Reception on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Slovenia in Skopje

Skopje, 21 June 2012

The Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Skopje hosted a reception to mark the National Day of the Republic of Slovenia.

Among the guests was the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia Trajko Veljanoski, Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki, deputy ministers, state secretaries, many members of the government and opposition parties, ambassadors and other representatives of the diplomatic corps and international organizations, representatives of political, economic, scientific, and cultural life, representatives of religious communities, NGOs presidents and members of all three Slovenian associations in Macedonia (France Preseren from Skopje, Triglav from Bitola and the Slovenian Centre from Skopje), General Honorary Consul Mihajlo Mojsov, Slovenian officers and soldiers from KFOR, Slovenian language students at the Faculty of Philology with their professor and many other Slovenians who live and work in Macedonia.

In his address Ambassador Bergant highlighted the excellent and friendly relations between Slovenia and Macedonia, which is also evident from the exchange of visits at the highest political level. He stressed the strong Slovenian support for Macedonia’s integration to the EU and NATO, and the successful cooperation in the economic sphere, where many opportunities remain open to strengthen this cooperation. At the same time, this was a farewell reception for Ambassador Bergant who will be ending his term in Skopje on the end of July.

The program of the reception which was prepared by the Slovenian company Studio Marketing JWT in cooperation with the Embassy was enriched by live performances of the quartet SaxTromb, singer Biba Dodeva and with a dance act by the ballet group Brejkaleg. On the big screen three-minute film about Slovenia was presented, while the side screens were focused on advertisements of Slovenian companies.
On the occasion of the National Day, the Embassy invited all professional, semi-professional and amateur photo enthusiasts who have sent us their personal photos of landmarks and tourist attractions of Slovenia. The chosen photos were shown on the side screens. The best photography by Max Maroh from Bitola was rewarded with a prolonged weekend for two in Terme Maribor and the prize was handed over by Tadej Lenarcic, Chief Operating Officer at ONE Telekom Slovenia. Terme Maribor donated vouchers for 50% discount for accommodation for second person at Hotel Habakuk to all guests of the reception.

The preparation of the reception was enabled by the Slovenian companies in Macedonia: ONE Telekom Slovenia, as a main sponsor of the reception, GEN-I, NLB Tutunska Banka, Sava Osiguruvanje, Triglav, TUŠ, Krka, LTH Castings, Laško, Peruthina Ptuj, Skopje Fair and Macedonian companies: City Plaza, Telesmart, FON University, Stobi Wines and Hotel Stone Bridge.

Slovenian Centre – Skopje celebrated the National Day of the Republic of Slovenia

Skopje, 19 June 2012

On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Slovenia Slovenian Centre - Skopje organized a celebration with rich cultural program in the Drama Theatre. Welcome speeches were delivered by the President of the Slovenian Centre Saso Stojkovski and Ambassador Brian Bergant.

Young members of the Slovenian Centre - Skopje appeared with the theatre play called “Miraculous water”, by the author Tanja Tkauc and directed by Natalia Teodosievksa. In May this year, they successfully performed the same theatre play in Ljubljana, at the jubilee X. Children’s festival of theater dreams and inspired the audience at the Slovenian Youth Theatre. As special guests at the celebration were the orchestra members from the Elementary School Johan Hajnrih Pestaloci from Skopje, which at the last national competition won first place. The event was enriched by the performance of the pupils from the supplementary classes of Slovenian language with poem recitations from Slovenian authors, music group “Alojz Rop and Problem Solved” and guitarist Renato Bisaci.
Ambassador Brian Bergant received a special Letter of Appreciation from the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia

Skopje, 26 June 2012

The President of the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia Lazar Elenovski hosted a reception in honor of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway Kjetil Paulesen and the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia Alain Brian Bergant, both ending their mandates at the end of July. The reception was attended by the representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, the Macedonian Army, the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia, number of Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps and media.

President Elenovski awarded the Letter of Appreciation on behalf of the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia to express gratitude to Ambassador Brian Bergant for his selfless contribution to the promotion and development of the Euro-Atlantic values and ideas in the Republic of Macedonia and for his determined efforts that the country becomes a full member of the EU and NATO. He expressed exceptional appreciation for the Slovenian support in its capacity as NATO Contact Point Embassy in 2007-2008, the numerous debates, seminars and workshops, promoting a new generation of young leaders and civil society and promoting a comprehensive Euro-Atlanticism in the country.

Ambassador Brian Bergant received a special Letter of Appreciation from the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia

Skopje, 26 June 2012

Meetings

Ambassador Brian Bergant met with new Kosovo Ambassador Ilber Hisa

Skopje, 11 June 2012

Ambassador and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Brian Bergant welcomed the new Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo Ilber Hisa who said that he will sought to further improve the very good bilateral relations between Kosovo and Macedonia. The main attention will be devoted to the enhancement of economic and cultural cooperation, and the improvement of the road and rail links between the two countries. They also talked about the internal political situation in the country, the wider Western Balkans region and the importance of beginning the process of visa liberalization for the citizens of Kosovo.

Ambassador Bergant expressed his hope that the embassies will continue their good cooperation in the cultural and economic spheres, and suggested that in near future a joint Slovenian-Kosovo-Macedonian business conference should be organized. He also talked about the successful cooperation of the Slovenian-Macedonian Business Club and he reiterated Slovenia’s support for all Western Balkan countries on their path towards EU and NATO.
Slovenia at the First International Charity Bazaar Skopje 2012
Skopje, 4 June 2012

The First International Charity Bazaar Skopje 2012 was held in Macedonia. Initiator of the Bazaar was the NGO »Dobredojo – Macedonia Welcome Centre«, joined by the diplomatic and consular representatives in Macedonia. The Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Skopje, Brian Bergant, was Honorary President of the First Charity Bazaar. Ambassador Bergant expressed his hope that the event will become traditional and that the Macedonian capital Skopje will join other major cities, which organize similar events to celebrate the World Children’s Day. The audience was also welcomed by the President of the NGO “Dobredojo – Macedonia Welcome Centre” Emilija Avramčeva Miladinova.

On the day of the First International Charity Bazaar Skopje 2012, which took place between the main walking street Macedonia and Mother Theresa Memorial Centre, the participating Embassies were selling traditional food and drinks, souvenirs, books, toys and other interesting things on their stands. Pupils from the primary schools and numerous NGOs took care for a rich cultural program, which gave additional multicultural and multiethnic character. On the Slovenian stand “United Green – Macedonia feels Slovenia” we were selling domestic walnut cake, drinks, books, toys, shirts, hats, cosmetics, wine, etc. The members of the Slovenian Association France Prešeren made jewelry, stained glass, decorative bags, and ornamental plates. The members of the Slovenian centre also took part with their hand made products.

At the Slovenian stand following Slovenian companies participated with their products: NLB Pension fund, Ljubljana dairy, Sava Insurance, Merkur, Rogoška Glassworks, Afrodita Cosmetics and Municipality of Ljubljana. ONE Telekom Slovenia, Skopje Fair and Studio Moderna participated in the lottery with their donations.

One of the most visible activities that were held before the main event was a charity exhibition that took place on 31 May 2012 at the Gallery of NLB Tutunska banka organized by the NGO “Dobredojo – Macedonia Welcome Centre”, Art Gallery “Bukefal” from Ohrid and supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia. The visitors could buy art works of more than twenty-five renowned Macedonian academic painters and artists, who generously donated their works. The members of the Slovenian Association France Prešeren made jewelry, stained glass, decorative bags, and ornamental plates. The members of the Slovenian centre also took part with their hand made products.

All funds that were collected at the Bazaar, charity exhibition and lottery were allocated to the Primary School Idrina from Skopje – a school for children with special needs in education, for improvement of the general conditions and equipment for the special room for psychomotor education and equipment for Montessori education.
Ambassador Brian Bergant attended the opening ceremony of the new school in the Municipality of Ilinden. The building of the school was part of the Slovenian bilateral development program from the Memorandum on International Development Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for 2011. Slovenian side co-financed one third, the rest of the total value of 1,5 million euro was financed by the municipality. The main building constructor was the Slovenian company Trimo Engineering and production of pre-fabricated buildings from Trebnje.

Main speakers at the opening ceremony were the Minister of Education and Science Panče Kralev, Mayor Žika Stojanovski and Ambassador Brian Bergant. Members of the Parliament, Mayors from neighboring municipalities, high representatives from the Macedonian Orthodox Church, director of Trimo d.d. Tatjana Fink, many citizens, media representatives and of course future pupils and students of the new school were present at the opening ceremony.

In his speech ambassador Bergant highlighted that the school was built with the newest technologies and innovative solutions, which will contribute to the protection of the living environment and energy efficiency. He thanked the Macedonian Government and the Mayor for the good cooperation and assessed the project as one of the most visible of the Slovenian development projects in Macedonia so far, that can be seen as a positive model of excellent and efficient cooperation in the field of the development cooperation.

The foundation stone for the new modular primary and secondary school, which area size is more then 2,000 square meters was laid on 23 October 2011. The school consists of twelve classrooms, four cabinets, teacher’s cabinet, kitchen, dining room and a big central area for cultural and other social events for 720 pupils and students in two turns. The school inventory was donated by Okta a.d. Skopje, the major refinery in the country that is part of the Hellenic Petroleum group.
The company Ljubljanske mlekarne d.d., has been for more than fifty years supplying fresh milk and various dairy products to Slovene and also foreign customers. With our products we are maintaining the majority market share in the Slovene market and are thus with more than 500 employees the leading dairy, and also the largest wholesaler of milk and dairy products in Slovenia. In the Ljubljanske mlekarne company, we employ an integrated management system, within which the systems of quality management, the system of ensuring food safety, and the system of environmental protection are implemented complementary to one another.

Ljubljanske mlekarne, the leading dairy in Slovenia, are aware of social responsibility to the employees, environment, the communities, where we work, and to other stakeholders of our company. We believe that we can develop our long-term goals and realise them with good relationships, which begin within the company with our employees, and also with a responsible attitude to our wider social and natural environments. Our task is to do everything in our power to make our work sustainable - economically and socially responsible, and environment friendly, which will lead to the long-term success of our company. Therefore, social responsibility is an integral part of our management strategy.

Besides taking care of our employees and protecting the environment the corporate responsibility of Ljubljanske mlekarne also includes sponsorship deals and donations to humanitarian, sports, cultural and scientific projects and organisations. For several years we have been donating milk (Alpsko mleko) to 30 safe houses, homes for mothers and crisis centres across Slovenia. We donate annually about 17,500 litres of milk.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of Ljubljanske Mlekarne in Skopje, the presentation and tasting of their products was held on the Street Macedonia in the Centre of Skopje. The Slovenian company used the opportunity to show its social responsibility in the local environment in which it operates, and donated 1800 liters of Alpine milk to state institutions for helping children. The donation in the form of a large check to the representatives of the National children's hospital, Home for children without parents in Bitola, SOS Children's Villages and families who care for children without parents, was handed by the director of Ljubljanske Mlekarne in Skopje Nikola Madjarovski.

Ambassador Brian Bergant greeted the good deed grants from Ljubljanske Mlekarne and recalled that the company was present with their products on the Slovenian stand at the I. International Humanitarian Bazaar Skopje 2012. Ljubljanske Mlekarne is considered as a synonym for tradition, care and reliability, while the Alpine milk, which is celebrating its 45 anniversary, as a quality and healthy beverage for children's development.

At the humanitarian event, among many others, were also present the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Ibrahim Ibrahimi and the director of corporate communications at Ljubljanske Mlekarne from Ljubljana Renata Lovrak.
The festival of creativity “Skopje Kreativa 2012”, which is organized by the City of Skopje, took place in the City Park from 14 to 16 June. Students from the University FON presented the project “MACEDONIA Feels Slovenia”. This is a project of multimedia exhibition by the students of the Faculty for graphic and fashion design, which at last year's 20th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Slovenia was presented at the reception organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Skopje.

As a reward to all of the students who participated in the project, with the help of the Slovenian-Macedonian Business Club, selected Slovenian companies and the FON University, during the Christmas period last year, the Embassy organized a study trip to Slovenia. The students presented the project to their colleagues at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia they were welcomed by then State Secretary Dragoljuba Benčina.

Ambassador Bergant stressed that this is an excellent example of the cooperation between the Embassy and the universities and companies that contribute to strengthening the bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Festival of creative documentary Makedox 2012
Skopje, 15 June 2012

At the Kurshumli An, the opening of the third festival of creative documentary film Makedox 2012th was held. The festival also presented three Slovenian movies:

- Cinema Love Her / The Alexandrians (06/16/2012 at 19:00 pm in the Children's Theatre Centre / teatarski Mapping Center);
- Hair on a tongue (06/19/2012 at 20:00 pm in the Children's Theatre Centre / teatarski Mapping Center);
- SonoLog-Sound Diaries (20/06/2012 at 19:00 pm in the Children's Theatre Centre / teatarski Mapping Center).

Literary Evening dedicated to the Slovenian poet Oton Župančić
Skopje, 13 June 2012

Slovenian Association France Prešeren, within the frames of Multicultural Community in Macedonia, organized a literary evening dedicated to the famous Slovenian poet Oton Župančić. The event, which took place at the Memorial house of Mother Teresa in Skopje, marked the 63 anniversary of the poet's death.

Prof. Bistrica Mirkulovska spoke about the life and work of Oton Župančić and at this occasion she also recited some of his most famous poems. The program was enriched with the presentations and recitals of students that attend the course of the Slovenian language, members of the Multicultural Community, children's choir and members-soloists from the Chorus France Prešeren, namely Nikola Stojčevski, Kristijan Antovšju and Blagica Miročević. Members of the Multicultural Community recited the Slovenian poems in Aromanian and Polish language.
Ambassador Brian Bergant visited the primary school Brothers Ramiz and Hamid

Skopje, 8 June 2012

Ambassador Brian Bergant at the end of the school year visited the primary school Brothers Ramiz and Hamid in the Šuto Orizari Municipality in Skopje. Ambassador Bergant thanked the principal, teachers and students who on 9 May marked the Europe Day, representing Slovenia at the main event of the EU Delegation in Skopje City Park, for their participation and gave them special recognitions from the Embassy.

With cake and juice the Ambassador, on the last day of school, wished the pupils a merry and most carefree summer holidays.

Bled Strategic Forum BSF 2012

On 2 and 3 September 2012, Bled will host the 7th Bled Strategic Forum (BSF), organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the Centre for European Perspective. Over the last six years, the Bled Strategic Forum has emerged as one of the leading annual gatherings in the region. Every year it brings together great thinkers from politics, economy and academia.

BSF is intended to promote a high-level strategic dialogue between leaders from the private and public sectors on the key issues facing Europe and the 21st century world. It has taken place annually since 2006 in the Slovenian resort town of Bled, world-renown for its beautiful alpine lake.

Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki will participate at the BSF 2012 and will be a panelist at the Panel C entitled “EU’s Challenges in South-Eastern Europe: the Euro Crisis and the Soft Power of EU Attractions”.

More information on BSF 2012 is available on: http://www.bledstrategicforum.org/
Murska Sobota and Moravske Toplice

Murska Sobota is the regional centre of Pomurje, the northeast part of Slovenija. The history of the town called Sobota by the local people is very interesting: this region was under the cover of several countries and only in 1919 was it joined to the central country of Slovenia. The visitors can learn a lot about the development of the town and the whole region through its history while viewing the permanent collection of the Murska Sobota Regional Museum (Pokrajinski muzej).

The garment industry, metallurgy and the agricultural industry were prevalent in the region and town in the past, and today trends move more and more towards the processing industry, construction, commerce and services. Murska Sobota has limited accommodations for tourists, but it is certainly worth seeing and an excellent starting and excursion point for all the visitors and tourists to this region. The town has a unique feature in comparison to the rest of Slovenia, which is mostly Alpine: Muska Sobota is the only Slovenian town situated on an actual plain.

Throughout the year, the life of the town is enriched by cultural, entertaining, traditional, culinary and sports events among which are: Bogračiada, Soboški dnevi, Aeromiting, traditional fairs, St. Nicholas’ fair, etc; there is also an especially rich culinary tradition which is difficult to resist.

Welcome to the tourist spot and tourist municipality of Moravske Toplice. Forty years ago a story began around a hot spring, a story that made the local people grow to realise that the only way to benefit from this gift of nature is to take up an active part in the development. The focal point of the municipality, Moravske Toplice, offers comforts of accommodation, relaxation and swimming. The setting is positively charming, with spectacular landscape, remnants of Pannonian architecture, rich handicraft tradition, delicious cuisine, excellent wines, and proverbial hospitality of the local people. Moravske Toplice is a great starting point for delightful sightseeing trips, short or long, e.g. architect Plečnik’s “White Dove” (Bela golobica) church at Bogojina, art of pottery at Filovci, Lake Bukovnica with its energy points, and others.

The town of Moravske Toplice has found its place in the sun in the very heart of Prekmurje where people say of themselves that they are rich. Rich because they know exactly what they have. Storks that have built their nests almost everywhere you look fly over the roofs of their houses. Nearby wine-growing hills invite visitors to take a stroll along wine routes where they are certain not to escape a wine tasting or two. To clear you head, you can quickly jump on a bicycle and experience nature in a very special way on a cycling tour.

You will be accompanied by colourfully cultivated fields, dew on vast meadows and the shady shelter of groves along the way. Welcoming and hospitable locals will be happy to talk to you, show off their skills in making pottery or invite to visit a water mill on the Mura River where you can still buy flour ground in the traditional way.
Prekmurska Gibanica

Basic dough
100 g sharp wheat flour
100 g fine wheat flour
100 g fat or butter or margarine
a pinch of salt or sugar
milk, water or sour cream for kneading

Sift the flour on a wooden board, add salt or sugar, and add also crushed fat. Knead the even dough while adding liquid. Leave it to rest for half an hour in a cold place.

Stretched dough
600 g fine wheat flour
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
a pinch of salt
lukewarm water for kneading

Make a hole in the sifted flour in the wooden board, add fat, salt, egg if desired and knead the ingredients while adding liquid. Knead for as long as the dough is even and stretchy. Make a loaf, oil the surface and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Poppy seed filling
200 g fine grounded poppy seeds
80 g sugar
1 bag of vanilla sugar

Add sugar and vanilla sugar to the grounded poppy seeds and stir the mixture well. All the fillings are used in two parts.

Cottage Cheese Filling
1000 g full fat cottage cheese
100 g sugar
2 eggs
1 bag of vanilla sugar
a pinch of salt

Crush the cottage cheese with the forks; add eggs, vanilla sugar, sugar and a pinch of salt. Stir the mixture well until it is even and easily spread.

Walnut filling
300 g grounded walnuts
100 g sugar
1 bag of vanilla sugar

Mix grounded walnuts with sugar and vanilla sugar.

Apple filling
1500 g apples (use the sour types)
120 g sugar
grounded cinnamon

Peel the apples, grate them, add sugar and cinnamon and stir the mixture gently.

Cream Topping
60 dl thick sour cream
4 eggs

Slowly whisk the eggs with the sour cream.

Fatty Topping
150 g fat or butter or 200 g margarine

Prepare a clay mould “tepsija” (very often round mould, 32-35 cm wide and 7-8 cm high). Cover well the mould with butter and put in a thin layer of the basic dough – named “podplat”, which should cover also the edge of the mould. Stick it with a fork. Roll the rested stretched dough and cover it with oil. Lift the dough and stretch it over the mould so the thicker edge of the dough hangs down. Cut into 8 equal parts in the shape of a mould. On the bottom that is already covered with the basic dough and the layer of stretched dough, spread the first layer of the poppy seed filling, sprinkle with melted margarine and cream topping. Put the second layer of the stretched dough and spread over the cottage cheese filling and sprinkle it with margarine. The third layer follows. Spread it with the walnut filling and sprinkle it with margarine. The fourth layer follows then. Spread it with the apple filling and sprinkle it with margarine. Gibanica is so half way made. Repeat all the fillings again to get 8 uniform layers. Cover the top with the cream topping and margarine. Cut off the thick edges of the stretched dough that are hanging over the mould and form the Gibanica. Stick it with a thin long needle. Bake in the baker’s oven or in the electric oven approx 75 minutes at 175°C. When baked spread the cream on top and leave it to rest a little while. Then cut it into triangles and sprinkle with sugar, if desired.
Slovenian National Holidays in August:
15 August – Assumption Day – Embassy will be open

Macedonian National Holidays in August:
02 August – Ilinden Day (Republic Day) – Embassy will be closed
19 August – Ramazan Bajram (End of Bajram) – Embassy will be open
20 August – Ramazan Bajram Holiday – Embassy will be open

The Embassy will be closed as well on 28 August, Religious Orthodox Holiday, Dormition of the Holy Mother of God (Golema Bogorodica).

International Days in August:
09 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous People
12 August – International Youth Day
19 August – World Humanitarian Day
23 August – International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
29 August – International Day against Nuclear Tests
30 August – International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances