Students from the Faculty of Social Sciences Visiting

On Wednesday, April 25, 2012, a group of students of international relations from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, led by Professor Zlatko Šabič, visited the Slovenian Embassy. At the embassy, the group was warmly greeted by Ambassador Kirn, who talked about the importance of international relations and diplomacy.

The ambassador presented basic features of the diplomats’ work. He talked about the mission to the U.S. and pointed out that Slovenia is closely integrated into the international community and takes its role seriously and responsibly.

Following the ambassador’s welcome remarks, Ms. Maša Šiftar de Arzu, diplomat in charge of business and scientific affairs, led a conversation. That was an excellent opportunity for the students to discuss topics related to international relations and get first-hand advice from an experienced diplomat. The field trip undoubtedly constitutes an integral part of their international organizations course with the aim of deepening the students’ understanding of key U.S. and international political and economic institutions.
During their stay in Washington, the group visited several institutions, including Department of State, U.S. Congress, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Organization of American States. In addition, the students met with several academics from George Washington and Johns Hopkins universities and learned about the work of the U.S. Institute for Peace, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Lenarčič Finishes Solo Flight around the Globe

Slovenian adventurer Matevž Lenarčič landed at the Ljubljana airport on Thursday, April 19, 2012, after making his second solo flight around the world in an ultralight airplane without a copilot or additional air support.

Lenarčič, who wanted to conclude his flight at the aviation fair in Friedrichshafen, decided to land his plane at the home airport due to bad weather that would have prevented him from flying across the Alps. Commenting on his three-month long adventure, Lenarčič said that everything was a question of perspective.

“Even if Slovenia might not be the most beautiful country, but it is one of the most beautiful. It would be nice if there were no borders, like there are none in the sky. I’ve seen no borders; borders exist only in our heads,” he added.

He accomplished the feat that took him across some 60 countries, six continents and over the highest mountains of five continents in a Virus SW 914, a 290-kilo (640 lbs) plane built by the Slovenian company Pipistrel. Lenarčič had to postpone the start of “GreenLight World Flight” several times because of different problems before taking off from the Ljubljana airport on January 8.

On his way around the globe, Lenarčič also successfully visited the United States. He landed on the southeast coast of the U.S. in Florida on Tuesday, January 17. Afterwards, he continued towards Canyon Lake, TX, and Calexico, CA, prior to heading to Middle and South America and eventually fly over the Pacific Ocean.

After crossing the Pacific from Chile, Lenarčič was grounded in central Australia for ten days due to the damage his plane suffered in turbulence when he was flying over Ayers Rock. His plane suffered two cracks in its rear, and two members of the GreenLight World Flight team were sent from Slovenia to repair the damage.

During his adventure, Lenarčič became the first Slovenian to land in Antarctica and the first Slovenian to make a flyover of Mt. Everest. He also flew over Europe’s highest peak Mt. Blanc, South America’s Aconcagua, Australia’s Mt. Kosciuszko and Africa’s Kilimanjaro.

(Source: STA)
Ljubljana has won the 2012 European Prize for Urban Public Space for the renovation of the banks of the Ljubljanica River in the old city center. The Slovenian capital shares the top prize with Barcelona’s landscaping of Turo de Rovira.

After entering the capital of Slovenia from the south, the Ljubljanica draws a pronounced loop around the northern slope of the Castle Hill, after which it moves away from the city center in an easterly direction. In the eighteenth century, the Gruber Canal (Gruberjev prekop) was opened up in an attempt to remedy frequent flooding, cutting through the southern slope of the hill and thus isolating the old city center as an island.

Exceptionally well preserved, this isolated historic area has accumulated a generous repertoire of architectural styles, which, from the Baroque era through to the Vienna Secession, reflect the position of Ljubljana as a cultural and geographic crossroads between the Latin South and the Germanic North. Once the river had been tamed, the city could expand northwards thanks to the construction of a considerable number of bridges.

Some of the most remarkable of these bridges, such as the Triple Bridge (Tromostovje, 1932) and the Shoemakers’ Bridge (Čevljarski most, 1931), are work of the architect Jože Plečnik, who, after the 1930s, marked the river’s course with a profuse and varied collection of buildings, squares, canals, embankments and riverside parks.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the river had lost the spirit that Plečnik had managed to give it, to the extent of being divested of its leading role as the city’s preeminent public space.

The renovation of Ljubljanica’s banks and bridges, awarded the European Prize for Urban Public Space, a collective and concentrated effort of several architectural bureaus, was initiated in 2004, while actual works on the renovation started in 2006.

The prize is an initiative of the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB). The aim of the prize, which is awarded biennially by six European architectural institutions, is to recognize the public character of urban spaces and their capacity for promoting social cohesion. (Source: STA, www.publicspace.org)
President of the Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Jože Trontelj, unveiled on Wednesday, April 25, 2012, the first book of the Slovenian Linguistic Atlas, labeling it a "celebration for the Slovenian nation and a first-class cultural achievement".

With the linguistic atlas, which on over 300 pages details the finer nuances of the Slovenian regional dialects, Slovenia now ranks among nations which have codified this part of their linguistic heritage, Trontelj explained.

"Slovenians have the largest number of dialects, but these are disappearing fast despite their enormous significance," he added.

The project to chart and compile all the dialects took over 70 years, with four generations of linguists compiling a list of words in over 400 local dialects and the corresponding maps.

The first book, entitled "Human (body, illness, family)”, contains local variants of words for body parts, various illnesses and names of family relations.

(Source: STA)

Slovenian Science Academy Unveils Slovenian Linguistic Atlas

Slovenes began settling in Cleveland in the 1880s, with immigration being heaviest in the periods 1890-1914, 1919-24, and 1949-60. As more Slovenes settled there, a sense of community began to develop. Over time, family units began to appear. All those, led to the expansion of a civil society that promoted Slovenian culture and language. Strong and numerous Slovenian communities vigorously started supporting literally hundreds of organizations reflecting their ethnic heritage and traditions. People soon became active in the cultural life of the community, reinvigorating it. In that spirit, they founded the Korotan Singing Society in 1950s.

First, a modest number of members, it quickly attracted a wide and diverse spectrum of people. Initially only a men’s choir, it evolved into a mixed choir in 1952. In only one year after the establishment, the number of signers reached 75.

The contribution of the Korotan Singing Society has been invaluable. Its abundant selection of Slovenian choral creativity and desire to expand the Slovenian language and culture led to many successful concerts and appearances. Thanks to Korotan Singing Society, the Slovenian choral song and Slovenian language are reachable to all who wish to cooperate.

On Sunday, April 29, 2012, the concert and a banquet celebrating the 60th anniversary of the choir will take place in the Slovenian National Home on St. Clair Ave. (www.slovenianhome.com) in Cleveland.

60th Anniversary of the Korotan Singing Society

Korotan Mixed Choir.
Bela Krajina, the southernmost part of Slovenia, on one side surrounded by lovely wine-growing hills and the pristine and warm Kolpa river, on the other side, is a place where Zeleni Jurij (the Green George) and his feast-day has had a very long tradition.

In mythology, Jurij is the son of the highest god of the Slavs, Perun. He returns to land after winter, and everywhere he goes, nature becomes alive again, trees begin to turn green, seeds in the fields begin to sprout, the day grows longer and sun is getting warmer.

This ancient mythological figure is widely known among people. Shepherds used to dress one of them in a garment made of green leaves and branches of white birch, and go from house to house singing songs and invoking happiness for the year. They would get a little present in each house and, in return, they would give back a small branch to the master of the house. That symbolic gesture meant that the house was blessed for the year and that the stock that the farmer had, would not fall ill and his fields would grow rich.

This custom of getting dressed in greenery is still alive in Bela Krajina. There is still, every year, the festival of jurjevanje in Črnomelj as part of spring celebrations. The festival dates back to 1964 and is the oldest folklore festival in Slovenia and also one of the largest. In its more than a forty-year tradition, it has become an integral part of the town.

The main event occurs when a group of young boys and girls go from a nearby hill to the town center. At the head of it, one youngster would blow on a homemade bark horn to chase away evil spirits, then the Zeleni Jurij figure, circled by of girls singing an old folk song, “All mountain is already green” would appear.

During the festivities, many local and international folklore groups perform their music, dances and songs, which date back to between the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Every year, visitors can hear traditional music played on the stringed instruments such as “tamburica”, “brač”, “berda”, “bisernica”, and “bugarija”, and on “gudalo”, “white birch leaf”, “rug” and some other traditional instruments typical for Bela Krajina.

(G. Jevšček - Tourist information center Črnomelj)
In the far southeast of Slovenia, right at the border with Croatia along the river Kolpa, lies Bela Krajina (White Carniola). The local people often say of their region that it lies on the sunny side of the Gorjanci hills, and that it is a land of white birches and white national costumes, all of which is true.

The two traditional centers of Bela Krajina are the old towns of Črnomelj and Metlika. The town of Črnomelj recently celebrated the 600th anniversary of being granted town rights. Metlika is half a century older. Both towns have much to offer in terms of cultural history. Sights in the town centers include old castles, numerous museums and galleries and other institutions of national importance.

The other undoubtedly distinguishing feature of Bela Krajina is its extraordinarily rich cultural heritage, with numerous folklore events attracting visitors from far and wide. Not overlooked should also be the numerous material goods for which the people of Bela Krajina can pride themselves. Bela Krajina’s winemakers are among the finest in Slovenia and their wines (the best known are the red Metliška Črnina and the white Belokranjsko Belo) have won numerous international awards.

The most important natural sights of Bela Krajina include the river Kolpa, one of Slovenia’s cleanest and warmest rivers, part of which flows through the protected region of the Kolpa Nature Park, and the river Lahinja, part of the basin of which forms a protected landscape area containing numerous karst phenomena. Also very beautiful and interesting is the powerful spring of the river Krupa near Semič, where it is even possible to find specimens of the ‘human fish’ (Proteus anguinus).

Among the popular events attracting every year large numbers of visitors to Bela Krajina is the Vinska Vigred (‘Wine Spring’) event in Metlika. Folklore enthusiasts gather in Črnomelj for Slovenia’s oldest folklore festival, Jurjevanje (‘Feast of St. George’), while a similar folklore-based event in Semič is the Semiška Ohcet (‘Semič Wedding’), where couples get married according to the old Bela Krajina tradition, dressed in traditional local costumes.
**EU Open House**

Feel sLOVEnia and its beat. Taste traditional Slovenian food and enjoy exquisite wines while enjoying the sculpture exhibition by Lučka Koščak. Listen to Slovenian music performed by ArtVento Quintet while learning about Maribor - European Capital of Culture 2012. See how potica and jabolčni zavitek - traditional Slovenian pastries are made by Rocky Mounatin Potica while your children enjoy a performance by Ross Elementary School students.

**When:** Saturday, May 12, 2012 at 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Where:** Embassy of The Republic of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

More information: [www.EUOpenHouse.org](http://www.EUOpenHouse.org)

If you would like to volunteer at the Slovenian Embassy, please send an e-mail to: nuska.zakrajsek@gov.si.

**Concert by Marjan Zgonc and Tomaz Vrhovnik**

A special two-hour performance with a 30-minute intermission. The first hour will be a vocal performance and the second hour will be a musical performance. After the concert, there will be music for dancing. Admission fee is $10.

**When:** Friday, April 27, 2012 at 7:00 pm

**Where:** Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center, 14252 Main Street, Lemont, IL 60439

More information: [www.slovenian-center.org](http://www.slovenian-center.org)

**6th Annual International Children’s Festival**

The Embassy of Slovenia is participating in the annual International Children’s Festival hosting an exhibit as part of the Embassy Cultural Displays Program.

**When:** Sunday, May 6, 2012 at 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm

**Where:** The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington D.C., DC 20004

More information: [www.meridian.org/icf](http://www.meridian.org/icf)

**Eurovision Song Contest 2012**

The EUNIC Washington DC Cluster invites you to party with us to celebrate Eurovision Song Contest 2012.

**When:** May 26, 2012 at 3:00 to 7:00 pm

**Where:** Embassy of Austria Washington, 3524 International Court NW, Washington DC, 20008-3027, Red Metro: Van Ness - UDC


[https://www.formstack.com/forms/?1207970-1PuDr1Ez8v](https://www.formstack.com/forms/?1207970-1PuDr1Ez8v)

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**TO DO LIST**

**Lučka Koščak: Angels**

“The sculpture of Lučka Koščak is definitely something special inside the Slovenian Art space (and in general), because we can’t define it within the context of either traditional or even less of modernistic or postmodernistic sculpture... The peace that the sculptures express is not meant to be for them, but for us. The calmness that they shine with is not the calmness of timelessness, but the calmness of this very moment that we live in...” (Mojca Grmek, Art Critic)

**Where:** St. Cyril’s Gallery, 62 Saint Mark’s Place, New York, NY 10003

**When:** Friday, April 27, 2012 at 7:00 pm

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

**When:** Saturday, May 12, 2012 at 11:00 am