



**Eye on Slovenia**  
Slovenia at the 62nd UN General  
Assembly

**No. 20, 5. October 2007**  
Free Edition  
ISSN: 1854-4924

Publisher: [Slovenska tiskovna agencija](#), Ltd., Ljubljana, Tivolska cesta 50, in cooperation with the Slovenian Foreign Ministry, E-mail: [desk@sta.si](mailto:desk@sta.si)

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Display Issue No. 20 (05.10.2007)

### **SLOVENIA PRESENTS EU PRESIDENCY PLANS AND VIEWS ON BALKANS TO UN**

Prime Minister Janez Janša and Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel took part in New York between 24 and 28 September in the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly. Their itinerary included many bilateral meetings with foreign officials, at which they presented Slovenia's plans for the EU presidency in the first half of 2008 as well as the situation in the Balkans.

In his address at the general debate at the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Janša pointed to the priorities of Slovenia's EU presidency: the fight on climate change, protection of human rights, progress in the Western Balkans, UN reform and intercultural dialogue. Prime Minister Janša and Minister Rupel were also present at the UN summit on climate change, which was held as part of the General Assembly.

The situation in the Balkans was the focal point of Prime Minister Janša's meeting with Serbian President Boris Tadić, Montenegrin Prime Minister Željko Šturanović and EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, which were held on the sidelines of the General Assembly. He acquainted Solana with a letter on the situation in the Western Balkans that he had sent earlier to his EU counterparts and the President of the European Commission.

During his stay in New York, Minister Rupel took part in a number of meetings held by the EU Troika, in a meeting of EU representatives with Russia, and a transatlantic dinner. He also held a series of bilateral meetings. The minister also paid a stop in Washington, where he inaugurated the renovated Slovenian embassy building.

Slovenia also ascribes special importance to the Mediterranean area. Minister Rupel acquainted Ihsanoglu with Slovenia's plans to establish a Euro-Mediterranean University in Piran that will associate scientists and scholars from around the Mediterranean. Rupel also outlined Slovenia's activities in promoting intercultural dialogue to his counterparts from Egypt Aboul Gheit, Lebanon Fawzi Salloukh and Algeria Mourad Medelci.

As part of his stay, Minister Rupel took part in a breakfast of foreign ministers of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. He said Slovenia was keenly following the work of the Alliance and welcomed its plans in the areas of intercultural dialogue and inter-religious understanding, tolerance and cooperation.



Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel and Secretary General of the Islamic Conference Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. (Photo: BOBO)

### **EU AND UN PRIORITIES DISCUSSED IN NEW YORK**

Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel together with Prime Minister Janez Janša held separate meetings with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and chair of the 62nd UN General Assembly Srgjan Kerim on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meetings focused on the priorities of the UN and EU during Slovenia's presidency of the EU, including climate change, intercultural dialogue and the future of Kosovo.

The visit to New York was an opportunity for Minister Rupel to hold many bilateral meetings. He assured his Iraqi counterpart Hoshiyar Zebari further support in his country's efforts to build democracy and develop economy. Rupel also offered Slovenia's assistance through various projects of the Together Foundation and the Centre for European Perspective as well as the training of the Iraqi security forces.

The meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Motaki focused on the Iranian nuclear programme, with Rupel voicing hope for Iran to respect UN Security Council Resolutions and "take certain steps towards



Prime Minister Janez Janša and Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel attending the 62nd UN General Assembly. (Photo: BOBO)

### **BUSY EU SCHEDULE FOR MINISTER RUPEL**

Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel spent much of his time at the 62nd UN General Assembly presenting Slovenia as the next EU presiding country. He was part of several meetings held by the EU Troika - attended by Slovenia at the invitation of current presiding country Portugal - with international partners.

At the meeting of the EU Troika and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the officials exchanged views on the Middle East, Iran's nuclear programme, the deployment of peace-keepers to Chad and Central African Republic, and the future of Kosovo. The meeting of the troika with China saw Minister Rupel chair talks on the fight against climate change. The signing of a free trade agreement was at the forefront of talks held by the troika with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The troika-Bosnia meeting meanwhile examined the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Minister Rupel also took part in a breakfast of EU foreign ministers dedicated to activities held as part of the UN General Assembly, the situation in Chad, Sudan and Myanmar. At the lunch held by the EU foreign ministers with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov talks broached the Middle East, Kosovo, climate change and UN reform. The same topics were at the forefront of the transatlantic dinner, hosted by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The meeting of EU foreign minister with Rice meanwhile produced a joint declaration on Myanmar.

Minister Rupel also met Peruvian counterpart Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde to discuss plans for the EU-Latin America and Caribbean summit that will take place in Lima in May of 2008. The summit was also a topic of talks between Minister Rupel and his Cuban counterpart

meeting the demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors". Talks with Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee were dedicated to joint activities in the UN General Assembly and cooperation within the International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises.

Minister Rupel also signed an International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The document was passed by the UN's General Assembly on 20 December last year. He was also involved in a meeting of countries who sponsor the Resolution of the UN General Assembly on the Death Penalty.



Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel and chair of the 62nd UN General Assembly Srgjan Kerim. (Photo: BOBO)

### **MINISTER RUPEL OPENS RENOVATED EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON**

Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel inaugurated on 28 September the renovated Slovenian embassy building in Washington. The building in Washington's diplomatic area was constructed in the 1960s and used to house the Yugoslav embassy. Slovenia was allotted it under the Succession Agreement between former Yugoslav countries.

In his address on the occasion, Rupel presented Slovenia's priorities for the upcoming EU presidency, including EU enlargement, climate change and energy security. "Slovenia will also place emphasis on strengthening the natural alliance between the EU and US," Rupel said and added that US President George W. Bush was to make his second visit to Slovenia next year as part of the EU-US summit.

Some 500 guests attended the ceremony, including Americans of Slovenian descent and US diplomats and politicians, among them Amy Klobuchar, the Democratic Senator from Minnesota who has Slovenian ancestors, and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a Republican congressman from Florida.

### **EU ACTIVITIES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER**

#### **Annual meeting of Slovenian Diplomats Focuses on EU Presidency**

An annual meeting of Slovenian diplomats that is customarily held at Brdo pri Kranju in March was brought

Felipe Perez Roque.

### **SLOVENIA ACTIVE IN SOLVING WESTERN BALKANS ISSUES**

In their talks in New York, Slovenian officials put special emphasis on the situation in the Western Balkans, one of Slovenia's priorities for the EU presidency. Slovenia believes that an EU future is the answer for the region and has said on many occasions that it will work to provide concrete timetables for the accession of these countries to the EU. During its presidency, Slovenia will be faced with efforts to finalise a solution for Kosovo. Slovenia would like to see a united EU stance on this issue.

The future of Kosovo was at the centre of the meeting of the EU troika with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Minister Rupel stressed the importance of this issue for regional security. The officials also examined plans for an EU civilian mission in Kosovo, which will take over from UNMIK following the determination of Kosovo's status.

Minister Rupel accompanied Prime Minister Janša in the meetings with Serbian President Boris Tadić and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić, who voiced concern that the situation could grow more complicated due to the upcoming elections in Serbia and Kosovo. After the meeting, Minister Rupel said that "everyone hopes that the democratic forces in Serbia would end up winning and that a solution for Kosovo would also be found".

Meeting the Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina Sven Alkalaj, Minister Rupel stressed that progress in EU accession greatly depended on the efforts of the aspirants. According to him, Slovenia is ready to help Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it is up to Bosnia to implement key reforms, including in policing.



Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, Prime Minister Janez Janša and Serbian President Boris Tadić. (Photo: BOBO)

### **MINISTER RUPEL OUTLINES SLOVENIAN INITIATIVE FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel outlined Slovenia's activities in promoting intercultural dialogue during his visit to New York. At the meeting with Secretary General of the Islamic Conference Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Rupel underscored that Slovenia has put intercultural dialogue at the forefront of its EU presidency.

Minister Rupel said that Slovenia would strive to strengthen dialogue with the Islamic community in the EU. He also presented the research projects of the Centre

forward to September and held in Brussels as part of Slovenia's preparations of the EU presidency. Addressing the meeting, Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel said it was important to hold the meeting before Slovenia takes over the EU presidency in January 2008.

Addressing the meeting were EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, European Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn, Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik, Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Franco Frattini and External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

The European officials promised to help Slovenia, the first EU newcomer from 2004 to hold the EU's rotating presidency. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said she was confident Slovenia would do an excellent job. This was echoed by High Representative Solana, who pointed out that the beginning of 2008 will be an important period for the issues of Kosovo, the Middle East and Africa. Frattini stressed that Slovenia was fully prepared to enter the Schengen border-free area before Christmas.

### **CHRONOLOGY**

**3 September, Vienna** - Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel takes part in a conference of Austrian diplomats at the invitation of Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik.

**7 & 8 September, Viana do Castelo** - Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel takes part in an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers. The talks focus on the EU reform treaty and the future of Kosovo.

**10 & 11 September, Brussels** - Slovenian diplomats gather for an annual working meeting dedicated to the EU presidency.

**24-28 September, New York** - Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel takes part in the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly. He holds numerous bilateral meetings on the margins of the Assembly.

for European Perspective (CEP) entitled "Restless Europe", which will deal with Muslims in Europe, as well as the joint project by CEP and the Salzburg Seminar called "Muslims, Citizens of the West".