Early Parliamentary Elections

Slovenia held its first early general elections on December 4, after the non-confidence vote to the government of Borut Pahor in September. The elections were won by Ljubljana’s mayor Mr. Zoran Janković’s party Positive Slovenia.

Positive Slovenia was formed only a few weeks before the elections, after Zoran Janković was asked by several prominent Slovenians to take part in this year’s contest.

Positive Slovenia won 28.5% of the vote or 28 seats in the 90-strong legislature, show the results after nearly all the ballots were counted in the 64.6% electoral turnout. Janković attributed his success to “focus on the platform and the team” rather than scandals, arguing that his victory was “evidence that Slovenia will go in the right direction.”

Mr. Janković giving speech just after the unofficial results were announced.
Janković said people had showed that they wanted “a new Slovenia that will be economically successful and social ... with respect and cooperation.” Although having been ranked as firm favorites in all pre-election public opinion polls, the Democrats (SDS) of Janez Janša secured 26.2% of the vote and 26 seats.

Three more parties made it into the parliament: the Pensioners’ Party (DeSUS), which won 6.9% and six seats, as did the People’s Party (SLS) with 6.9%, while New Slovenia (NSi) made it with 4.8% and four seats.

Of the parties that were in the parliament from 2008 through 2011, the Slovenian National Party, the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, and the Zares-Social Liberals did not reach the 4% threshold needed to win seats in the parliament.

Due to Slovenia’s electoral system, the smaller parties will prove crucial in building a coalition, as natural allies alone have too few votes to build a strong government.
As a part of the Embassy Adoption Program, Simona Seliškar and Nuška Zakrajšek of the Slovenian Embassy visited John W. Ross Elementary School in Washington, DC. The embassy is participating in the program for the third year in a row, whereas the program itself has existed since 1974.

The Embassy Adoption Program works with 5th and 6th grade students, to infuse global education to DC Public School students through DC’s international community. The students in a class “adopted” by an embassy spend a year immersed in various programs that, among other, include classroom sessions hosted by embassy representatives, and field trips to gain hands-on experience with their “adopted” culture.

December 6 was the first time that Slovenian embassy representatives visited the class at Ross Elementary School, which is situated in a charming historic building near Dupont Circle, and were very happy to find out that the children already knew quite a few facts about Slovenia.

The presentation on Slovenia included its tourist attractions, national history, national cuisine, sports, and music. The kids were very excited after the presentation and had lots of questions about the country.

The students will also become pen pals with a class at a Slovenian school back in Ljubljana, so that all the children will be able to share their learning experience with each other, be able to understand each other’s communities and increase cross-cultural communication skills.
On Thursday, December 6, the Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United States, Ambassador João Vale de Almeida hosted the reception to celebrate the opening of a Washington office of the European Union National Institutes for Culture.

Full members of EUNIC in Washington are the Alliance Française, Austrian Cultural Forum Washington, British Council, Goethe-Institut, Hellenic Foundation for Culture, Instituto Camões, Romanian Cultural Institute, and Italian Cultural Institute.

The embassies can become associate members, and among the current members in the Washington cluster is also the Slovenian embassy and the embassies of Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden, while the Delegation of the European Union to the United States is an observer.

EUNIC Washington aims to present diverse, cutting-edge and thought-provoking cultural and educational programs to showcase the best of contemporary Europe.

In addition, you can check its website at: http://www.eunic-online.eu/, or follow it on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/EUNICDC.

Representatives of EUNIC members and associate members.

Mr. Thomas Caurin, executive director of Alliance Française de Washington, DC.
When the Slovenian American newspaper Ameriška Domovina - The American Home closed in 2008 after 110 years of publication because of illness of publisher Jim Debevec, local Slovenians under the leadership of Breda Loncar and Tony Petkovsek decided to establish a new paper, the Slovenian American Times (SAT). The bilingual Slovenian American Times celebrated three years of successful publication this November. Published each month on 36 large pages, it provides a wealth of Slovenian community, cultural, and heritage news, local as well as global. In addition to Slovenian news, it features a number of regular columnists. Among occasional contributors is also prominent Jim Klobuchar, the legendary retired columnist of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, author of over twenty books and father of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar. The paper can be ordered online (SlovenianAmericanTimes.com), by phone (440-833-0020), or from Slovenian American Times, 33977 Chardon Road, Suite 120, Willoughby Hills, OH 44094.

**Contest For Livery Design**

Slovenian aircraft manufacturer Pipistrel is unveiling the contest for the exterior (livery) design of the first Panthera aircraft, which will be presented in major air shows and media around the world in 2012. Pipistrel is looking for a livery which will enhance Panthera’s lines and unique characteristics such as luxury, sportiness, speed, efficiency, environmental friendliness, and safety. More information on the Panthera can be found at www.panthera-aircraft.com. Send your contribution to: contest@pipistrel.si not later than January 10, 2012. The winning livery design, according to Pipistrel’s panel of judges, will be awarded a prize. More info at: http://www.facebook.com/Pipistrel?sk=app_242182309174965.

New Panthera.
Kompas Holiday International is one of the largest Central and Southern Europe Escorted Tour specialists as well as a Groups operator and FIT supplier to the wholesale travel industry in North America, built on 60 years of experience in the field.

In recent years, Kompas Holidays has combined its vast experience in European escorted tours with the Mediterranean cruise business by offering, within its tour programs, land and sea Adriatic tours, and various cruises along the Croatian coast.

In conjunction with sailing tours as well as any Tour Operators’ own European cruises, Kompas is able assist with all pre- and post-accommodation in the arrival or departure hub, complete with sightseeing city stays and tours in and from the port of call. More about its products and tour programs can be discovered at: www.kompas.net, or by email at kompas@kompas.net.
The European Union Visitors Program (EUVP) invites young, promising leaders from countries outside the European Union to visit Europe to gain a first-hand appreciation of the E.U.’s goals, policies and peoples and to increase mutual understanding between professionals from non-E.U. countries and their E.U. counterparts.

The EUVP offers a one-week long program to learn more about the E.U. in Brussels and the E.U. institutions, tailor-made to the requests and interests of each participant. The program has been in operation since 1974. That first year, five selected Americans made their way across the Atlantic. Since then, more than 600 have followed.

Those eligible to participate are government officials (local, state, and federal), journalists, trade unionists, educators, officials of non-profit, non-governmental organizations and other professionals in their mid-20s to mid-40s with career-related interests in the European Union.

The application deadline for the 2013 program is March 1, 2012. The official application and information for this program is available at http://www.eurunion.org/eu/.

Slovenian extreme athletes Miro Kregar and Nino Cokan placed third and fourth, respectively, at the 27th Ultraman World Championships in Hawaii last weekend. The event featured ten kilometers of open ocean swim, a 421-kilometer cross-country bike ride, and a 84-kilometer run.

Kregar, who finished the first day of the competition in the 13th place and the second day in the sixth, won the running event on the third day with the time of 6:24:10, which propelled him to the third place overall with the combined time of 23 hours and a half.

Cokan, who on the other hand did better in swimming and biking, placing fifth on the first day and fourth on the second, was an hour and a half slower than Kregar on the third day, thus achieving the combined time of 24 hours and 17 minutes and overall placing fourth.
LIST OF EVENTS

1. “Polka! The Movie”
A film documentary about Slovenian music in America written and narrated by Mr. Joe Valencic for RTV Slovenija. The film is preceded by live Slovenian accordion music at 1:00 pm and a speech by Mr. Valencic.
When: Sunday, January 15, 2012 at 1:30 pm
Where: Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130

2. Annual Ski Trip
Dust off the skis and snowboards, it’s time for the SCC 2012 Annual Ski Trip to the famous Mt. La Crosse, WI. If interested, please respond ASAP – available space is limited.
Depart: Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center, 14252 Main Street, Lemont, IL, on Friday, January 13, 2012 at 7:00pm.
Return: Leaving Mt. La Crosse on Sunday, January 15, 2013 at 5:00pm.
Contact: SCC Ski Line @ 708-243-3825 or 708-250-4775 or email rhozjan@mahmachine.com

3. The European Career Fair in Boston
The European Career Fair in Boston is an annual recruiting event, organized by the MIT European Club, that connects employers from Europe with the most talented candidates that live in the US. The Career Fair will offer an opportunity to: facilitate matching European employers to some of the brightest researchers who are interested in a career in Europe; and increase the awareness in the United States of the opportunities that European research offers. The European Commission will have a stand at the Career Fair on the exhibition day on January 21.
When: January 21 - 23, 2012
Where: (MIT campus, Cambridge, MA)
More information: www.euro-career.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome To a New Colleague

A new cultural and public diplomacy officer started her tenure at the Slovenian Embassy in the month of November. Besides editing the weekly Embassy Newsletter, she will be involved in cultural and other promotion of Slovenia in the United States through various events at the embassy as well as on a wider European level.

Ms. Zakrajsek at the Embassy on election day.