came across a number of human bones, TV Slovenia reported on Friday evening.

The meadow under Borl Castle near Ptuj, which was former state property, is hiding several thousand bodies according to the locals.

Pathologists from Maribor have confirmed that the bones found in the field were human bones. The site is also being investigated by the criminal police, according to the national broadcaster.

This is said to be only one of the mass graves in the area, as several more are allegedly lying at Zavrc and Majspark nearby. According to the government subcommission tasked with uncovering the mass graves, 196 sites of mass graves dating from WWII and its aftermath are yet to be unearthed in Slovenia.

The data of the Slovenian Institute of Recent History suggest that 614 civilians and 13,100 members of military formations which collaborated with the Nazi regime or fought the communist partisan troops were executed after the war without standing trial.

Vjesnik on Upcoming Testimony of Former Slovenian President in The Hague

Zagreb, (STA) - Next week when the former leaders of Slovenia and Serbia, Milan Kucan and Slobodan Milosevic, will probably meet for the last time face to face in The Hague, perhaps one of the most sensitive secrets regarding military operations in the former Yugoslavia will be revealed, speculates Friday's issue of Croatian daily Vjesnik.

According to the paper it could become clear whether the ten-day war in Slovenia upon the break-up of the former Yugoslavia had been agreed on or was that truly the start of a bloody tear-up of the former common state.

Despite huge amounts of books and articles written on the first days of the war in the former Yugoslavia, it is still a mystery whether the Slovenians reached an agreement with Milosevic and the Yugoslav army to allow Slovenia to get out of Yugoslavia more or less peacefully, suggests Vjesnik.

The theory that Kucan made arrangements with Milosevic in Belgrade regarding all possibilities of Slovenia's withdrawal from Yugoslavia is just as conniving as the alleged agreement between the deceased Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Milosevic on the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, writes today's Vjesnik.

At a time when Milosevic is in The Hague, when Kucan enjoys a well-deserved retirement and when Slovenia is in Europe, Kucan's testimony in The Hague will give many answers about the time which is now history, but has shaped Croatia's future to a great extent, concludes Vjesnik.

Slovenian of the Year Awards

On June 28th of June 2003 will be celebrating two important events, Slovenian Independence Day and The NSW - will be held on the same evening. This is the second year the Awards will held, this time the committee opted to have the Awards as a formal evening function, once again held and sponsored by Triglav Panther at St. Johns Park.

The Slovenian community can nominate their choices in the following categories:

- NSW - Slovenian Primary student of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Secondary student of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Tertiary student of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Apprentice of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Entrepreneur of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Outstanding Volunteer of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Outstanding Senior Citizen of the year.
- NSW - Slovenian Australian achievements in Slovenian.

I would like to remind our reader of Glas Slovenje to please read the criteria to make sure that the potential nominee complies to the criteria set.

It would be fantastic to see twice the number of enters we had last year, and I hope that the NSW Slovenian community supports these Awards and celebrates in the peoples achievements, recognising their contribution to their Slovenian community in NSW.

This is the chance they have to highlight an Australian - Slovenian working hard at school or their profession or as a volunteer worker giving them an opportunity to be appreciated for their efforts.

Please get your nominations forms by down loading all the relevant information from the Slovenian Australian Institute on www.sloaus-inst.com. Or at all the Slovenian Clubs and at St Rafael Merrylands.

Please take the time in nominating someone, all nominations close at the end of May, the judging panel will then go through the entries and make the selection based on the criteria for each category. At which time the finalist will be invited to the evening. The Winner and Highly commended will be announced at the function.

So book now for your tickets and come along to enjoy the evening, we will have something for everyone, dinner and entertainment it will be a lot of fun.

*See you there.
Valter Suber*

Slovenian e-Artist to Attempt to Communicate with Aliens

Turku, (STA) - Multi-media artist Igor Stromajer is to launch his latest project "Trauma" on Saturday in the Finnish city of Rauma. The project explores various social and intimate forms of communication. These are based on a simple outer space signal received by a commercial mobile device Handspring Visor Edge. Stromajer has been working on the multi-media communication project for three months in Rauma as part of the Raumars Artist-in-Residence. The project is to be underway tomorrow between 10 AM and 10 PM CET.

With the help of the outer space signal the "Trauma" project team will explore possible forms of outer space communication and possibilities of intimate preparation for the arrival of extraterrestrials, taking into account all traumas, frustrations and pain that such arrival would bring along.

The city hall, kindergartens, schools, the university, offices, shops, the traffic system, printed and electronic media and others have prepared for the emotional communication with aliens and for the first close contact with them.

The result of the research is close outer space communication, dangerous, but vital for survival, according to Stromajer.

Historical Archives of Slovenian Australians – NSW

The Slovenian Archives, established 9th February this year, is making sound progress. We will soon move into the rooms P. Valerijan Jenko has kindly provided for us. We now have a Business Number (ABN: 92 908 013 743) and have been endorsed as a gift recipient (meaning any donations can be claimed on tax). We have also been endorsed as an income tax exempt charity (ITEC).



We have applied for two grants to help us with initial 'setting up' costs. One to the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and the other to the Bureau for Slovenians Abroad. Although promised, the grants have not yet materialized. If it were not for the generous support and donations of Mr. Alfred Breznik (\$1000) and the Slovenian Association Sydney (\$5000), we would not be able to begin our important work. On behalf of our community, I thank them for their financial support, but more importantly, their encouragement and support of our endeavours. The management committee of HASA has met and made some important organizational decisions.

Based on the information I'm getting by attending a yearlong archival course, 'Managing Historical Documents' at the University of NSW, we have been able to develop 'best practice' guidelines for our archives collections.

We have also looked at various ways of arranging the collections.

The categories under which our collection will be organized are:

General File, alphabetically arranged. In these files, family histories and bibliographies will be the focus. Our community has achieved much and this is due to the hard work of many individuals. These archives give us an opportunity to acknowledge their work and pass the information to future generations. It really is a way of celebrating our achievements. Of course, the individuals or families must donate this information to us.

Institutional File, which will include the records of our community clubs, sporting groups and cultural groups. The safe keeping of their records is of vital importance. Much information about the early years of our clubs, for example, is in people's homes. Now we have a chance to bring it all together and preserve it for the future generations.

Literary Works and Publications. Our focus for this collection is work related to NSW. Nevertheless, the productivity of Slovenians over many years ensures that this will be a large collection. Again I urge everyone to check cupboards and drawers for publications and issues of our early years. I urge our many authors to provide us with a copy of their works and some personal information for our General File. Let's acknowledge now and forever, the talents and skills of our community members.

Subject Files. These will include areas we have researched over the years. For example, 'Slovenian Schooling in NSW'; 'Migration Stories' etc.

Films, Videos and Photographs. Again, these will reflect our community life over the years. I do urge you however, that if you donate these to the center, you include a brief description of: From where it comes, what or who is shown (names if possible), when it was taken and most importantly why it is significant. Please, please do not write on the back of the photo! Rather attach with a plastic clip, a sheet of paper containing the information. Of course, many old photos have information on the reverse. This is acceptable because it gives it history and context.

So you see, much work is being done in the background. But we cannot achieve success in our endeavours if we do not have support and help from you, our community.

How can you help?

Please consider putting together your **family history**. Who are the members? What were your experiences in the early years of migration? Highlight some achievements. It is the responsibility of the younger generation to undertake this challenge. I will be inviting and encouraging such participation strongly.

Search through your drawers and cupboards for any memorabilia or records of the early years of settlement. Don't forget the present however. Record all major events and consider donating them to us for preservation.

Volunteer some of your time to us. We will need many helpers in the arrangement and accessioning of the collections. I will teach you any computer skills necessary.



I believe that we must extend our foundation of knowledge. I therefore invite anyone interested to consider undertaking the yearlong course at the University of NSW titled 'Managing Historical Documents'. I'm sure you will find it very enjoyable, as I do. But more importantly, it will ensure a strong future for our archives center. Keeping you informed,

Olga Lah



AIMS & OBJECTIVES FOR THIS PROJECT

1). The formation of Ansambel Avstralskih Pet has already helped to continue promoting traditional Slovenian folk music in Australia. Each member has been heavily involved in the Slovenian music scene in Australia. They also have a passion to continue promoting the rich Slovenian music tradition not only to members of the Australian Slovenian community and the general Australian community at large but also promoting the fact that they are keeping this tradition alive for generations to come! . By performing in Slovenia, we will be able to successfully promote the fact that we as Australian Slovenians are keeping Slovenian folk music alive.

2). Each member of our ansambel has had years of musical training and experience. This experience has given us a professional approach to the way we promote Slovenian folk music and of course this would be clearly demonstrated to all audiences we would perform for in Slovenia. We would have a quality cultural program as well as a varied repertoire of popular and originally composed songs.

3). A number of Slovenian organisations in Australia have already given us their support in working on this very important project. Discussions have already taken place with the presidents of Slovensko Drustvo Sydney, Slovensko Drustvo Planica in Wollongong and Slovensko Sportno Drustvo St Albans in Melbourne. They will allow us to organise concerts with the aim of promoting ourselves as well as helping raise much needed funds. In addition, we are already preparing for performances in a number of major Slovenian events to be held next year in Australia.

4). It goes without saying that our ansambel is actively promoting Slovenian culture, language and of course musical tradition, particularly amongst the 2nd and 3rd generation Slovenians living in Australia. This of course is so we keep the Slovenian traditions alive in this country. As many of the Slovenian bands have visited Australia over the past 30 years and we now feel that it is our turn that we as and Australian Slovenian band return the favour by performing and promoting Slovenian music as 'Aussies' in Slovenia! We wouldn't simply be another 'straight' Slovenian group. We are promoting ourselves as Australian Slovenian musicians living around the other side of the world who are doing our utmost to keep Slovenian music and traditions alive in Australia!

5). We have already been invited to perform in Slovenia! Pater Niko Zvokelj who is the main priest at the church of Nova Stifca na Dolenjskem has invited us to perform for the Assumption Day holiday on August 15th 2003. In addition he has excellent contacts with Ansambel Franca Mihelica. It was suggested by him that perhaps arrangements could be made for our group to be a supporting act for that very popular band. After a visit in Slovenia last year, the director of M hotel in Ljubljana (Siska), offered our group free accommodation on the proviso that we perform free of charge when in Slovenia and that they arrange a special evening in their hotel inviting all 'izseljence' in Slovenia at that time to attend. Our ansambel would be the major performing item for the event.

6). Our ansambel is heavily structured around the sound of the diatonic button accordion- the traditional Slovenian instrument! Lenti Lenko and Peter Grivic are currently involved with the promoting of Zupan accordions in Australia- a task they are undertaking without any reimbursement. This is developing an interest for this beautiful instrument, not only within the Slovenian community, but also within the wider Australian population. This is another contribution towards our involvement in promoting Slovenian tradition in Australia. Peter Grivic's occupation as an automotive electrician involves him encouraging the purchases of Iskra's electrical automotive products in Australia!

7). Peter Grivic, Rudi Crncec and Lenti Lenko are involved giving tuition and assistance to a number of younger 2nd and 3rd generation Slovenians in learning to play the diatonic button accordion. We believe that the opportunity to perform in Slovenia will greatly increase our knowledge and exposure to improve our knowledge base, which we hand down to this younger generation! Branko Kojc also commits to assisting numerous people in giving them a structural knowledge of Slovenian music and styles.

8). Our performances in Slovenia would directly strengthen ties between Australia and Slovenia at a cultural level. We know that groups from other countries with Slovenian immigrants have had the opportunity to successfully perform in Slovenia. We feel that it is time that we strengthen that very important cultural link between Australia and Slovenia as this has not yet occurred with regards to an Australian Slovenian band performing in Slovenia.

9). Australia needs this commitment from Slovenia to encourage present and future cultural activities to flourish. Without Slovenia's moral and financial support, we can clearly see that within the next couple of years the Slovenian traditions will begin to fade, which is most definitely not in Slovenia's interest nor that of the Australian Slovenian community. We are striving to keep what little we have left and promote it to our younger generation- the future of the Australian Slovenian Community!

10). Ansambel Avstralskih Pet will do it's utmost to ensure that it plays a major role in the promotion of Slovenian music, particularly for the younger generation. We are genuine in our commitment to keep Slovenian musical traditions alive and that these traditions will continue to strengthen the bond linking Slovenia with the Australian Slovenian community!

BIOGRAPHY OF BAND MEMBERS

Ansambel 'Avstralskih 5' comprises 5 very talented musicians. All are well known amongst the Slovenian community in Australia and have done much in promoting Slovenian culture, language, music and tradition in this country.

Here is a brief biography of each member

MR BRANKO KOJC (guitar/bass/vocals) - was born in Maribor and has spent most of his life living in Australia. He has always been heavily involved in performing and promoting Slovenian music in this country and performed in the first popular Slovenian band in Australia, Ansambel 'Bled' for 16 years. In that time they also successfully recorded an album of original Slovenian compositions. Since that time Branko has continued to perform with different bands including Slovenski Kvintet, Kristal, Lipa and Veseli Slovenci to name just a few. He is always available to help in Slovenian cultural events and when touring bands visit us from Slovenia. Branko goes out of his way to help the 2nd generation Slovenians born in this country to appreciate Slovenian music. He has helped a number of bands and individuals to successfully establish themselves as musicians within the Slovenian community, which is something to be proud of! It just goes to show that Branko is intent that Slovenian music remains an important part of keeping the Slovenian traditions and culture alive in Australia.

EVELYN KOJC- (vocals/percussion) - who is Branko's daughter, has been very encouraged by her parents to involve herself with Slovenian music. Evelyn is also actively involved in many other Slovenian community activities. She is very well respected for her generous nature and positive attitude She works on Slovenian youth radio in Melbourne and is also very involved in various Slovenian cultural events held throughout the year. Evelyn has also been involved in Slovenian folklore dancing groups and is also helping establish a Slovenian school for children at the Slovenian Australia Cultural and Sports Association St Albans in Melbourne where she is an active committee member. She has been performing as the main vocalist with the Melbourne band 'Plave Noci' for the past 3 years. Evelyn is extremely proud of her Slovenian background and this is clearly evident in the amount of time she gives to the Slovenian community in this country!

PETER GRIVIC- (piano and diatonic button accordion/ bass guitar/vocals/drums & clarinet) is very well known throughout the Slovenian community in Australia as an accomplished accordionist, having studied piano accordion for 20 years and played button accordion for 10 years. He won the prestigious 'King of Polka Down Under' award which was held recently in Sydney. Peter has never been to Slovenia but has always had a strong love of Slovenian music and culture which has been passed down to him by his late Grandfather Mr Janko Grivic, who has raised him since birth and financed his total musical career. Janko's dream was to see his grandson perform in his beloved homeland Slovenia! Peter has performed in a number of well known Slovenian bands over the years including Planica, Lipa, Domaci Fantje (with whom he successfully

recorded the CD 'Domaci Fantje, Zlate Harmonike which contained 6 of his own compositions). Peter was also involved in the recording of the CD 'Slovenija je Domovina Tvoja' with the men's vocal group 'Planica' from Wollongong. He always makes himself available to assist bands from Slovenia performing here, loaning sound/PA. Touring Slovenian Bands Peter helped out when they visited Australia include Ansambel Stajerskih Sedem, Big Ben, Korosec and Zavrski Fantje (which was accompanied with Ansambel Lipa). Peter has also accompanied Slovenian folklore dancing groups and performed at various cultural festivals promoting Slovenia and it's culture here in Australia. Peter has always had the wish that he could one day soon successfully perform in Slovenia so his late Grandfather's dream would come true!

RUDI CRNCEC - (diatonic button accordion/guitar/bass guitar/vocals/drums & percussion) is also very well known as an outstanding musician throughout the Slovenian community in Australia. He displays incredible charisma when performing in front of an audience and he is very proud of the fact that his parents have inspired him to perform and promote Slovenian music in this country. Rudi has also been actively involved in the Slovenian drama group in Sydney as well as working on Slovenian radio. He has been an inspiration to a large number of up and coming accordionists both young and old. He also wishes that Slovenian music remain alive in Australia and that it must be promoted in Slovenia! Rudi has also extensively performed for various bands and cultural activities promoting Slovenia. He has accompanied Slovenian folklore dancing groups from an early age and performed with the Sydney band 'Crni Baron' for a number of years. Rudi has inspired many people into a musical career. Here we can include Peter and Lenti who have followed in his footsteps by taking up the diatonic button accordion.

LENTI LENKO OAM - (organ/piano/synthesiser/bass guitar/piano accordion/diatonic button accordion/vocals). Is very well known in the Australian Slovenian community. He has been actively involved in all aspects of the Slovenian community from a very early age. He has achieved many goals for Slovenians in Australia, having recently been awarded the medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the Slovenian Community in Australia especially amongst the youth. Lenti is actively involved in Slovenian radio and assists wherever necessary if there is a Slovenian community function. He was also actively involved in the movement for Slovenian Independence and international recognition in the early 1990's as well as being an active member of the Slovenian National Council of Victoria and many other Slovenian organisations in Australia. He has been a church organist at the Slovenian Church Saint's Cyril and Methodius in Kew, Melbourne for the past 17 years and was the acting president of the Slovenian National Council in Victoria during 2002. Lenti has an Associate, Licentiate and University degree in Music and is a professional teacher of piano, organ, keyboard and music theory. He also has his own music production and recording studio- www.miditek.com.au Lenti is also a proficient musician having recorded backing tracks for now well known Australian performers including Vanessa Amorosi and the late Peter Chappel. Lenti has a huge passion for Slovenian music from a very early age. Both his parents are actively involved in the Slovenian community in Melbourne and they have always imparted their love for Slovenian language, culture and music. Lenti has supported many groups and bands from Slovenia including Ansambel Stajerskih Sedem, Trio Pogladic, Veseljaki, Big Ben, Orleki, Korosec and KUD Student to name just a few, as well as production of CD's for Slovenian bands which had arrived in Australia and run short of their supply. He has also performed in many Slovenian bands here in Australia including Veseli Slovenci, Karantanija and Domaci Fantje (who also successfully recorded their original CD, Zlate Harmonike in his own recording studio). Lenti also has a lifelong dream to successfully perform in Slovenia, the homeland of his parents. He wants to show that Slovenian music is alive and active in Australia and that there are people here who wish to keep this very important part of Slovenian tradition alive!



TRIGLAV TRIVIA

March and April have been as busy as ever with new poker machines and fresh up-grades for more excitement and fun in poker machine play. We have also installed the latest technology in till systems called Micros which eases the burden on financial reporting.

At our last Board Meeting the agreed amount of \$100,000 was allocated between five groups with a generous portion going to Slovenian Cultural Events. Other groups benefiting from the funding in order of funding preference are Bocce Triglav, Wetherill Park Cricket, Fairfield Hotspurs Soccer and Our Lady of Mt Carmel Ladies Netball. Each group is very happy to receive their funding and quite determined to support Club Triglav (Panthers) any way they can.

We have become truly multi cultural club now that the Uruguayan's have found us and they think we are terrific. They create great music while rehearsing in our hall three nights a week and bring their friends and family with them which in turn boosts are sales and visitation. We have become so popular with them that we now have another group rehearsing in the dining room at the same time and a Uruguayan Festival stretching from 9am in the morning 'til late.

The Cambodian Youth Groups has had yet another function with us and shown us once again how versatile this tiny little area of Sydney has become. On the night they provided traditional food and performed traditional dance and music numbers that was absolutely magnificent to watch.

Earlier in April Club Triglav (Panthers) presented a brand new Scanner and Printer to Maria Grosman and Ivan Klobcic from Club Tivoli Newcastle. The Slovenian Cultural Events committee were proud to take the opportunity to donate equipment that will be put to good use not only for the business of the club but also for the Archives project.



As always on Anzac Day we proudly placed flowers at the monument in the Courtyard and prayers were lead by Father Valerijan, and guests

attending were Don Ellks, and Ken Chapman. This ceremony was followed by a simple dinner where everyone was able to chat and enjoy each others company.

St Johns Park Panthers (Triglav) is your club
 80-84 Brisbane Road St Johns Park - General Enquiry 02 9610 627
 and ask for Lesley (she speaks 125 words of Slovenian now)