

# The Slovenia Times

The Slovenia Times  
Slovenian Magazine in English Language  
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## TIMES

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**Special report:**  
Slovenian Insight  
in association with  
S&P Global Ratings



**Dr Sundeep Waslekar (India):**  
"The world needs a preventive  
not a reactive approach"



**Basketball Gold –**  
Lessons to learn



**12<sup>th</sup> Bled Strategic Forum:**  
Confronting the New Realities  
with New Strategies



**OECD: Slovenia needs to boost  
investment and productivity  
through better skills and regulation**

The 61<sup>st</sup> EOQ Congress: "Success in the digital era – Quality as a key driver" (Bled | 11 and 12 October 2017)

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# The Slovenia Times

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If all the numbers are to be believed, we can look forward to good times in Slovenia in the year ahead. In their Autumn forecast, IMAD have upgraded the forecast for 2017 GDP to 4.4%. Whether the positive numbers from Slovenia's economy will be translated into better times for business is debatable. If we turn the clock back a decade, the confidence levels were similar and very quickly the benefits were squandered.

There are often parallels made between sporting teams and business success and maybe we should look behind the success of our gold medal basketball team. Under the leadership of a (foreign) coach, a bunch of talented individuals came together to achieve what has been said is the biggest success for Slovenian sport since independence. This "history-making" Slovenian sporting success was not a result of foresight, i.e. supported or planned by the Slovenian state, the politicians and those who run the multi-million euro, state-owned businesses. It is worth noting that the largest Slovenian insurance company, Triglav, which is 100 percent state-owned, sponsored the Serbian basketball team, not our own winning national team –they invested in and financially supported our opponents for the European basketball gold medal.

Frequently I hear that a fundamental issue in this country is bureaucracy. Why did the bureaucrats not recall the reason why investors have left the country in the past when they were dealing with the proposed investment into Slovenia by Magna Steyr, a foreign investor who had a Plan B, an investment that was so very nearly lost and hundreds of new jobs with it! Why did it take the potential loss to kick-start the bureaucrats into action? Perhaps some of our key decision makers, those who will take our country and companies into the next decade, should take some notes from our success stories.

It is not only the leaders who must take some notes. There is no doubt that Slovenia is a country of innovative and talented individuals, Slovenia ranks ninth from 130 countries in this year's World Economic Forum's Global Human Capital Index, but why can't we translate this talent so that we can make the necessary breakthroughs on the world stage. Is it our inability to look beyond our borders, accept the ideas of those from outside who have 'been there, done that' and may be able to guide this human capital to global success? As a small country, we can be a niche player and we can be the best, but to do this we should learn lessons from others and be better at it.

Maybe we are too focused on the mind-set and not on the 'heart-set', a concept proposed by two leadership experts who suggest that businesses should focus on new approaches that come from different drivers than before. Or maybe it is that we are too reactive and we need to take on board the proposals of the author of '**Big Questions of Our Time**', which raises questions that will face humanity from 2010-2060 and covers a broad spectrum of issues, including globalisation, suggesting that the world needs a preventive and not a reactive approach to deal with the issues facing humanity today.

Quality and Slovenia go hand in hand and in October, the EOQ Conference will be hosted in Bled. More than 400 panellists and delegates will debate '**Success in the Digital Era - Quality as a Key Driver**'. Esteemed panellist, Ms Dong Mingzhu, President of Ghee Appliances Inc, who Forbes identifies as the "Iron Lady", shares her recipe for success in an exclusive interview with The Slovenia Times. We invite you to join us at the conference to hear how your business can achieve success in the digital era.

We encourage you to enjoy the good times in Slovenia and use the lessons of the past for a better future. To keep informed about the progress of this wonderful country, you can read the daily news at [www.sloveniatimes.com](http://www.sloveniatimes.com), where you can also subscribe to our magazine and the monthly newsletter and follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook, and look out for our tweets and updates. ◀

*Brane Krajnik*  
CEO  
The Slovenia Times



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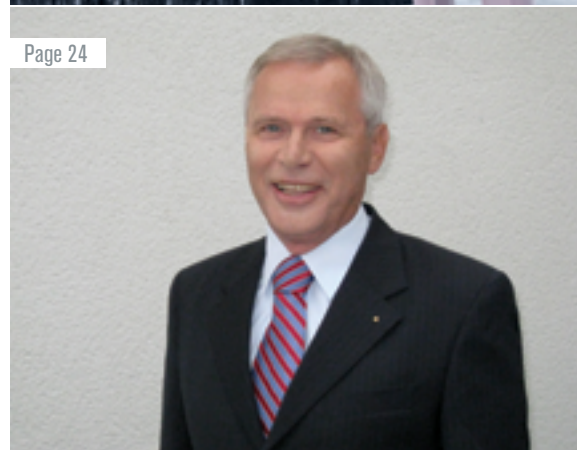
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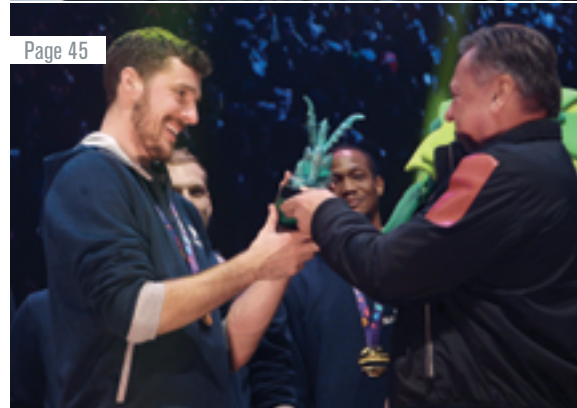
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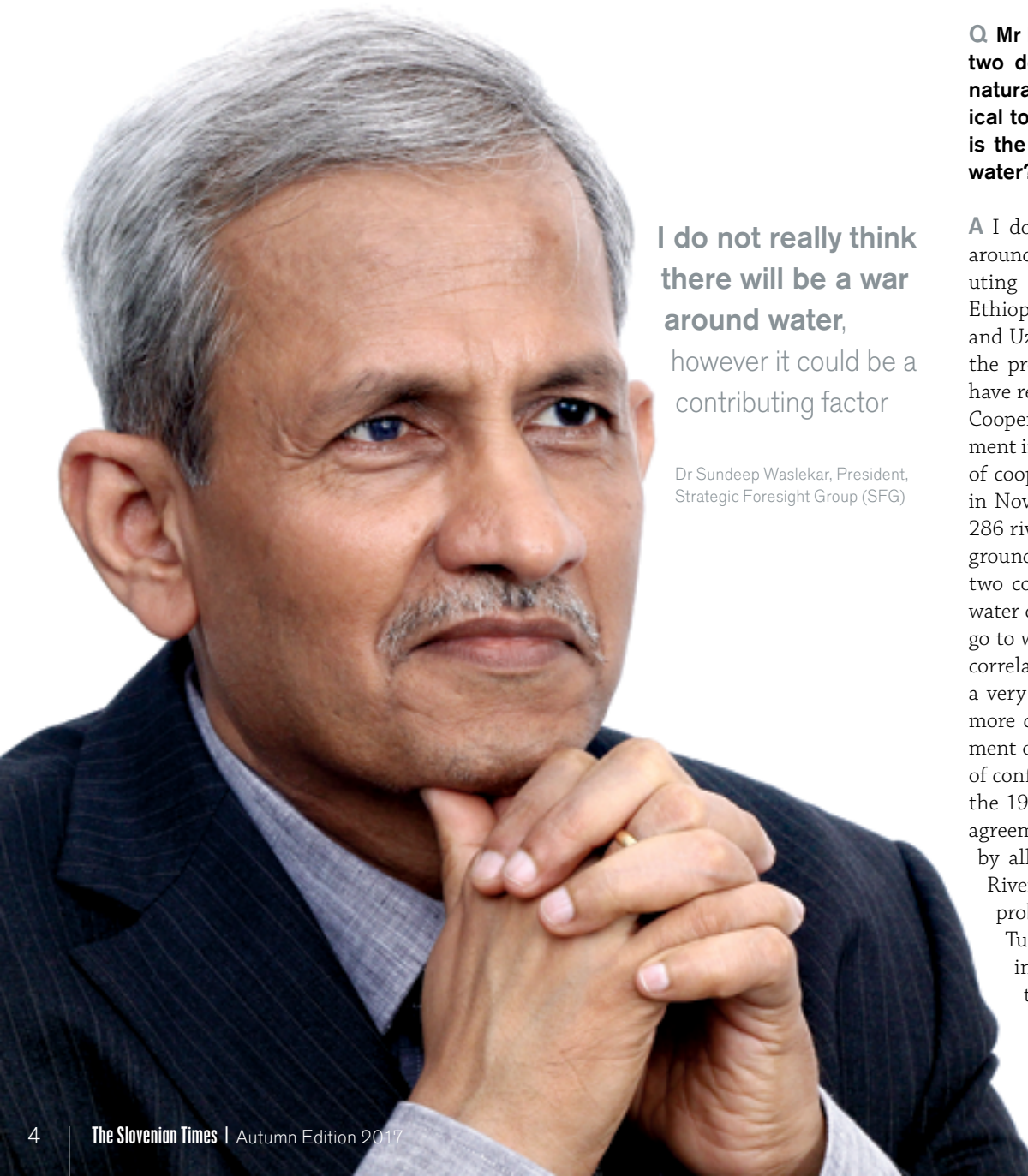


**Interview:** Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group (SFG)

# The world needs a preventive not a reactive approach

By **Tina Drolc**, M.Sc.

*Dr Sundeep Waslekar is President of the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), a think-tank based in India, that advises governments and institutions around the world on managing future challenges. Under his leadership, SFG has worked with or on 50 countries from all continents, creating new policy concepts on conflict resolution, water diplomacy and outlooks for countries and societies. At the Bled Strategic Forum 2017, Dr Waslekar moderated the 'Water for peace and security' panel.*



**I do not really think there will be a war around water,** however it could be a contributing factor

Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group (SFG)

**Q Mr Kofi Annan has argued for more than two decades that protecting and sharing natural resources, particularly water, is critical to peace and security. How significant is the risk of war between countries over water?**

**A** I do not really think there will be a war around water, however it could be a contributing factor - there have been tensions in Ethiopia and Central Asia between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and at one stage they created the process for cooperation over water. We have recently released a progress study, Water Cooperation Quotient, which is the only document in the world that quantifies the intensity of cooperation over water, it will be launched in November this year. The study looks at all 286 rivers in the world, but it excludes underground water. The document proves that any two countries, which are actively engaged in water cooperation at the political level, do not go to war for any reason! This is a very strong correlation and the Sava River Commission is a very prominent example of this. More and more countries are using water as an instrument of cooperation after they have come out of conflict. You had conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990's and immediately after the Dayton agreement, the first major agreement signed by all the countries involved, was the Sava River Agreement. At the moment, there are problems in the Middle East; Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Lebanon which are engaged in conflicts with each other. But even in this situation, Iraq and Turkey are negotiating very close cooperation over the Tigris River. In the last 25 years, every Secretary General of the UN has

Slovenia lacks confidence; it sees its role primarily in the context of South Eastern Europe, which is understandable, but **in the environmental field and in particular in the use of water as an instrument of peace, Slovenia has a role on the broader stage - worldwide and not just in Europe.**

said that the importance of water for peace and security has to be recognised and put on the peace and security agenda of the UN.

**Q "Being a leader in environmental initiatives makes sense for Slovenia", quoted American Professor Jay Ebben in an interview for this magazine. What are your feelings on this?**

**A** Slovenia has tremendous potential for making a positive contribution to the Blue Peace process, and the reason for that is the aforementioned Sava River Agreement, indicating credibility to the rest of the world. In addition, Slovenia has been very active in the Danube River project and that ensures Slovenia retains the moral authority to take a leadership role in the Blue Peace process which aims to promote water as an instrument of peace. Also, the management of the environment is much better in Slovenia than in other parts of the world. Tap water is a great example, one can drink it everywhere in Slovenia. In my view, Slovenia lacks confidence; it sees its role primarily in the context of South Eastern Europe, which is understandable, but in the environmental field and in particular in the use of water as an instrument of peace, Slovenia has a role on the broader stage - worldwide and not just in Europe.

**Q You co-authored a book, Big Questions of Our Time, which raises questions that will face humanity from 2010-2060 and covers a broad spectrum of issues, including globalisation. "Only 10 countries account for 60 percent of global merchandise trade... Thus, so-called globalisation is not global at all.... This game is further concentrated in the hands of a few percent of people within countries - in both the rich and the poor nations." What kind of global governance does the world need to adequately address the issue?**

**A** It is true that what we call 'globalisation' is really limited to a very small section of the population. This is the 'globalisation of opportunities'. There are up to 50 countries in the world that obtain almost 90 percent of trade out of the almost 200 countries, which means 150 countries obtain only 10 percent of trade!

Are people aware of this fact? Furthermore, 60 percent of trade is concentrated in the hands of 20 countries, and then within these countries there are only some groups which benefit. So, there is a lot more in common between the elite of Ljubljana, Milan, New Delhi, Beijing and Sao Paolo than the elite of Sao Paolo and the poor people in Brazil or the elite in New Delhi and the poor in India. A new global class of selected elite has been created who have the capacity and opportunities that benefit from cooperation with each other, through trade, investments, knowledge exchange and technology. On the other side, there are a lot of people that are feeling frustrated and cooperate in different ways- organised crime; terrorism, piracy, cyber-crime and this is the so-called 'globalisation of risk'. If we want the 'globalisation of opportunities' to win, we need to extend the people involved, but the tendency of those who are winning is to keep the cake for themselves and leave out the other 85 percent of people in the world.

**Q Is this because the environment 'supports' this behaviour...**

**A** To some extent. Macron in France is trying to strike the balance but what is needed is a different kind of governance at the national and then at the global level, where the risks are integrated (climate change, migration, political destabilisation, energy, etc.). But what we have currently is that everything is separated – the OECD only deals with trade, WHO only deals with health, the UN Security Council only with security. There is no mechanism where there is an integrated understanding of the challenges facing the world. In my view, we need to reform the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, to try and deal with the complexity of the challenges rather than separating them in to different boxes. The problems are integrated but the solutions are separated which is why it does not work. The world needs a preventive approach, not a reactive approach. And if we will not do that, the world will face much deeper crises in the next 50 years than we have been facing now.

**Q Since 2002, you've authored several research reports on the global future under the auspices of SFG. With robotic and ar-**

**tificial intelligence, many jobs have disappeared. Should robots be taxed as a form of labour?**

**A** I think, in the long term, artificial intelligence and robotics will increase the quality of life, the same as we faced with computers in the 90's, they expanded the economy. In Japan, 70 percent of the labour force are robots. Therefore, I do not think there could be a problem in the employment field. Some forms of labour will go, a new form of labour will arrive. Education should be redefined as education and training, which happens all the time and governments should encourage ongoing education. However, the problem I see with artificial intelligence in the long run is security. If 50 years from now artificial intelligence becomes super intelligence, it would start taking decisions on its own. If artificial intelligence is loaded in a missile, it could strike unintended targets. This may even start a war! Artificial intelligence infused with biology could invent a new biological weapon and this could end the world in a century, this is a serious risk, much bigger than the nuclear risk. ◀

If we want the 'globalisation of opportunities' to win, we need to extend the people involved, but **the tendency of those who are winning is to keep the cake for themselves and leave out the other 85 percent of people in the world.**

# Basketball Gold — Lessons to learn

By **Boštjan Lajovic**

*If you were to read these lines on the Sunday following the victory of the Slovenian basketball team in the European Championship finals, the pathetic outburst of emotions would most likely make you want to quickly put this magazine down.*



Being cautious, I waited a few days which has turned out to be a good decision. In addition to the emotion, more objective thoughts, comparisons, facts and questions have appeared. Based on population and financial support for sport, Slovenia has been achieving above average and disproportionate sporting success. Our hockey players have been more or less regular members of the world's Group A Ice Hockey Championship, despite there being less registered players than there are hockey teams in Finland. Our handball and volleyball players are placed just below the top European players and our basketball players have won in a spectacular way. Not in volleyball and even less so in basketball, there are not any Slovenian teams able to achieve more visible results and it is only a little better in handball. In the individual sports, our skiers, ski-jumpers, judoka, table tennis players, athletes and some other sportsmen who I can't remember now, have been achieving spectacular results, although it cannot be claimed that Slovenia invests heavily in sport.

## Why does a small country have the energy for such success in sport?

In basketball, the answer is relatively simple: excellent selection, a good leader and a clear path to the end goal. A group of people, who knew what they wanted, gathered together. The Basketball Federation of Slovenia hired a selector from Serbia, who was only interested in the end-result and was able to leave the past of grudges and discord behind. When they realised that we lacked the quality centre players, they decided on the extraordinary step of naturalising Anthony Randolph. The selector had chosen a strong team of professional assistants and clearly defined the roles and hierarchy between the players. The first five were not predetermined, they changed according to their performance. In the most critical moments, selector Kokoškov calmly changed the best player, Goran Dragić, with Aleksej Nikolic who is just starting his career. His message of trust and giving opportunities to everyone was sent to the players in the best possible way. Who would not have given their best in such a team? ◀

Slovenian basketball team's matches were also watched by Slovenian politicians. **I hope they have learned something.**

Photo: Žiga Bojč/STA



# Slovenia beats Serbia to claim European basketball title

*The Slovenian national basketball team became the European champions after defeating Serbia 93:85 in the final match of the 2017 EuroBasket in Istanbul. The gold medal is the first medal for the nation at a major basketball competition.*

The match was played in the sold-out Sinan Erdem Dome which saw 7,000 Slovenian fans converge on Turkey's biggest city after their team qualified for the final by beating the reigning European champions, Spain, in the semi-finals.

Slovenia entered the match as the only undefeated team at the tournament, after a clean sweep in the five preliminary round games in Helsinki and eliminating Ukraine, Latvia and Spain in the knock-out round, on their path to the final with Serbia.

As a debutante in the finals, Slovenia faced Serbia, the silver medalists from the 2009 European Championship, the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Rio Olympics, but were never impressed by one of the most successful European nations in basketball.

In the first quarter, both teams were nervous and impressed by the wild crowd, exchanging the lead and measuring each other's strengths with the quarter closing with Serbia leading 22:20.

Slovenia went on a 5:0 run at the start of the second quarter and pushed the tempo further to increase the lead to 10 points midway through the period. The hot play by Slovenia's best player, Goran Dragić, helped Slovenia maintain the lead until the end of the first half (56:47), with the Miami Heat point guard scoring a total of 26 points.

Slovenia fell in a hole in the third quarter, struggling to score consistently, while losing its teen star, Luka Dončić, with a sprained ankle. Serbia cut the lead to only two points with three minutes to go, but Dragić calmed things down in to give Slovenia a four-point lead at the end.

Owing to some poor shooting decisions, Slovenia surrendered its lead by the middle of the last quarter, allowing Serbia to take a one-

point lead midway the last period, after which the two teams were almost equal until two minutes to go.

It was then that Slovenia tightened up their defence and Anthony Randolph and Klemen Prepelič scored crucial points to seal the win for Slovenia with the exhausted Dragić watching from the bench.

"Slovenia is the European champion", captain Dragić told the press immediately after the win, admitting that he had cramp in the second half such that he could barely run. "The team was phenomenal from start to finish ... all the best to my guys!".

Dragić and Dončić were named among the best five players at the tournament, along with Alexei Shved of Russia, Bogdan Bogdanović of Serbia and Pau Gasol of Spain. Dragić also won the title of the most valuable player at the EuroBasket after scoring 35 points in final, which is a Slovenian national team record and one of the best scoring performances in the finals of the European Basketball Championships.

It was the first time a team won the EuroBasket without the loss of any match at the tournament, while the Slovenian basketball team became the first national team to win gold at a major tournament. ◀

Source: STA



The golden Slovenian team are Goran Dragić (C), Anthony Randolph, Matic Rebec, Aleksej Nikolič, Klemen Prepelič, Edo Murič, Jaka Blažič, Jan Kosi, Miha Lapornik, Gašper Vidmar, Saša Zagorac, Žiga Dimec, Vlatko Čančar and Luka Dončić.

They were coached by Igor Kokoškov.

S&P Global Ratings

# Slovenian Insight in Association with S&P Global Ratings

*In June 2017, S&P Global Ratings raised its long-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings on Slovenia to 'A+' from 'A'. At the same time, the agency affirmed the 'A-1' short-term sovereign credit rating. The outlook is stable. The upgrade reflects the expectation that net general government debt will fall below 60 percent by the end of 2018. This is based on the assumption that the Slovenian economy will continue on its robust growth trajectory in 2017 and the following years as domestic demand continues to soar, with rising employment lifting disposable incomes and investment picking up.*

Slovenia benefits from its integration into the eurozone's core supply chains in a number of key industries, such as automotive, pharmaceuticals and electrical equipment. Slovenia's bright economic outlook and labour market conditions support the recovery of its financial sector, as non-performing loans continue to decline and the appetite for lending in the economy returns. Despite the European Central Bank's expansionary monetary policy, credit growth has only recently picked up in Slovenia.



**Interview:** Ludwig Heinz, Primary Credit Analyst, S&P Global Ratings

Slovenia continued its strong growth in 2017. Accordingly, S&P revised upward the growth projections for 2017 and 2018 to 3.7% and 3.4%, respectively. This is driven by rising private consumption due to sound employment growth and higher incomes. The agency also believes that the authorities will drive the general government deficit to below 1 percent of GDP in 2017.

The stable outlook on Slovenia balances the upside potential from the further reduction of debt and contingent liabilities against structural reform complacency, risk of fiscal slippage and re-emerging external imbalances. S&P could raise the ratings if structural reforms were implemented to support sustainable economic growth and fiscal improvement, resulting from a consistent reduction in government debt. Furthermore, if progress on privatisation were to reduce the government's role in the economy significantly, containing contingent liabilities and further contributing to public debt reduction, the agency could also raise the ratings.

**TST: As the outlook reveals, "political disagreements could also interfere in planned privatisations in Slovenia as shown in recent discussions on the privatisation of the country's largest lender, NLB". How does S&P factor privatisation into its sovereign analysis?**

**Ludwig Heinz:** In our sovereign rating analysis, privatisations can reduce the government's contingent liabilities and potentially improve its fiscal position. In some cases, privatisation can also improve economic efficiency and the conditions for private enterprises, and may improve a country's growth potential. In Slovenia's case, we have not factored in potential proceeds from the sale of the state's NLB stake in our fiscal forecast. More broadly, we think that further privatisation in Slovenia will be a politically contentious issue, not only ahead of next year's elections but also thereafter.

**TST: The agency also expects continued growth in investment to result in capacity expansion in Slovenia's export-oriented industry. Can you be more precise?**

**LZ:** We anticipate continued demand from Slovenia's trading partners, particularly in the eurozone but also globally. With external demand set to remain strong, we think that Slovenia's export-oriented corporates will continue to invest. Furthermore, recent capacity

expansions (for example at Revoz) and planned investments in the automotive sector, support our forecast of the continued strong export performance of the Slovenian economy.

**TST: How does the agency assess the investment environment in Slovenia, especially from a foreign investment perspective?**

**LZ:** Overall, Slovenia's very strong integration into core European supply chains is a positive factor in our assessment and also speaks to an attractive environment for foreign investors. At the same time, the state maintains a large role in the economy and structural reforms in this regard could potentially even improve foreign investment prospects further. ◀

**Sources:** Standard & Poor's Rating Services and Eurostat.

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OECD view:

# Slovenia needs to boost investment and productivity through better skills and regulation

*The Slovenian economy is rebounding after a long downturn, experiencing stronger growth, declining unemployment, healthier public finances and renewed income convergence with more advanced European economies. Further reforms are now needed to increase investment, boost productivity, improve living standards and ensure that all Slovenians benefit from inclusive growth, highlights the latest OECD Economic Survey of Slovenia, issued on 5 September 2017.*



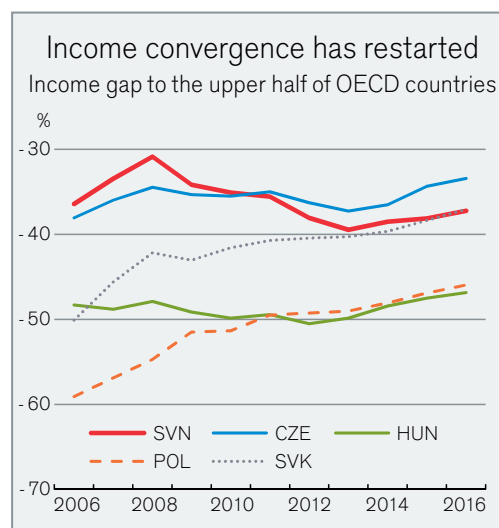
Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD;  
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

*"I am delighted to be in Ljubljana to present the OECD Economic Survey of Slovenia. Yesterday, I was privileged to meet with President Pahor and Prime Minister Cerar in Bled, where I remarked on the tremendous improvements in Slovenia's economy since my last visit only two years ago", Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD stated when delivering the findings.*

## Slovenia's recovery is strengthening

Growth has picked up to a pace exceeding the EU15 average due to recent structural reforms, business restructuring, supportive monetary conditions and improved export markets. Lower unemployment and higher real incomes are underpinning consumption. Business investment is rising, although it remains low relative to GDP. Public debt and non-performing loans

are reducing from the previously high levels. However, Slovenia faces several socioeconomic challenges, particularly rapid ageing of the population. The government's National Development Strategy 2030 aims to improve the wellbeing of its population through strong, inclusive and sustainable growth in the context of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

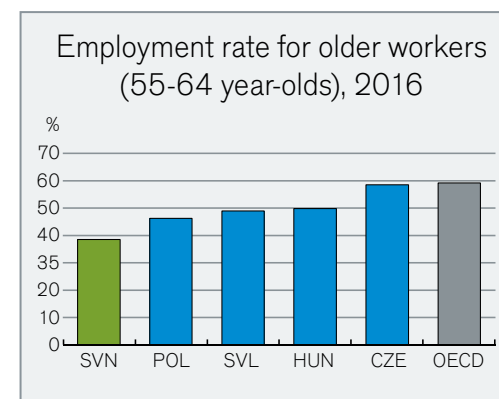


Source: OECD Analytical Database.

## Investing in skills would raise incomes and make growth more inclusive

Investment in human capital is important to raise productivity and to ensure that the benefits of the recovery reach everyone in society. Persistent long-term unemployment and low employment of older workers, combined with

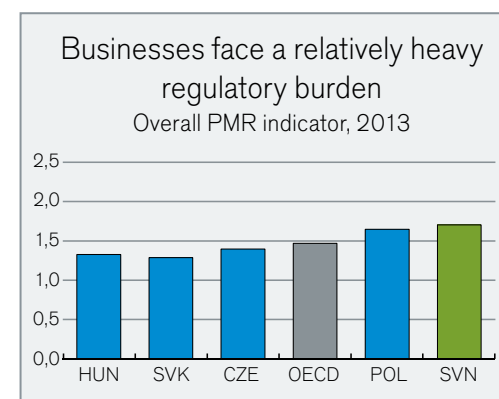
an ageing population, magnify the importance of achieving a more inclusive labour market. Workers need to maintain their skills to find and retain well paid jobs, and many of the unemployed have to be reskilled to gain a foothold in the labour market. A number of policies are required to meet the challenge of preparing people for successful careers in competitive and innovative firms that are globally integrated, including training of the jobless and strengthening vocational and university education.



Source: OECD, Labour Force Survey – Sex and Age composition database.

## Attracting investment and fostering competitive firms

More capital would raise productivity and living standards. Reducing high regulatory barriers would make Slovenia more attractive to domestic and foreign investors. This could be achieved by strengthening inter-agency coordination, regulatory impact assessments and the competition authority. Reducing the wide scope of the numerous state-owned enterprises would foster competition, particularly in network sectors. More competitive markets would lower prices, expand consumer choice and stimulate innovation with benefits for well-being and economic growth. ◀



Source: OECD PMR indicators database.



NKBM Bank; Photo: Bojan Šuštar/STA

## NKBM completes acquisition of Summit Leasing

*NKBM bank has completed the acquisition of Summit Leasing Slovenia, one of the biggest leasing houses in the country, six months after the transaction was announced. The bank said that the takeover was a key stepping stone on the path toward becoming the leading universal bank in the country.*

Summit Leasing will be an independent unit of the NKBM group. Existing management and all of the employees will stay with the company, which will now have access to fresh capital, with NKBM having said that this will improve its development prospects. Summit Leasing Director, Mitja Otorepec, said the bank's broad distribution network would facilitate the cross-selling of services to drive future growth. Summit Leasing Slovenija was acquired in March by Biser Bidco, a company established by US private equity fund Apollo, and the EBRD for the acquisition by NKBM.



Sonja Šmuc; Photo: Gregor Mlakar/STA

## Sonja Šmuc appointed GZS Director General

*On 14 September, Sonja Šmuc, Executive Director of the Managers' Association, was appointed as the new Director General of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS).*

Šmuc, who is succeeding long-standing GZS boss, Samo Hribar Milič, said upon confirmation of her four-year term by the Chamber's Executive Board, that GZS needs to serve as a cornerstone in efforts to raise everyone's quality of life. Šmuc feels that bureaucracy and excessive regulation come at a price that has a significant impact on a country's competitiveness. She is proposing a pact by all stakeholders, to pursue the joint goal of raising added value per employee by 30 percent to 45 percent by 2025. Šmuc expects a constructive attitude from the trade unions with whom talks will be held on health reform and older workers, while the primary focus areas for cooperation with the government will be the tax system, labour market and zoning legislation.

## Moody's changes outlook for NLB, NKBM and Abanka to positive

*Moody's, the rating agency, has changed the outlook on the deposit ratings of Slovenian banks NLB, NKBM and Abanka from stable to positive.*

The agency said the latest rating action was prompted by the change in its macro profile for Slovenia from "moderate" to "moderate+", as well as the continued improvement in the credit fundamentals of the banks. The agency also affirmed the June ratings of the three banks; at Ba1 for NLB, Ba2 for NKBM and Ba1 for Abanka.

## Minister says talks with Magna under way, contract ready in few weeks

*The Minister for the Economy, Zdravko Počivalšek, announced in mid-September that agreement on the majority of the contract conditions related to the investment planned by Magna had been reached at a meeting with representatives of the auto giant.*



The Minister expects the contract will be signed by the end of October. Speaking at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS), the Minister said that this is a strategic investment contract for an investment exceeding EUR 100m, is projected to secure at least 1,000 new jobs, provides EUR 18m in government support and defines the consequences of a cancellation of the project.

The Minister for the Economy, Zdravko Počivalšek  
Photo: Daniel Novakovič/STA

Source: STA

**Interview:** Dong Mingzhu, Chairperson and President of Gree Electric Appliances Inc., Zhuhai

# Only healthy and quality companies will survive and maintain sustainable development

By **Tina Drolc**, M.Sc.

*China is pushing forward with revolutionising the supply side, forcing unhealthy companies and those companies that produce poor quality products to take corrective action or go out of business, says Dong Mingzhu, the leader of the US\$22 billion air-conditioning giant, Gree Electric Appliances, inc. Since becoming the head of the company in 2012, the price of the company's stock has more than doubled. She was named as one of the Top 10 Economic Figures in China and Forbes identifies her as the "Iron Lady", the most outstanding woman in business.*

**Q** What are the beliefs and values that give meaning to your business *modus operandi*?

**A** Gree is a manufacturing company. For a manufacturing company, any kind of business model is designed with products at its core. It is only by producing high quality products for consumers that a company can maintain continuous success in business. At present, many companies emphasise innovation and advertising rather than products. In my opinion, they are running after the less important things. No matter how smart your advertisement is, it is the product that consumers are going to use and experience. If your product gives a bad user experience, different from what is said in the advertisement, then your company is not an honest company. A dishonest company will be driven out of the market sooner or later.

In recent years, Gree has used the slogan "Made in China, Loved by the World" and at all times, makes its products by insisting on the "Artisan Spirit" and "Innovation Spirit". We hope that, with our independently developed core technologies and premium quality, people around the world will benefit from Chinese manufacturing and then love products made in China. Gree is now not only an air conditioning enterprise but also a diversified enterprise. Our dream is to build the world's best products and benefit consumers all over the world. For us, this is a grand dream and also a relentless pursuit.

**Q** You will visit Slovenia for the 61. EOQ Congress, sharing a plenary session titled "Guarantee of Quality is the Social Responsibility for an Enterprise". What has Gree gained from implementing quality standards?

**A** In the past, Chinese manufacturing was stereotyped as "low quality and low price" but today we have basically removed this stereotype. Our products are gaining more and more recognition globally. This is inseparable from our strict requirements on quality control since the beginning.

In recent years, China has pushed to revolutionise the supply side. In my view, the revolution of the supply side is a kind of forcing mechanism, forcing unhealthy companies and those companies that produce poor quality products to take corrective action or go out of business, meaning that only healthy and quality companies will survive and maintain sustainable development. This has also encouraged more and more Chinese companies to understand their social responsibility and the fact that a company should not just be seeking profit.

Recently, the concept of the "Artisan Spirit" has often been discussed in public. What is Artisan Spirit? I think it is the spirit of pursuing perfection and implementing the highest standards for our products at every stage of the production process.

**Some of the quality standards that Gree has implemented have already become the industrial and national standard. Can you highlight the impact?**

**A** In order to guarantee product quality, Gree established the Material Inspection Factory from its foundation and which is unique in the industry. This factory conducts strict inspections on every component and will not allow any inferior components to continue along the production line. We are promoting the "Zero Defect" project in product design, manufacturing, purchasing and other production processes, which has greatly lowered the after-sales reworking rate of air conditioners. In the process of product design, we have set up a complete supervision system, implemented a comprehensive strategy of refined products, imported and encourage the excellent performance management mode. In addition, Gree has a complete system of enterprise standards management which currently includes more than 10,000 items, most of these standards have surpassed national and international standards. ◀





Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., CEO, AmCham Slovenia

**Interview:** Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc.,  
CEO, AmCham Slovenia

# Slovenia could be a place of abundance

By **Tina Drolc**, M.Sc.

*When asking Ajša Vodnik, M.Sc., about the challenges in Slovenia and in US-Slovene relations, she highlights the essence of decision-making and focus. She was appointed as head of the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia in 2009 and she approaches the tasks with a tone of cooperation, optimism and inspiration.*

**Q You have served two mandates as the elected member of the Executive Committee of AmChams in Europe\*, what is your estimate of the future trade potential between America and the EU?**

**A** More than 60 percent of global trade happens between the US and Europe, so they are the largest trade and investment partners. In recent years, there was a strong likelihood of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which was meant to abolish trade and investment barriers, however the current administration put it on hold. In Slovenia, American companies are interested in investing in companies that develop niche technologies and products but we have to be more proactive in searching for investment partners who would also be interested in **greenfield investments**. This is something that AmCham Slovenia would definitely support.

\* Established in 1963, AmChams in Europe serves as the umbrella organisation for 46 American Chambers of Commerce (AmChams) from 44 countries throughout Europe and Eurasia. AmChams in Europe represent the interests of more than 17,000 American and European companies employing 20 million workers and accounting for more than US \$1.1 trillion in investment on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Q When considering Slovenia's geopolitical position, how do you see Slovenia's role in transatlantic relations?**

**A** Every country says it has the best geopolitical position but in Slovenia's case it is actually true! We are at the crossroads of the east and the west and we understand both cultures but it is something we do not promote enough. Occasionally, American companies ask why they should have their European headquarters in Slovenia. The answer is obvious and yes, we want to attract them, but they often get stuck because of high labour taxation, lengthy procedures in getting all kinds of permits and the talent pool. The AmCham Slovenia Investment Committee believes that we could be really good for high-end jobs as the green reference country. There are already some great cases, for instance the Jožef Stefan Institute with their artificial intelligence lab. It is important that we know how to tell a story and sell it. If we do that correctly, the investors will be interested.

**Q With Slovenian born Melania Trump the US First Lady, where do you see the main opportunity for Slovenia?**

**A** It can have a lot of impact or none, it is on us and not on her. We have gained some attention

and she is quite popular in the US, I think we should be proud that for the first time in history, a Slovene is the First Lady of the United States. For Slovenes, in my opinion, it is really important to learn how to promote ourselves well, how to tell a good story and having a first lady in the White House is definitely an opportunity we should use.

**Q Has Slovenia made good use of the current economic growth, especially in terms of investment?**

**A** We know that the growth is mainly due to the export companies and I am happy that the current government is really proactive in terms of attracting investors as, in the past, this was not always the case. There are still some barriers, as already mentioned, but it is really important that we make investors feel welcome. I am really satisfied that we have seen some good cases in recent years, for example the collaboration with Japan, in robotics, through Yaskawa. But I strongly believe that there is a lot more potential and I certainly hope we will make good use of it in the years to come.

**Q Since you became the Director of AmCham Slovenia, many things have changed and you have made a lot of progress. What would you highlight as your greatest success?**

**A** There are a lot of things I am proud of but I would highlight three. First is AmCham Young, the program that we have for potential leaders, from 20 to 40 years of age, from student age to becoming a business leader. They are the ones who are our biggest inspiration and I cannot be more proud that we now have more than 1,000 people involved. The second is Partnership for Change, a program we established with the Slovenian government. It is a program of innovative collaboration between Slovenia's public administration and private sector, where we are working together through the exchange of employees, sharing best practices and solving real challenges. The third is the Giving Back to the Community project where we started working with the socially, or in some other way, disadvantaged people. We are now taking our operation to the next level as can see that it really matters to our members. It is important to leave an impact on society. At the end of the day, I am happy that our business community has really grown, there are many people who are willing to commit their time, energy and inspiration and they want Slovenia to be a place of abundance. ◀



2<sup>nd</sup> Brexit Ambition roundtable

# Business is more optimistic about Brexit

By Barbara Uranjek

*The British-Slovenian Chamber of Commerce organised the second, in a series of three, "Brexit Ambition" roundtables where we hosted Slovene and British businessmen, as well as a representative of the Slovenian government. A proposal was then prepared by business on the Brexit negotiations, which was then handed to the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Trade.*

In general, panellists were more optimistic about the relations between the EU and the UK since the first roundtable which took place in April 2017. After the general election in Great Britain, where the ruling Conservative Party of Theresa May did not get the expected overwhelming majority, the panellists agreed that there is a greater likelihood of a "soft" Brexit, which is expected to be more acceptable economically to both Europe and the UK.

PwC's Pawel Peplinski, the leader of the Brexit Ambition initiative, estimated that the negotiations would last more than 18 months and that it is in the interest of business that the costs of the UK exit from the EU are as low as possible. Unnecessary costs can only result

in reduced competitiveness for both sides. His recommendation to the Slovenian government was to turn Brexit into an opportunity and offer more support to Slovene exporters looking to enter the British market.

## Slovenian exporters are concerned about trade barriers

Slovenian exporters expressed their fear of higher costs due to import barriers once the UK leaves the EU, which could result in less orders and exports from Slovenia. Currently, the British market is interesting for Slovene business because its open, but this may change in the future with additional barriers. TPV,

Currently, the British market is interesting for Slovene business because its open, **but this may change in the future with additional barriers.**

a development supplier in the automotive market, emphasised the importance of common regulation and legislation (in the area of materials, safety and driving). Avoidance of double taxation is also crucial, as is the UK's participation in the European Digital Initiative (i.e. Industry 4.0). With regard to additional restrictions, TPV propose the **avoidance of additional taxation and barriers**, such as additional waiting time at borders, customs duties which will require the need to increase security stock which is an additional cost. Maciej Galant, CEO of BMW Group Slovenia, pointed out that the introduction of customs duties would have a negative impact on the British and European automotive industry and therefore proposes the maintenance of a duty-free trade policy between the EU and the UK. In particular, for the BMW Group, when it comes to the introduction of customs duties, the sale of MINI in the EU will be questioned since they are produced in the UK and because of this, they are free of intellectual property rights, uniform homologation regulations and uniform standards for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Conclusion

For Slovene exporters, the most important concerns in trading with Great Britain are the **introduction of new regulations on products and services**, the **introduction of new administrative barriers to trading and customs duties** that will burden prices and consequently reduce competitiveness.

Managers expect politicians to engage in negotiations between the EU and the United Kingdom in a constructive, cooperative way, following the principles of common interest and above all, the negotiations must be transparent. Most importantly for the smooth operation of business are **stability** (political and financial, which also means the stability of the British pound) and the **predictability of the European economy**.

The next roundtable will take place on 9 October from 9am -11am at Hotel Lev, when the perspective of British business will be shared by **Allie Renison** (Institute of Directors), **Anne-Marie Martin** (Council of British Chambers of Europe), **Hugh Aitken** (Council of British Industry), and many more. More at [www.bscc.si/program](http://www.bscc.si/program). ◀



**Interview:** Dr Hansen, the founder and President of Magee Scientific and Assistant Professor Griša Močnik, Director of Research and Development

# Corporates often prioritise the economy and technology over the environment

By **Geoffrey West**

*Recently, Aerosol d.o.o., a partner of Magee Scientific (California), marked its tenth anniversary in Slovenia. The company, founded by Dr Tony Hansen, celebrated the anniversary by showcasing their products and initiatives in air-quality measurement technologies. The Slovenia Times met with Dr Hansen, the founder and President of Magee Scientific and Assistant Professor Griša Močnik, Director of Research and Development.*

Almost all of the political negotiations for reducing carbon emissions are aimed at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, **'black carbon' or smoke, is the second largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for about 20% - 30% of the total effect.**

Aerosol is a growing company, having started with a staff of seven in 2007 to about 20 today. They have an estimated 80 percent share of the global market for instruments which measure "black carbon" pollution particles in the atmosphere. The company's website states that: *"Since 2007, we have focused on 'black' (and 'brown') carbon aerosols. We have a world-leading scientific research group; technical development; and first-class manufacturing of instruments and accessories which are shipped from Slovenia to installations on all seven continents."*

To understand Aerosol's products, Dr Hansen presents an analogy of two diesel trucks hauling the same loads. One truck has a well-maintained engine releasing very little soot into the environment, while the other is poorly-maintained with very thick, black smoke coming from its exhaust.

**TH:** The emission rate of particles can be very different. The "aethalometer" which we make measures the black particles in the atmosphere. Whereas CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can be predicted knowing the quantity of fuel consumed, the emission of aerosol particles cannot be predicted because it is so variable and dependent upon the quality of combustion.

In the media, the term 'pollution by carbon' is generally interpreted as emissions of carbon dioxide gas or CO<sub>2</sub>, which is the primary component of the 'greenhouse effect'. Almost all of the political negotiations for reducing carbon emissions are aimed at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, 'black carbon' or smoke, is the second largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for about 20% - 30% of the total effect.

**GM:** Black carbon is a part of all particles in the atmosphere, the portion is usually between 5% in remote areas to 50% next to a busy road. The daily limit, in Europe, for particles smaller than 10 micrometres is 50µg/m<sup>3</sup> for what is considered acceptable for breathing. In New Delhi, for example, we were getting readings of black carbon of around 100µg/ m<sup>3</sup>. We have this huge variation in pollution from one place to another that needs to be addressed. This means knowing more about the composition



and about the sources, and this is where our instruments are important because they measure parameters which indicate not only the composition, but even more about the sources of pollution.

#### Q Why Slovenia?

**GM:** Unfortunately, Ljubljana is still one of the worst places in Europe for air quality. It is a good place to take measurements, but it is not the best place to breathe.

**TH:** The EU allows each country to submit delegates to EU-wide committees and discussions affecting the EU as a whole and so when there are discussions about air quality, Slovenia has a seat at the table. There are only a few people in Slovenia qualified as experts in this field, and many of them are directly associated with us.

Griša is an Assistant Professor at the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School associated with the largest national research institute, Jožef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana. Aerosol has the credibility, the track record for fundamental research such that, when Griša joins those committee meetings, he is appropriately qualified to contribute scientific opinions to those discussions and be a part of the debate on managing pollution on an EU-wide basis. Separate from his business responsibilities, Griša is a respected scientist as part of the Slovenian delegation. Aerosol has the most knowledgeable team of people under one roof to discuss EU-wide air quality concerns.

**GM:** Slovenia has an excellent educational system. There is a high proportion of people available, as a percentage of the national population, who are very well educated and have experience in research, development, technology and manufacturing. When we try to recruit people for research and development or to produce instruments or to send the instruments globally, there is the talent here in Slovenia. We have a globally relevant company that makes a highly specialised product that addresses a global topic. We are well above the average in terms of average output or added value per employee.

**TH:** In Slovenia, you can find lots of goods that says 'Made in China'. Within China, there's relatively few that say 'Made In Slovenia' – but you can see that on our products.

#### Q The issue of the environment is a hot topic among politicians. What is your corporate directive, as far as the environment is concerned?

**GM:** Global climate change, in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> measurements, covers decades. Our technology allows for measurements of black carbon that can result in direct, immediate changes. This buys us some time to enable politicians to arrive at some sort of political consensus on the issue, which starts with the Paris UN agreement.



Recently, in India, the courts ruled that cars must now meet new, strict criteria. This means that there is now a legal precedent in giving health a priority over economy and this is incredibly important in developing countries. Current corporate practice often gives the economy and technology priority over the environment, and now we see a reversal of this in India and China. There is increased recognition of the need to consider the environment more in decisions relating to economic and technological development.

#### Q What is your 10 year vision?

**GM:** I see our place within this discussion as contributing a little to the environmental, economic and health/climate discussions. There are different aspects to what we do, but the bottom line is that we make instruments that are reliable, robust and are being used everywhere in the world. ◀



In Slovenia, you can find lots of goods that says 'Made in China'. Within China, **there's relatively few that say 'Made In Slovenia' – but you can see that on our products.**



# City of Maribor focuses on foreign markets with Invest in Maribor

*Since the launch two years ago of the investment platform, Invest in Maribor – Welcome to Slovenia, and following a series of efforts by the Municipality of Maribor, the city continues to attract foreign investors and identify new business opportunities, for investors and representatives from industry, with a variety of new projects. As highlighted by the Municipality, over the last four years, Maribor-based companies have generated six percent more jobs.*

The Municipality presents investment opportunities through a broad spectrum of activities including the website ([www.investinmaribor.eu](http://www.investinmaribor.eu)), and brochures and special investment offices both at home and abroad. Multiple events have been held: in Zhengzhou (China) there was a special promotional exhibition pavilion; and numerous B2B meetings and

conferences attracting a lot of attention at the Slovenian-Belarus and Slovenia-Chinese investment conferences.

The platform, Invest in Maribor, promotes investment opportunities in the city and the region, offers active assistance to those who want to present their potential to investors and possible business partners. The platform also

**Maribor is one of the most important economic and production centres in Slovenia,** a strategic hub in Central Europe

The majority of the activities are related to identifying opportunities from financially strong markets, particularly China.

provides investors with direct contacts to enable them to investigate the potential projects.

As Mayor **Andrej Fištravec** states, the common denominator of the entrepreneurial challenges in the city is the lack of funds for their implementation, while the Municipality's ability to provide financial resources is limited by a number of restrictions. Therefore, a priority of the Municipality is to continue with the development of a business-friendly environment for the implementation of projects in accordance with its remit.

## Investors in Maribor

Maribor is one of the most important economic and production centres in Slovenia, a strategic hub in Central Europe as its location makes it attractive for logistics centres and mid-sized companies that produce and distribute high-quality products. Due to the excellent working culture and an abundance of specialists in technical fields, Maribor offers the best possible solution to potential investors. The city provides an attractive business environment for foreign investors, offering numerous investment opportunities. Foreign investors in Maribor include: **Henkel, Palfinger, Dura-Bus, Starkom, Unicredit Bank, Sparkasse, SHS Aviation, Weiler Corporation** and many others. The municipality includes six business zones: Tezno, Melje, Limbuš, Studenci, Tabor, Pobrežje and **there are more than 10,000 business entities.**

Next to 6 business zones, region and surrounding Municipalities offer additional space for investments. **Magna** was initially interested in Maribor, but due to the lack of spatial capacity in the city, the Municipality in cooperation with the Municipality of Hoče Slivnica and state, offered space on the outskirts of the city, near Maribor airport. **Investment of Magna has become the biggest greenfield investment in Slovenia in the last 10 years.**

## Aerodrom Maribor investment project

Aerodrom Maribor d.o.o. successfully tendered to the **Republic of Slovenia** for the 15 + 5 year rental concession for the real estate and equipment of the **Edvard Rusjan Maribor Airport**. With its new ownership structure, Aerodrom Maribor will have many opportunities, including potential development and investment. The long term entrepreneurial vision for de-

velopment was part of the tender specification from the Ministry of Infrastructure, which Aerodrom Maribor fulfilled and for which it has set visionary goals for the development of infrastructure, including a hotel, centre for recycling aircraft, simulation centre and the extension of the runway to attract intercontinental flights.

## Investment opportunities based on tourism and green industrialisation

The Municipality wants to ensure and enable the conditions for the economic development of the municipality through measures to promote the economy in the City of Maribor and its surrounds. It wants to increase employment opportunities, create new jobs as well as improve the quality of existing jobs, while at the

## The key activities in the city are tourism and green reindustrialisation.

same time improving the standard of living and increasing the competitiveness of individuals and the region. The key activities in the city are tourism and green reindustrialisation. In order to achieve these ambitious goals, the Municipality has implemented various measures to promote the economy and activities to attract foreign as well as domestic investors. The majority of the activities are related to identifying opportunities from financially strong markets, particularly China.

## Maribor is the Future – Pohorske Livade project

The City of Maribor is one of the oldest towns and the traditional hosts of the Alpine Skiing World Cup for Women, the "Golden Fox". Maribor wants to develop sports tourism. The future of the city cannot be envisaged without adequate development of the sporting infrastructure and activities such as offers aimed at meeting the demands of the global sporting community, professional sportsmen and women, rather than just local or national

## Successful investments

- Acquisition by Australian company, Brobo: estimated investment value, EUR 1m;
- Acquisition by Italian company, Serioplast: estimated investment value, EUR 7.5m;
- Acquisition by Chinese company, Tam Europe, estimated investment value, EUR 25m;
- Restructuring aid for Arosa Mobilia;
- Numerous bilateral agreements between Maribor companies for cooperation and acquisition;
- Florjančič printing press;
- Investment by an international fund in Aerodrom Maribor d.o.o., estimated amount, EUR 300m

requirements. The city has all conditions to develop this area and therefore as owner of all the land, has designed and certified all spatial plans for this project.

The Pohorske Livade project includes the construction of villas and apartment blocks, and the construction of a multi-purpose pavilion and an outdoor skating rink. The estimated value of the investment is around EUR 44m. The project to build the infrastructure for a Winter-Summer Sporting Centre is attractive to both private and institutional investors, as its feasibility is practically immediate as the city is already well prepared in terms of planning and activities. ◀

The City of Maribor is one of the oldest towns and the traditional hosts of the Alpine Skiing World Cup for Women, the "Golden Fox". **Maribor wants to develop sports tourism.**



Ravi Chaudhry, strategy consultant to corporations, governments and civil society, mentor to CEOs and corporate boards, author of the book *Quest for Exceptional Leadership*. [www.ravichaudhry.com](http://www.ravichaudhry.com)

# Changing the Heart-set of Leaders of Today and Tomorrow

A vital Pre-requisite for Sustained Results and Happiness

By **Sonja Klopčič & Ravi Chaudhry**

*Two unique business paths in significantly different environments, east and west, European and Asian perspective, experiences from the huge India and tiny Slovenia, generational gap, a woman's and a man's view... We could still go on with the differences between us, but inspite of this we are synhronized in our outlooks for a new era leadership.*

Leadership development lags behind breakthrough technological discoveries, behind the development of new business models, it is slower from the changes of people awareness and changes in the environment. Leadership is in crisis, from which it will not come out with even more guidance and control, but with a radical transformation. The challenge of lead-

ership is to open up a space for co-creation, to encourage trust, collaboration and transparency, so that organizations actually come to life as living systems.

The current system for monitoring results, which we set ourselves, is largely responsible for the focus on short-term goals and ignoring long-term objectives. We focused on only one segment of business, the income statement and ballance sheet, and forgot about others, as if the business systems were separated from other aspects of life. Destroyed ecosystems, exhausted natural resources, and people, tired from constant stress, give a clear signal that the way in which success is judged is too narrow and doesn't provide the whole picture.

We are entering a new phase of human enterprise that is redefining the criteria of success as well as re-contouring the routes to success. Even the skills required to stay successful have undergone re-configuration. So far, the traits of the body and the traits of the mind were sufficient to do well. But no longer. We now need a new set of leadership traits – the traits of the heart, defined as "wholeness, compassion and transparency." These are the attributes that can transform an average leader in to an Exceptional Leader.

It is the high time to focus on new approaches, that come from different drivers as before. For sustainable future leadership decisions and actions need to come from the love for the humanity, from the most profound human values and from highly conscious awarness. This is the invitation to all leading Business Schools to change the nomenclature of their coveted Master's Program from MBA (Masters in Business Administration) to MBC (Masters in Business with Conscience). The schools should not wait for the employers to ask for such candidates; they should convince all employers that for their own survival and growth, it is vital that hereafter they recruit management graduates only from MBC stream.

This process of transition is not merely about the nomenclature of the programme, it is more about changing the mind-set and the heart-set of tomorrow's leaders, so that they start realizing that we have already entered an era when "the company that makes only money will be considered a poor company".

Sustained Happiness is a natural outcome of how you lead. It is defined by "*leadership attitude*". Interactive attitude necessitates a navigational change in the way leaders function. It is about anticipating tomorrow's issues and the need to take all stakeholders in confidence. Invariably, it is the result of a leader's ability to trust and be trusted by all stakeholders, her eagerness to work in close partnerships with them, showing sensitivity toward their expectations, and re-aligning strategies and business plans as required. This attitude is driven entirely by a leader's core set of values. When that happens, '*sustained happiness*' also happens, quite involuntarily actually.

It is our fervent hope that the leaders of today and tomorrow genuinely realize that the new traits of leadership are not about philanthropy; these are necessary for our survival, growth and happiness. ◀



Sonja Klopčič, innovator, manager and leader, developer of collaborative leadership, mentor to CEOs, author of the book *The Energy Inside Leadership*. [www.internetofleaders.com](http://www.internetofleaders.com)

Annual International HR Forum, IEDC-Bled School of Management

# Facing Digitalisation from a HR Perspective

*The HR Forum which is being hosted by the IEDC-Bled School of Management on 12 – 13 October, promises to bring together many HR managers, educational experts and other managers from all parts of Europe. This year's forum will discuss digitalization, which is not just a buzzword but affects a lot of businesses and business processes*

The program of the Forum will enable participants to go deeper into such topics as developing leaders for the new era and the challenges of future work and learning, digital business models and their impact on the HR function, and HR's active role in preparing companies and employees for the digital revolution. Among the lecturers will be Professor Drikus Kriek, who will hold a lecture on the development of leaders for the new age, and Melanie Seier Larsen from BCG who will speak about the future of work and learning. The impact of digital business models on the HR function will be presented by Gregor Bierent from New Frontier Group, Austria. Dr Reza Moussavian from Deutsche Telekom and Dr. Klaus Niedl from the Austrian company, Novomatic Group, will share their experiences on the transformation of the HR department to show how the human resource function can support digital transformation.



*"The task of HR in a world dominated by digitalisation can be seen as: looking behind the process i.e. supporting the initiatives and helping people adjust; driving from the front i.e. the need to help employees understand the importance thereof and giving them the energy to embrace a new technological future; observing from above where HR needs to look "from the balcony" to advise and to guide the organisation in its digitalisation efforts; grounding from below where HR should build on the values of the company to help it embrace new ideas; and finally walking beside where the role of HR is to assist, console and help where it become difficult."*

Professor **Drikus Kriek**, South Africa and IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia



*"I believe that, in the future, we will see closer collaboration between computers, robots and employees. Hence, several new competencies will be required. Employees with strong project management skills, programming and robotic engineering will be in great demand as they are the interface between artificial intelligence (AI) and human intelligence. What we can see today is robots with AI - this means they can act as team members and they are taking over customer-facing activities. The first robots with AI can be found in call centres, hotels in Asia are replacing receptions and the whole front desk with computers. There are also cases in sales and after-sale activities in the telecommunications industry. We can also find them in the insurance industry in the claims area, etc. As you can see, it will be essential to understand, cooperate and co-create with AI in the future."*

**Melanie Seier Larsen**, Boston Consulting Group, Slovenia



*"Digital business models are one of the major change management projects influencing a company's DNA and employees and therefore the HR function needs to be aware of the required changes within the organisation and to drive, in conjunction with other executives, the new skill set definitions, mindset and required personal development of employees to achieve a company's sustainable success."*

**Gregor Bierent**, New Frontier Group, Austria



Annual HR Managers Forum

Facing Digitalization  
from the HR Perspective

October 12-13, 2017



IEDC-Bled School Management, Prešernova cesta 33, 4260 Bled, Slovenia, [www.iedc.si/pf](http://www.iedc.si/pf)

**Interview:** Maja Oven, Head of Marketing and PR Communication, BTC d.d.

# New technologies are an opportunity for leveraging communication

By **Tina Drolc**, M.Sc.

*For almost 20 years, Maja Oven has been the Head of Marketing and PR Communication at BTC, one of the largest business, shopping, entertainment, recreation and cultural centres in Europe. This year, Ms Oven received the Gold Quill Award for Excellence in Communications for corporate social responsibility for the BTC Cycling Story - Encouraging Cycling in Slovenia. In this interview, she highlights that communication approach for activities, with events individually tailored to each target group.*



Maja Oven, Head of Marketing and PR Communication, BTC d.d.

**Q The beginning of the award-winning cycling story dates back to 2013, when the BTC company took an active role in the development of recreational and professional cycling in Slovenia. What facts and figures would you highlight?**

**A** We strengthened the cycling habits of Slovenians as proven by the increased number of participants in Marathon Franja BTC,

from around 700 in 1982 to nearly 8,000 in 2016. We had a successful breakthrough in women's cycling, with the female participants in Marathon Franja BTC increasing from a small percentage to almost a third. We successfully enhanced our digital communication, the number of visits to Marathon Franja BTC City website have increased 16-fold.

We are proud that we have successfully positioned BTC as the promoter of cycling in Slovenia, supporting the company's CSR efforts and achieving its mission to create **new business opportunities**. Last but not least, the BTC Cycling Story contributed to the **improvement of Slovenia's position** among the 27 EU countries on the **cycling barometer** of the European Cycling Federation. Slovenia was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in 2013 and reached seventh in 2015.

**Q Today, the sharing of content is multi-platform and multi-channel. According to BTC's business model, how do you deliver the messages to people where they are already seeking information?**

**A** BTC addresses its consumers through a mix of **online and offline channels**. We consistently publish information on relevant websites and on the intranet, as well as engaging users on social media. We have also launched a new mobile app "BTC City of Opportunities". For those who prefer searching for information via printed materials, there is our updated newspaper, BTC Vodnik. To keep relevant consumers informed or to present important projects, events and initiatives, we constantly issue different publications and we also take advantage of traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers. Together with events where we meet our stake-

The Gold Quill tender recognises the best communication practices and the value that professional and strategic communication programs contribute to the business success of organisations, their brand and reputation. Each tender application is evaluated with regard to the criteria of excellence determined by the International Association of Business Communicators. Among more than 5,000 submitted projects, from 16 countries, three of the awarded projects were from Slovenia.

holders personally, this channel mix is intended to ensure an ongoing communication flow and to nurture relations with our visitors, partners, employees and other stakeholders.

In the coming years, I look forward to **embracing new technologies** which are bringing a whole new world of opportunities for leveraging communication and experience with artificial intelligence and Augmented and Virtual Reality. If we think about our visitors and fashion enthusiasts for example, wouldn't it be fun to have high-tech, futuristic fitting rooms like those witnessed at Ralph Lauren's show in NYC back in 2015?

**Q Do you target local and international consumers differently, and are there any international projects in the communication field that you would like to attract in the future?**

**A** According to Ninamedia research from 2015, 22% of visitors to BTC City Ljubljana in the research sample were foreign. Most of them were from the neighbouring countries of Austria, Italy, Croatia and Hungary. In addition to Marathon Franja BTC City, every year we organise the FIS Ski Jumping Ladies World Cup - Ljubno. Such massive events also include the UCI World Cycling Tour in 2014 and the prologue and first stage of the Giro Rosa in 2015. We are confident that the arrival of Ikea will significantly increase the number of BTC City Ljubljana's visitors from the current 21 million.

In addition to private visitors, BTC City Ljubljana also welcomes people doing business. One example is ABC Accelerator which interacts with companies, investors and young start-ups at a global level. In addition, we are also involved in international flows with our business units: the BTC Logistics Centre and BTC PROP. ◀

**The arrival of Ikea will significantly increase the number of BTC City Ljubljana's visitors from the current 21 million**

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# Investment Opportunity

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## Driver Training Centre

Murska Sobota, Slovenia

The only regional training centre certified by ADAC education programme comprising. The fully leased commercial building and training polygon is located at the main regional road in Murska Sobota commercial zone.



### KEY FIGURES

- **Location:** Noršinska ulica 8, Murska Sobota
- **Floors:** -1, GF, 1 upper floor
- **Year of construction:** 1995
- **Last renovation:** 2009
- **Energetic efficiency:** C 47 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a
- **Land:** 24,615 m<sup>2</sup>
- **Net Useable Area:** 1,023 m<sup>2</sup>
- **Centre capacity:**
  - bar and car salon
  - mechanical garage
  - lecture rooms
  - driving range
- **Parking place:** 50 and free public parking nearby
- **Asking price:** **1.300.000 EUR**

The Driving Training centre complex comprises commercial building with 840m<sup>2</sup> net leasable premises and a 20,670m<sup>2</sup> training course. The range is equipped with specially designed and adapted surfaces for simulation of slippery surfaces, water curtains, and hydraulic sliding plate. The entire training system is automated and computer-controlled. The training range is fully equipped with traffic signalization, lighting, oil traps, security fence and certified for education program of the German automobile club ADAC under the auspices of the German DVR and the Council for the Prevention and Education on Traffic of Slovenia.

The commercial building has small storage in the basement, 505m<sup>2</sup> showroom with 80 seats bar and 115m<sup>2</sup> mechanical garage with tire repair workshop on the ground floor. The upper floor is used for 3 lecture rooms and 5 offices with kitchenette.



### LOCATION

Murska Sobota is a city and regional capital in north-eastern Slovenia in the corner between Austria and Hungary. The city is also an important regional economic and educational centre. The region has over 60,000 cars, on average 8.6 years old and the local Department of Transport yearly issues 3,900 new driving licences. New drivers are obligated to take safe driving course to receive full licence and generate 3.8 million euros yearly revenue to local driving schools and training centre.

The property is located at the main regional road in commercial zone in the south-eastern part of Murska Sobota. There are several retail centres, restaurants, two gas stations and high school in the immediate surrounding.

The commercial building lies 1.5km away from the town centre, 5km from A5 highway connection Lipovci and the local airport. Public transport is available within one minute walking distance.



### Contact

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# Investment Opportunity

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Building Land in Ljubljana

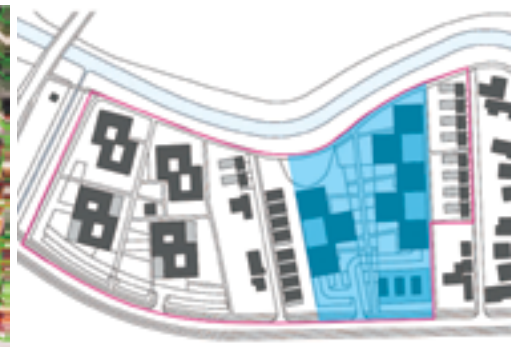
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Prime development plot is part of upcoming residential neighbourhood "Dva cesarja" located at Ljubljana ring road with city centre and Rudnik shopping area within 5-minutes' drive.



#### KEY FIGURES

- **Project:** Residential neighbourhood "Dva cesarja"
- **Land:** 14,893 m<sup>2</sup>
- **Development:** Greenfield
- **Type of Use:** Residential - commercial
  - residential: 82 apartments
  - commercial: 840 m<sup>2</sup>
  - parking: 140 parking spaces
- **Foot print ratio:** 40%
- **Max. height:** GF + up to 2 upper floors
- **Asking price:** **1.952.000 EUR**



Prime Greenfield development plot is part of upcoming residential neighbourhood "Dva cesarja". The area where residential project "Dva cesarja" is planned has divided ownership between HETA and Ljubljana municipality.

The land owned by HETA is intended for construction of smaller commercial – residential building at the local road, followed by 8 multi-dwellings buildings with 79 apartments and 107 parking spaces on the ground floor. Between the two series of apartment complex there is foreseen a community plateau with children playground, walkways and park stretching towards Mali graben creek. The 840m<sup>2</sup> commercial part is intended for grocery store with small café and on the upper floor there will be 3 duplex apartments with spacious terraces.

Detailed Spatial plan is prepared and presented to the Community; however it still needs to be approved by City council.

#### LOCATION

The Slovenian capital is distinguished by high living standard, diverse high-quality cultural and sports events as well as preserved natural environment with great biodiversity. Ljubljana is a safe, and open city, friendly towards children, the youth and the elderly. Its central location within Slovenia together with concentration of educational, scientific and research institutions generate the most knowledge and human potential in the region. The potential is met by 12,628 entrepreneurs, 18,560 registered limited liability companies and 343 corporate companies that generates over a third of the Slovenian gross domestic product.

Property is located in a peaceful neighbourhood of single family houses next to the Ljubljana ring road in the Trnovo suburb. Property is only 2.2km for Ljubljana - Center highway connections, 2.7 km from the city center and from 5.7km from the Rudnik shopping area.



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The 61<sup>st</sup> EOQ Congress

# Success in the digital era – Quality as a key driver

*The European Organization for Quality (EOQ) has been organising the Annual Quality Congress since 1956, and the 61<sup>st</sup> congress will be held in Bled on 11 and 12 October. The EOQ Congress 2017 has an amazing program of 120 speakers from 35 countries and is co-organised by EOQ, the Slovenian Association for Quality and Excellence (SZKO) and the International Academy for Quality (IAQ). In addition, on the day after the Congress, the IAQ Quality Forum will be held at the same place.*

**The EOQ Congress 2017 is the opportunity for:**

- Learning and training about how to be better on the path to excellence
- Meeting prominent and renowned individuals, experts on quality and international organisations from all over the world, including academia and those from the public and private sectors
- Developing your social capital
- Gaining inspiration and energy for successful organisations and personal quality
- Offering great opportunities for identifying new quality trends with the aim of being better on the way to the better, with the final goal – being excellent!

## Themes

- Digital Agenda and Industry 4.0
- From Quality to Excellence – Models of Excellence
- Transformation and Change Management
- Competencies Required for Managing Quality and Quality of Management in the Digital Era
- Quality Standards, Programs, Tools
- IT Solutions for Quality Support
- Quality and the Circular Economy

Under the theme '*Success in the Digital Era - Quality as a Key Driver*', the 61<sup>st</sup> congress brings together prominent and renowned individuals, experts on quality and international organisations from all over the world, among them Maryam Al Hammadi, Tim Cole, Nigel Croft, David Hutschins, Noriaki Kano, Anni Koubek, Pat LaLonde, Joseph A. Defeo, Glenn Mazur, Dong Mingzhu, Narayanan Ramanathan, Benedikt Sommerhoff, Fernando Sierra, Lars Sorquist, Harnek Singh, Velimir Srica, Mohamed Zairi, Willy Vanderbrande and Gregory Watson.



"In the digital era, the common denominator for survival and success of organisations will be the ability to adapt and change quickly. This can only be achieved by a 'Quality' culture of creative improvement on a continuous basis. In this digital era, the world is dividing once again, not between the big and small or the rich and poor as in the past, but between the fast and slow. The question is where an organisation or country wants to be. Slovenia has demonstrated it definitely wants to be on the winning side at sporting events, and now is the time for Bled to be the world capital of quality for one week to benefit the people of Slovenia, neighbouring countries and Europe."

**Janez Benčina**, President of the Organising Committee, 61<sup>st</sup> EOQ Congress



[www.eoqcongress2017.com](http://www.eoqcongress2017.com)



[twitter.com/EOQ2017](https://twitter.com/EOQ2017)



"The "get together" of active Quality professionals will this year be held in Slovenia for first time, co-organised by the committed leadership of SZKO. 'Success in the Digital Era - Quality as a Key Driver' is the theme of the 61<sup>st</sup> EOO Congress, which will take place in Bled on 11-12 October 2017. The theme of the congress was chosen because we consider that, in the digital era, quality is a key factor simply because digital is woven into everything we do and need. The digital environment requires new ideas and solutions and the congress provides the opportunity to deploy social capital."

Dr **Eric Janssens**, EOO Director General



"IAQ will organise the second IAQ World Quality Forum in Bled on 13 October 2017. In 1966, IAQ was jointly founded by the American Society for Quality (ASQ), EOO and the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE). The purpose of IAQ is to promote the quality philosophy, particularly those problems that affect mankind globally. The program includes several new dimensions on the "Future Impact of Quality", which will influence the humanity of the world in future years. The topics which should be emphasised are: "Intranet Qualities in the Digital Era", "Intergalactic Quality: Reaching for the Stars Beyond our Imagination", "The Future of the Quality Profession", "Quality in Education" and "Quality Management in the Service of Planet Earth".

Dr **Pal Molnar**, IAQ President



"Innovation, Internationalisation, Digital transformation... are highlighted as challenges for SMEs to be able to compete. After three years of working with 500 SMEs in the Basque Country (Spain), we can identify a prerequisite. To be able to create new products or services, to export to other countries, or to exploit the opportunities of the new technologies...and to do it not once but continuously, it is necessary to have a sound management system. Quality used as simple and agile support is the real challenge."

**Fernando Sierra**, CEO, EUSKALIT, Basque Foundation for Excellence



"Michael Levinson, City Manager of the Baldrige Award Recipient stated, "People ask, 'Why Quality?' My answer is very simple: A triple A bond rating on Wall Street from all three ratings agencies, bringing capital projects in on time and within budget, a 96 percent business satisfaction rating, a 94 percent resident satisfaction rating, an overall quality rating of 95 percent, and an employee satisfaction rating of 97 percent . . . that's why we're involved with Baldrige to drive our quality."

Superiority in quality from a customer perspective does not just happen, the business must make superior quality happen. Quality happens when the organisation sets the strategic direction with a relentless pursuit to be the best in quality. However there is problem. Today many business leaders do not always see the connection between the meaning of "quality" and their own "strategy."

**Joseph A. DeFeo**, PhD, CEO, Juran Global

# Tech and innovation have a home in Slovenia

By **Blažej Kupec**

*Even though Slovenians tend to think of themselves as overly cautious and not excessively adaptable to change, a growing number of mostly younger people probably disagree with the notion. Slovenian start-up entrepreneurs are getting lots of attention in the last couple of years - and rightly so - some of the young tech companies are raising millions of euros, disrupting traditional industries and doing business all around the world.*

**In 2016, Slovenian start-ups raised almost US \$100m worldwide**, according to a Slovenian venture fund, **Silicon Gardens**.

Starting with the biggest success story so far. **Outfit7**, co-founded by Iza and Samo Login and regarded as one of the most valuable and biggest in the industry of mobile entertainment apps. Outfit7 received global recognition with Talking Tom and Family franchise, centred around a mobile app where anthropomorphic animal characters repeat the user's words. The Cyprus-based company, headquartered in London and with development departments in Ljubljana, also stands out as it didn't receive any investment capital, the Logins were able to fund and sustain the growth until they sold the company to a Chinese conglomerate for US \$1bn at the beginning of 2017.

The current year is apparently a good one for lucrative exit deals. **Zemanta**, one of the earliest Slovenian tech start-ups founded in 2006, also changed ownership, leaving its founders, Andraž Tori and Boštjan Špetič, millionaires. The Ljubljana-based advertising technology company was sold to **Outbrain**, the world's largest content discovery platform (think of suggested content, usually placed under various articles). The sale price was not disclosed but according to some reports, the deal has been valued at around EUR 20m.

Both transactions are regarded as evidence that the ecosystem is maturing and is able to produce tangible results. The same goes for investment activity which has grown over the past few years. In 2016, Slovenian start-ups raised almost US \$100m worldwide, according to a Slovenian venture fund, **Silicon Gardens**. Among the most successful start-ups are fashion marketplace, **Lyst** (raising EUR 50m so far); conversation platform, **Layer** (EUR 25m); student accommodation platform, **Uniplaces** (EUR 24m); and **Urban Mining Company**



Blažej Kupec is a journalist who is covering Slovenian start-up and tech scene.

(EUR 21m) which is developing technology that is able to recycle magnets.

Start-ups are all the rage with some of them having fundamentally changed industries that have been more or less the same for decades (think of **Uber** and **Airbnb**, the poster children of the "new" economy). Some people believe that blockchain technology has - similarly to internet - the same potential to disrupt incumbents, in particular the financial sector. In the meantime, Slovenian start-ups have been at the forefront of efforts to bring blockchain innovations to life. Companies, such as **Iconomi**,

**Cofound.it**, **Hive**, **SunContract**, and **Viberate**, are utilising the new technology to bring more transparency and security to different industries - investment management, factoring, live music and energy trading.

They all still have a long way to go but who knows, maybe in five or ten years people will be able to say that they were there when the next **Google** or **Facebook** was born, this time in Slovenia! ◀

# The Digital Future is not about technology, it's about empowering people.

By Saša Fajmut, M.Sc.



## Amrop

The world is going digital, whether you like it or not. Digital is a very popular buzzword these days but what does it actually mean? Is it about all the flashy, new technologies which are everywhere? Or is it actually about a much, much deeper change which is beyond imagination, about something that will change our way of working and living forever?

Today, billions of people and machines are connected to each other, technology speed and processing power are scary. The world has become digitally empowered. In one week, we absorb more information than people in the 18<sup>th</sup> century absorbed in their entire lifetime. The latest technologies impact all business functions and show little respect for existing business models. New technologies are actually rewiring the way in which entire markets operate with unprecedented speed (Perkin and Abraham, 2017). **This change is inevitable, not optional.**

The paradox is that people and organisations are heavily lagging behind. Why do we still see office workers being overwhelmed with loads of paper when we have all this technology at hand, or better said, only a mouse click away?



The fact is we are struggling, the amount of information is overwhelming. For example, an average worker checks their mobile device 150 times per day (Deloitte Human Capital Trends, 2014). Mails, phone, apps... everything around us is constantly beeping, heavily interrupting our concentration and thus impacting productivity. It takes a lot of discipline to build the habits and lifestyle that allow our brains to function at their best. Furthermore, unlike technology, humans are very slow when it comes to change. Think about the last time you took a different road to your office than usual. Can't remember? So how can you expect that your average employee will dramatically change their mindset overnight just because you decided on a new, "we-need-to-think-differently" corporate strategy?

Nonetheless, **technology provides a unique opportunity to shift our focus from basic tasks to more complex problem solving.** While simple operations which require less than 5 seconds of thinking may soon be replaced by robots, a human touch of empathy, ethics and creativity probably never will be.

**So, who will be behind the wheel? The future lies in the hands of leaders who quickly understand the scope and speed of global change and are flexible enough to adapt themselves and their organisations quickly.** And it's not just about the intelligence; it has a lot to do with the ability to influence others who are not so advanced in understanding the world but realistically represent the majority in our companies. Traditional leadership models are changing; there is no longer a place for rigid, hierarchical organisations, instead courageous, yet humble leadership should step in. Basic work competencies, which are the key for efficient work will be changed-

instead of technical abilities, social competencies and cross-functional cooperation abilities will prevail. Since automation will be responsible for millions of basic workplaces being lost, **leaders who are able to sweep away the organisational drag and unlock their employee's potential, creativity and engaged problem-solving will take organisations to the next level.**

Perhaps we could start with changing the basic, obsolete stuff such as asking our people to "switch on" at 8.00 and "switch off" at 16.00. That's something that machines do.

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**Saša Fajmut**, M.Sc., Director Leadership Services at Amrop, is responsible for leadership assessments and development. She holds a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology and an Executive MBA.



June 2017 Induction Ceremony

# University of Ljubljana BGS Chapter — looking back and going forward

By Professor **Katarina Katja Mihelič**, BGS Chapter Officer

*Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) is a premium honour society, established in 1913, that recognises the academic achievements of students from business schools which pride themselves with the AACSB International Accreditation, the most recognised and well-established form of professional accreditation an institution, and particularly an educational program, can obtain. The society's name comprises three letters of the Greek alphabet and stands for honor (Β – Bebaeos), wisdom (Γ – Gnosis), and earnestness (Σ – Spoude).*

The value of knowledge and achievement permeates the BGS mission which is to recognise and further encourage academic achievement in business studies, foster personal and professional excellence and to advance the values of the society and thereby serve its members. The latter is achieved through BGS chapters established at universities across the globe, with 584 collegiate chapters in 33 countries attesting to the true global nature of the society. This number includes only 16 collegiate chapters

located in eight countries in Europe. One of them is the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics chapter, founded in 2011. For seven consecutive years, current and former students who have demonstrated their academic excellence, have been invited to join the society. In 2017, the seventh generation of high achievers received certificates at the induction ceremony held in Ljubljana.

By joining this society of more than 820.000 members, graduates have the opportunity to

become part of a broad network of aspiring and established leaders that spans across institutions, regions and cultures. In essence, BGS provides a global platform through which the best business students can network, collaborate, learn from one another and thereby gain valuable competencies.

Since 2011, Professor Tanja Dmitrovič has done an excellent job in establishing and running the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics chapter and she will continue to be a valued mentor as the Chapter plans future activities in conjunction with the President of the Chapter, Dean Metka Tekavčič. For example, to enable both learning and networking opportunities, the Chapter aims to organise events with keynote speeches, workshops and lectures, and the first event took place in March 2017. As part of the developmental efforts, a student representative will attend the upcoming Global Leadership Summit where approximately 400 BGS members join together for a weekend of personal and leadership development activities.

This year, the Chapter received special recognition, the High Honours status for 2016/2017. This status is indicative of a school where academic excellence is valued and where the Chapter Officers work diligently to enhance Beta Gamma Sigma's stature. We look forward to co-creating the next steps of the BGS University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics chapter. ◀



# Women leaders, agents of change in Africa

"Women are equal and make the difference," stresses Professor **Danica Purg**, Founding President of IEDC-Bled School of Management and President of CEEMAN, who initiated this conference in 2016. The main goal of the conference 'Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa' is to create awareness that women leaders are an important factor for the development of Africa. "This amazing event will provide an exceptional platform for exchange of information and best practices between African women and women role models from the rest of the world, and the positive impact women have on their economies," explains Professor Purg.

Women represent over 50 percent of the African population, meaning over half a billion people who make daily economic decisions on where to spend or invest their resources. "The women of Africa symbolise a huge hidden and underutilised potential that can change the discourse of the history of the continent. This potential can translate in to real power only when women are convinced of making a complete mind-shift on how they perceive Africa and its future," says Mrs **Madelein Mkunu**, President of the Pan African Forum, Leading Women of Africa

(LWA), that promotes the inclusion of women in the mainstream economy, and co-founder of WEISED - Women in Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy Development Africa.

The idea of the conference is also based on the aspirations of **Agenda 2063**, a strategic framework for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa over the next 50 years. Accordingly, a prosperous Africa will be based on inclusive growth, sustainable development, and transformative leadership. Africa's women and youth shall play an important role as drivers of change. Africa in 2063 will be a continent where the critical role of women in Africa's transformation is recognised and proactively harnessed. With this perspective, the international conference 'Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa' supports the efforts to build an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women.

For more information, visit:  
[www.womenleaders-africa.com](http://www.womenleaders-africa.com)

*Based on the great success of the 2016 international leadership conference 'Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Europe', staged in celebrating IEDC-Bled School of Management's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Slovenia, the event is spreading its global wings. The 2017 conference is taking place on 7-8 November in Cape Town, South Africa, one of the most multicultural cities in the world. This amazing event serves as a follow up to the 2016 breakthrough conference and brings together some of the world's most influential speakers, as well as prominent business and political women leaders from across the globe. For the first time, the conference will include a Special Recognition Honours ceremony, where women key role models, including young women under the age of 35, will be recognised and celebrated for their achievements and their contribution to Africa's social and economic growth.*



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Professor Katarina Katja Mihelič, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana

**Interview:** Professor Katarina Katja Mihelič, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana

# Talent management is a strategic priority of HR specialists and senior leaders

*While talent has been viewed as one of the key drivers of organisational performance and societal progress over the long run, it is important to know how to attract, manage and retain talent. Global Entrepreneurial Talent Management (GETM3) is an international, interdisciplinary research and innovation project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020. Slovenia is involved in the project, the overarching aim of which is to improve the employability of global talent and talent management practices.*

**TST: Can you share some key facts about the GETM3 project (H2020)?**

**Katja Mihelič:** GETM3 is a global project, connecting academic and business partners from Ireland, Poland, Slovenia, South Korea and the United Kingdom. This project presents a great opportunity for multi-disciplinary research, with researchers working together on seven different work packages to help employers, current and in particular future talent, harness their knowledge and skills through systematic talent management practices. We are lucky to be working with six corporate partners, including a multinational corporation, an SME, a representative body of SMEs, and an international learning and development company.

**TST: The research project aims to improve employability and future global talent management to support economic development. How does the project achieve this?**

**KM:** How to attract, manage, and retain young talents are some of the issues employers around the world struggle with. For example, the 2016 Annual Global CEO survey, conducted by PwC, demonstrated that 72 percent of CEOs view the availability of the most important skills as a major concern. It is therefore not surprising that **talent management remains one of the strategic priorities of not only Human Resource specialists but also senior leaders.** The differences between the supply and

demand of valued skills, the skill imbalance as termed by BCG, presents a real challenge for employers. For example, one of the issues that we are looking at is the expectations of young talent when entering an employment relationship and the expectations of employers in this situation. We want to see to what extent expectations about skills, resources, demands etc. overlap, and whether there are certain assumptions, on either side, that are not aligned or do not fit in the contemporary organisational landscape. Educational institutions play an important role by adapting existing and creating new programs that facilitate the acquisition of the skills that are sought. At the core of the project are longer visits to partner institutions, called secondments, which enable international cooperation with corporate partners and also networking with researchers at academic institutions. In this way, individuals in this research network will gain a better insight into innovative teaching practices, co-create new ones and subsequently incorporate them into the curriculum at their home institutions, thereby achieving a higher quality of learning experience for students.

**TST: The research project will identify and address the talent management issues of the future through the work of three stakeholder groups: students and graduates, employers, and higher education institutions. Can you share some cases from Slovenia?**

**KM:** In Slovenia, researchers come from the University of Ljubljana and its three participating schools, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Computer and Information Science, and the Faculty of Social Sciences. We are interested in learning about the perceptions of the employment relationships and educational programs from the perspective of young talents, both students and graduates, and to add a cross-cultural dimension to it. We are also working with two corporate partners from Slovenia, Kolektor and Medex, to uncover their approach to managing talent. It is worth noting that in September, the University of Ljubljana hosted a successful gathering for researchers, referred to as "sandpit", that takes place quarterly, with the academic partners rotating the hosting of them. Approximately forty people attended the third sandpit of the project, a three-day event, that took place at Faculty of Economics. These intensive events pave the way for fulfilling the project goals through brainstorming, collaborative learning and networking, while also facilitating the development and thriving of the researchers themselves.

You can follow GETM3 activities and events on Twitter (@GETM3global) or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/globalentrepreneurialtalentmanagement/>



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**TOPIC:** Environmental legislation in Slovenia: Necessity or Overload?



## American Chamber of Commerce – **AmCham Slovenia**



AmCham Slovenia supports better regulation and facilitation of the dialogue on environmental issues. We support a coherent, science-based and balanced approach to sustainable growth. We believe that environmental regulation provides enormous economic benefits as it improves, for example, the quality of water and air, and increases the level of recycling and the protection of nature. These rules, consistently implemented, are effective but we must also be more efficient in issuing environmental permits. We believe that it is necessary to promote investment and the jobs that the investments bring, but is it too often a problem in Slovenia that the investors, and they highlight this themselves, do not get environmental permits. The AmCham Investment Committee therefore advocates the elimination of the legislative obstacles for obtaining building and environmental permits because we need a quick and more efficient process and it will also encourage the promotion of "greenfield investments". ◀



## British – Slovenian Chamber of Commerce – **BSCC**



We strongly support a healthy business environment in Slovenia, one that would attract more foreign investment, especially during this period before the UK leaves the EU, when British investors and companies are changing their business strategies due to the uncertainty that Brexit has brought, and also due to the shift in manufacturing from the Asia back to Europe. Slovenia certainly has a good opportunity to attract some of that demand. We've seen cases of FDI in the past where environmental legislation has halted or prolonged the approval process for investments in Slovenia, which can discourage future investors from investing here. If the government is serious about making Slovenia interesting enough as an investment destination, environmental legislation should also be addressed and amended appropriately so that foreign investors know where they stand from the start. ◀



## The German-Slovene Chamber of Commerce and Industry – **AHK Slowenien**

From the beginning of the new millennium, waste management has become a business. Reusables are more and more attractive, new technologies enable us to be even more innovative in reusing, remaking and transforming different waste.

Probably the best practice of Slovene innovation capability and reusables is the competence centre for the recycling of plastic materials. The use of recycled plastic materials produced in the centre reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 30 to 50 percent. We have to be aware of the problems caused by harmful gases. German cities (e.g. Berlin) have prohibited the driving of vehicles with Euro emission standard below Euro 4 within inner city circles, making the cities healthier for inhabitants.

Today, environmental legislation is top of mind for the health of the country's population, therefore it needs to be easy to understand by the population and at the same time enable free competition and a free market. ◀

Slovenia has an amazingly rich biodiversity and landscape due to its location at the junction of several ecological regions and has the idea that this biodiversity shall be preserved for future generations. Over the last decade, Slovenia has established comprehensive environmental legislation, having transposed the majority of EU environmental directives into the 2004 Environmental Protection Act and other national laws. The biggest issue, however, is the application of this legislation in practice. The bottleneck to Slovenia's faster economic development is the Slovenian Environment Agency, a body of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. This Agency performs expert, analytical, regulatory and administrative tasks related to the environment at the national level. Due to the extent of the areas of work of this Agency and maybe due to their lack of experience and certainly due to their lack of resources, this Agency is overloaded with work. As a result of the lack of experience and clear guidance at the Agency, the environmental NGOs unreasonably prolong the environmental procedures and hinder the further economic development of the country.

Thus, the problem in Slovenia is not an overload of environmental legislation which is in accordance with the EU, but it is the process that is the problem ◀



## Advantage Austria





## Luxembourg-Slovenian Business Club (LSBC)

By Iztok Petek, Nataša Zajec

Slovenia is well aware of protecting its natural resources and the importance of conserving its amazing nature. Furthermore, Slovenia has amended its constitution to make access to drinkable water a fundamental right and has made good progress in waste management, putting it in third place in Europe for recycling.

But when it comes to new investments or taking unpopular and costly measures to repair the damage from the past, Slovenia seems to be oblivious. As an example, the Krupa River continues to be polluted because nobody dares to challenge a big Slovenian company and employer, in the remediation of its waste which for decades has been buried in inappropriate leaking containers ...



Slovenian FinTech companies at global tech fair ICT Spring 2017 (photo LSBC)

We should be cognisant when applying strict environmental legislation and listen to common sense when it comes to opposing business opportunities in order to save a few birds, plants or acres of land. If Slovenia wants to be a part of the business environment then its environmental legislation should be

adjusted accordingly to take into account the good practices of its neighbours. The nature doesn't acknowledge national borders, nor can pollution or disturbance of wildlife stop at the political boundaries. When it comes to nature, we are all literally sitting in the same boat. ◀



## Italian Trade Agency (ICE)

Care for the environment is essential at the national, European and global level and in this regard, we share a common view and agreed targets. Legislation is not an overload if it still enables and even boosts new solutions and investments by minimising any negative environmental impact. In this context, it is important to simplify the investment process for both domestic and foreign investors. In this framework, the Italian Trade Agency and Invitalia joined forces by establishing a new scheme with the ultimate goal of simplifying investors' life in new and sustainable technologies.

In 2016, FDI flows to Italy grew by 50 percent to US \$29bn, increasing the Italian share from 1.1 percent to 1.7 percent of global flows and improving its world rank from 18<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> place. Italy is ninth globally in exports, with EUR 417bn and a EUR 51.5bn surplus also due to sustainable technologies incorporated in our products. An interesting showcase of our technologies in this sector will take place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of November at Rimini International expo, Ecomondo. The presence of the EU Joint Research Centre, Ispra, with its cutting-edge activities on environment is a plus for Milan's candidature to host the European Medicine Agency-EMA. In brief, internationalisation, innovation, investment and the right infrastructure and regulatory reforms have shown to be the best way to growth. ◀



Whenever we face any ecological issues, we have to avoid judgements and consider all the consequences. For example, the Magna case in Maribor, there are certain doubts that this foreign investment will be safe for the local environment.

It is clear that the ecological situation in Slovenia is one of the best in Europe and so legislative requirements for hazardous objects are presumably high enough for any foreign investor. They should not, however, become a stumbling block on the path of economic development.

In Russia, things are far more complicated with lots of contaminated areas remaining after production facilities are closed. Usually, ecological safeguards are incorporated in the strategy for sustainable development – a must for any multinational. ESG is becoming the norm for international companies listed on stock exchanges as they can then attract "green money" at less cost than if they don't have the right policies in place. Environmental responsibility, social responsibility and the right corporate governance policies do pay off.

The voice of the local community sometimes escalates the situation but eventually it all boils over and is replaced by a give-and-take procedure where the territory obtains certain benefits and advantages. Anyway, the decision

over such controversies as Magna Steyr should be made with the involvement of all possible stakeholders and based on the current environmental regulations in Slovenia. ◀

Yury Praslov,  
Slovene-Russian Business Club in Moscow



## Slovene - Russian Business Club

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Photo: Bor Slana/STA



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

## Cerar: Slovenia prepared to take legal proceedings to implement arbitration ruling

*Prime Minister Miro Cerar has announced that in trying to convince Croatia to respect the arbitration ruling on the Slovenia-Croatia border, Slovenia will use all legal and political means available, including legal proceedings.*

*"If Croatia continues to ignore the decision of the international tribunal, we'll use all legal and political means to persuade our neighbor, Croatia, to respect the decision," Cerar said in an interview for commercial broadcaster, POP TV, in mid-September. The Prime Minister also expects the international community and the European Commission to help; "I believe that the international community will also contribute its share." He considers it normal that, at this stage, the Commission expects Slovenia and Croatia to come to agreement on the implementation of the ruling themselves. If this does not happen, the Commission will have to do "what is European - [for] the respect of the law and agreements". "If the EU or any EU Member State forgets or ignores this, then the EU has no future...," the Prime Minister stressed.*

## Erjavec concerned about fighters returning to Western Balkans

*Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec has warned of the potential threat of foreign fighters returning from Syria and Iraq to the stability of the Western Balkans, addressing an informal EU ministerial in Tallinn, in early September, that also included ministers from candidate countries.*

The ministers discussed the fight against terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, with Erjavec noting that many young people from the Western Balkans had gone to fight for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. With the militant group losing the ground war, these fighters are likely to return home soon. *"This could pose a potential threat for the stability of the Western Balkans,"* Erjavec told STA, over the phone, from Tallinn. In his address to the meeting, the Slovenian Minister also called for unity in the approach to the combat against radicalism and extremism, as well as Slovenia's initiative for a positive agenda for youth in the Western Balkans. The initiative seeks to positively influence the young people who are more susceptible to radicalisation, in particular those whose prospects are poor.

At the Bled Strategic Forum (4-5 September), Erjavec and Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary

General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), agreed that the initiative should be expanded to the Mediterranean which faces similar problems. To discuss the way to prevent youth radicalisation, Slovenia plans to organise a conference in cooperation with UfM.

## New act in force on the reciprocity of real estate purchases by foreigners

*New provisions governing reciprocity in the acquisition of real estate in Slovenia by non-EU foreigners have entered into force, simplifying procedures and reducing red tape. The changes replace a 1999 Act, which had never been amended although other regulations that affect reciprocity had changed requiring the 1999 legislation to be amended, the government said when it presented the bill last February.*

Most notably, the authorities will now only check reciprocity when necessary, not for each case as was required in the old law. For example, it is not necessary to determine reciprocity if a foreigner already owns a portion of the real estate in question.

Similarly, if reciprocity with a given country has been confirmed for the same type of real estate in the same area, it will not be necessary to check it again.

Red tape for buyers is being reduced, for instance access to the e-land registry, foreigners no longer have to provide statements about the purpose of their purchase or need special documents by the Surveying and Mapping Authority about the specifics of a property.

The new act also abolishes the obligation of parliament to get acquainted with the list of decisions on reciprocity every six months. The list will be published by the Justice Ministry on its website.

**Interview:** HE Maryam Al Hammadi, Assistant Director General, Government Performance and Excellence Sector, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Future of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

# The new way to driving excellence in organisations is disruptive thinking

By **Tina Drolc**, M.Sc.

*Following the vision to make the UAE among the best countries in the world in time for the Golden Jubilee of the Union, HE Al Hammadi speaks to The Slovenia Times about the measures that are driving improvement. At the 61. EOQ Congress, in Bled, she will participate in the plenary session - UAE National Agenda and Performance Management Framework – An Integrated Model to Improve Competitiveness in the Public Sector.*

**Q Can you highlight the measures implemented to shift the government of the UAE to be more results oriented?**

**A** On 14 January 2014, **His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, launched the Vision 2021 National Agenda. This agenda serves as a roadmap with clear, measurable objectives to drive the national efforts over the coming years. The government is resolute about the accomplishment of its ambitious vision that aims to make the UAE among the best countries in the world by the Golden Jubilee of the Union in 2021. In order to translate the vision into reality, its pillars have been mapped into six national priorities that represent the key focus areas of government action: a cohesive society and to preserve identity; safety of the public and a fair judiciary; a competitive knowledge economy; a first-rate education system; world class healthcare; and to sustain the environment and develop infrastructure. The agenda 2021, with its six national priorities, has 52 national key performance indicators (KPIs) which have been allocated to those responsible for the federal entities, a government ministry/authority. To be successful, this requires cooperation and partnership with the relevant entities from the federal government, local government and the private sector.

**Q According to the 2017 IMD World Competitiveness Ranking, UAE has risen five places to tenth. What are the main drivers behind this improvement?**

**A** While this vision is inspired by the principles of our founding fathers, it is also guided by the National Work Program, launched by **His**

**Highness** and adopted by Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Emirates and Members of the Federal Supreme Council. To further integrate these national KPIs within the federal government's performance framework, they were included into the strategic plans and linked to the relevant strategic objectives to ensure that the efforts and initiatives directed towards these were weaved into the day-to-day operations of the main sponsor entities. The results of the national KPIs are monitored by the Prime Minister's office via the:

- **National Agenda Website** ([www.vision2021.ae](http://www.vision2021.ae))
- **National KPI Annual Analytical Reports**
- **National KPI reports in His Highness' dashboards** housed in the electronic performance management system (ADAA)
- **National Agenda Yearbook**
- **National KPI Audit Reports** detailing the findings from the annual audit of the 52 national KPIs.

HE Maryam Al Hammadi, Assistant Director General, Government Performance and Excellence Sector, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Future of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)



- **Government Performance Navigator:** analytical system that shows the inter-relationship between the national KPIs and identifies gaps that hinder them from achieving their 2021 targets and shows the impact of certain policies and data provision methods on the national KPIs' performance
- **His Highness's annual meetings with the executive teams** that work to achieve the national KPIs targets for 2021.

**Q How has the performance management system improved the competitiveness and quality of institutions, and the welfare of the community through sustainable results?**

**A** Although the 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Excellence Model is part of an evolutionary process, it is revolutionary in terms of the 'mindset' it represents. Its key elements are based on disruptive thinking and its fuel is transformation-based innovation which can deliver outcomes of a superior nature. What really matters, in-so-far as the Management of Quality and the development of Organisational Excellence, is the long-lasting impact that the organisation generates. The output measures are a subset of value creation and the cycle must continue until the real results are achieved. The measurement of value, which is what the primary stakeholders expect, is the core of the model and takes measurement to a higher level by emphasising the:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of capabilities and the drive to solidify the core and critical areas through pioneering thinking.
- The emphasis on key results through the level of care, dedication and commitment to deliver superior performance outcomes through stretching and focusing on the achievement of leading positions. ◀



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12<sup>th</sup> Bled Strategic Forum:

# Confronting the New Realities with New Strategies

By **Ivona Victoria Moro**

*Organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the Centre of European Perspective, the 12<sup>th</sup> Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) took place on 4 - 5 of September with the theme of "new realities". The event was attended by government officials and leading private sector figures, with the conversation focused on a continuing set of fundamental questions that require a coherent, strategic approach by the EU: immigration, security and national identity. The President of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, opened this year's forum by stressing the need to "nurture our diversity," while Frans Timmermans, First Vice President of the European Commission, called for the need to create a "Europe with more responsibility for its own security," a topic which included Angel Gurría's, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), discussion of "extreme parties gaining power."*

**Paul Richard Gallagher**, Secretary for Relations with States, Secretariat of State, Vatican City, reiterated the need to "facilitate greater access to legal migration." However, with the current global security situation more unpredictable than that at the end of the Cold War, a significant component of the debate was about confronting the 'new realities' faced by the international community. Given the theme of this year's forum, there is an increasing need to develop a comprehensive strategy to master new and unfamiliar responsibilities. Since the forum is central in bringing regional players together, it is clear that a changing reality is not only favourable, but necessary, for the countries in the Western Balkans.

**Federica Mogherini**, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission (EC), has made it her "personal goal that by the end of her current EC mandate in two years, we will see practical and measurable progress for all of our six partners in the Western Balkans, progress that will make their path to the EU irreversible." **Ana Brnabić**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, highlighted that "Serbia's growth is to the EU, we want to be EU."

## Nuclear Security: Quo Vadis?

The need for a coherent, strategic approach to global nuclear governance also dominated much of the debate, which took place just two days after North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test. **Enna Park**, Ambassador for Public Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, outlined that it is the goal of North Korea to change the status quo in the peninsula by weakening the alliance between South Korea and the US and on achieving its goal, to negotiate terms favourable to Pyongyang. The recent developments on the Korean Peninsula reiterate the importance and integrity of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the need to combat the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), as stated by **Yukiya Amano**, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. When questioned about the significance of the situation on the Korean Peninsula for NATO's nuclear deterrence policy, **Rose Gottemoeller**, Deputy Secretary-General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), stated that she would rather "characterise it as a test for US extended deterrence policy per se. It's not an issue in the NATO context, but the United States of America has extended its deterrent not only to the NATO allies, but to its Asian allies as well, to the Republic of Korea and to Japan. So, in this way, I think it will be indicative how people around the world will look at





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## PHOTOS

01 Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission (EC).

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

02 Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

03 Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

04 Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA



04

the strength of U.S. extended deterrence commitments."

## Western Balkans: EU Enlargement?

In the concluding panel of the Bled Strategic Forum, the majority of the discussion focused on the future of the Western Balkans and how certain obstacles for EU integration or reform might be resolved in certain countries in the region. Key aspects of the debate included whether a long-term commitment to reform really exists or whether perhaps in cases such as that of Bosnia and Herzegovina where it is not that it does not want to reform but rather that it bears the consequences of its system which was set up by external forces. Nevertheless, there is a much stronger will to speed up the process from some of the EU candidate countries.

**Ana Brnabić** demonstrated Serbia's dedication to European values during the Leader's Panel the first day and met with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, **Hoyt Yee**, where they "discussed the European path of Serbia and agreed that the European integration of the entire region is a key element of regional stability and development." In the concluding panel, Yee went on to state that there is a special need to identify the crises in the Western Balkans before they take place, rather than dealing with them once they are occurring.

**Nikola Dimitrov**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, confirmed that Macedonia is well ahead of where it had been a few months ago following its parliamentary crisis. When questioning how the future relationship between Russia and Serbia may look, **Aleksey Yurievich Meshkov**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,

replied that Russia also has "excellent relations with Slovenia." He stated that a stable Europe is in Russia's interest for a predictability in supplies and trade. With the closure of TTIP and CETA negotiations with the US and Canada, the dedication of EU Member States to free trade can no longer be taken for granted - it has become clear that while some countries seek full implementation of the single market, others have indicated more protectionist tendencies and delayed their efforts to advocate for open societies, including restrictions imposed on the free movement of persons within the Schengen zone. ◀

# China and Central and Eastern European Countries meet for Agricultural and Trade Cooperation

By **Silvija Fister**, M.Sc.

*Slovenia hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Agriculture and Trade Forum for economic cooperation between the People's Republic of China and 16 Central and Eastern (CEE) European countries. The Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China, Han Changfu, attended as an honoured guest, accompanied by a business and political delegation. Prior to the forum, a ministerial conference was held on 25 August in Brdo pri Kranju, followed the next day by a business conference in Gornja Radgona as part of the 55<sup>th</sup> International Fair of Agriculture and Food (AGRA).*



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The 16+1 mechanism is a Chinese initiative aimed at intensifying cooperation with 16 Central and Eastern European countries.

The forum was part of the ongoing activities of the so called '16+1' mechanism to deepen economic ties between the participant countries through the exchange of ideas, good practices, scientific research and innovative solutions. The mechanism is a Chinese initiative aimed at intensifying their cooperation with Central Europe with the participants including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Areas of particular focus include investment, agriculture, transport, finance, science, technology, education and culture. Following the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit of the 16+1 in 2015, Slovenia was confirmed as the country responsible for leading the coordination mechanism for forestry cooperation. The first meeting to discuss the cooperation was held in Slovenia in May 2016.

The Trade and Agriculture Forum was hailed by the Slovenian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, **Dejan Židan** as one of the most important diplomatic events of 2017. He stressed the need for an economic model that works for everyone, striking a balance between global free trade and the needs of citizens, with the environment taking priority. Minister **Han Changfu** suggested that safe food production is a common goal and that political dialogue is necessary to achieve it.

The forum was a key event at the AGRA fair, which is the largest agricultural food fair in Central Europe. This year, the fair hosted more than 1,800 exhibitors from 36 countries. China was a partner of the fair and its culture was a central attraction at the fair's opening day. More than 20 companies from China presented their products, ranging from traditional medicinal foods and teas to meat products.

A common thread of the 16+1 mechanism and this year's fair was the sustainable and green development of the economy and eco-

logical culture. In line with the current International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, there were plenty of opportunities for discussions and for viewing the exhibitions representing evolving sustainable farming, forest management, agricultural techniques, environmentally friendly foodstuffs and bee-keeping amongst others. At the opening of the fair, Minister Židan stated that the need for Slovenia's participation in the '16+1' mechanism in the midst of the detrimental consequences of climate change is clear: "Because we need friends. We need a common approach to search for solutions to the new challenges that we are faced with, and we need solidarity!"

This was not the first time that Minister Židan and Minister Han discussed common interests and obligations. Earlier this year, in Hangzhou, China, they jointly praised the economic process that has already had concrete results: In 2016, Slovenia's exports to China grew 80 percent and further growth is expected this year. ◀

Last year, exports to China grew 80 percent.

## PHOTOS

01 Chinese Agriculture Minister Han Changfu and Slovenian counterpart Dejan Židan plant a tree as part of a tour of the agriculture and food fair Agra.

Photo: Bor Slana/STA

02 Chinese Agriculture Minister Han Changfu, Slovenian Agriculture Minister Dejan Židan and President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor at the opening of the agriculture and food fair Agra 2017.

Photo: Tamino Petelinšek/STA

# Melania Trump: First Lady of the United States

By Ivona Victoria Moro\*

*As she carefully steps out of Air Force One, the first female President of the United States looks up with a bright smile and waves, before comfortably walking down the stairs. Wearing a long brown trench coat, there is a natural elegance to her demeanour as she continues towards the waiting car.*



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\* Ivona Victoria Moro is a third year International Relations BA student studying at King's College London.



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This was for a clothing line advertising campaign, shot in 1993, featuring the then Melania Knavs playing the first female President of the United States. To quote Jozica Brodaric, a renowned Slovenian fashion expert, "It is the most extraordinary historical coincidence," that Melania Trump is now the First Lady of the United States, "she looked refined, elegant, really presidential." There is even more resonance to the commercial, in early September Melania Trump stepped out to greet those that were most affected by Hurricane Harvey in Texas with the President of the United States, Donald Trump. Nevertheless, there has been much debate about how the First Lady has adapted to her role, which she approaches somewhat differently than her predecessors. From her interviews, Melania eschews a firm, decisive personality, that of a First Lady. It is clear that with her controlled public profile, Melania Trump shows a strong commitment to her family, choosing to provide stable support in the background. This is especially evident in her choice to remain in New York for her son, Barron William Trump, to finish his school year and then moved to the White House in June. She has, however, also undertaken a number of hospital, youth centre and classroom visits where it is clear that she has a strong will to dedicate her time to children. Her strong involvement in charity efforts is also very clear, she has received Salvation Army, Red Cross and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief representatives in their efforts to help those affected by Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma. Although not formally announced, it appears that these may be some of the roles that may be her focus as First Lady, along with access to education for girls and female empowerment. Interviewed during the campaign for an article that originally appeared

in the Harper's BAZAAR February 2016 issue, Melania Trump said that the press often mischaracterises her quietness as reticence. "I am not shy. They interview people about me who don't even know me. These people, they want to have 15 minutes of fame in talking about me, and reporters don't check the facts...You can see how they turn stories around and how unfair they can be." "I'm choosing not to go political in public because that is my husband's job. I'm very political in my personal life, but I chose not to be on the campaign. I made that choice." When her husband, Donald Trump, became President, she was given the role of First Lady. Melania Trump is exceptional in the manner she has adapted to her role, especially given that she is not a native English speaker, nor American-born. We can only wish her great success as she continues to perform her duties as First Lady. ◀



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#### PHOTOS

01 Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

02 Photo: Robi Poredoš/STA

03 Photo: Thierry Monasse/STA



The bicycle park KoloPark; Photo: N. Rovar

# EMW 2017: Sharing gets you further

*For 16 consecutive years, the City of Ljubljana has participated in European Mobility Week. This year thousands of European cities were brought together between 16 and 22 September in their efforts to promote people and environmentally-friendly forms of mobility.*

The City of Ljubljana, within this year's European Mobility Week, implemented 10 permanent sustainable measures and carried out numerous events for different target groups. At the end of the week, on the car free day, 18 streets and roads in different parts of the city were

closed and instead of the motor traffic, various social activities took place.

The communication platform with the slogan "**Pusti se zapeLjati**" (let yourself be taken away) is aimed at promoting and raising awareness on the topic of sustainable mobility and

**In Ljubljana, we are aware of the importance of sustainable development** for current and especially future generations because it is our responsibility to leave them the best that we can.

was used to encourage the citizens and visitors to Ljubljana to move around the city on foot, using bicycles, public transport or other environmentally-friendly forms of mobility. The slogan also invited them to feel the heartbeat of the city and allow them to be taken away by Ljubljana's friendliness, warmth and beauty by giving up their cars and the worries they cause. The slogan refers not only to traffic, but it is also an expression of Ljubljana's character and emphasises how sustainable mobility contributes to the wellbeing of Ljubljana's citizens. At the same time, it is an appeal for sustainable action and a change in travel habits towards "greener" transport options.

Since the mission is to create sustainable mobility for future generations, the visual image used for the campaign was from the children of the kindergartens and schools in Ljubljana. Their illustrations show how they

**Ljubljana is the only city that has twice received the European Mobility Week award for the successful implementation of activities and measures for sustainable mobility!**

see urban traffic and have become the central artistic element of the campaign.

Other permanent measures include the arrangement of the bicycle park, **KoloPark**, which enables free time to be spent actively on a previously unused area and several other bicycle infrastructure improvements, the launch of the web traffic portal **PROMinfo**, which combines, in the one place, all of the current data on traffic conditions in the Ljubljana area (traffic density, bus arrivals, the situation at the Bikelj stops, free parking places, etc.), and the installation of automatic measuring devices in stationary housings to further alleviate traffic on roads near educational institutions or school routes.



# EUROCITIES 2017 LJUBLJANA CIRCULAR CITIES 15 - 17 NOVEMBER

## CO-CREATING THE STORY OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

At the City of Ljubljana, the circular economy is one of the main focus of the year and of the international EURO CITIES conference, which Ljubljana is to host in November.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JANEZ  
POTOČNIK

*Co-chair of UNEP International  
Resource Panel and former European  
commissioner for the environment*

THE ROLE OF THE CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY IN RESOURCE STORY  
AND THE CITIES

### CIRCULAR TALKS

IZA LOGIN

*Co-Founder Login5 Foundation and  
former co-founder and CEO of Outfit7*

THERE IS NO TIME TO POSTPONE  
SUSTAINABILITY

MATEJ ČER

*Founder AvantCar*

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CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT NOISE,  
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Mestna občina Ljubljana  
City of Ljubljana



# European Funds to Improve the Environment

*In August, the European Commission approved the financing of a major cohesion project, Waste water collection and treatment in the area of the aquifer of the Ljubljansko polje. The total value of the investment is estimated at EUR 111m. The process to obtain funds began in 2008 and this is currently the largest project of its type in Slovenia.*

## The projects we undertake at a local level have a regional and even a global impact

The approval from the European Commission for the co-financing of this major project for environmental protection of the water sector, gives recognition to the local communities and experts who have been preparing and been involved in the project which will provide many years of work and effort for an environmental project that will undoubtedly bring about major changes in sewage management and the treatment of waste water in Ljubljana and its surroundings. Throughout the preparation phase, a focus was the importance of regulating the waste water system for the protection of the environment and water resources in the future.

## A large project provides visible results

The project consists of three parts: upgrading the sewage system in the Municipality of Ljubljana, the construction of the third phase of the Central Waste Water Treatment Plant in Ljubljana; upgrading the collection system of the municipal waste water in the municipalities of Medvode and Vodice; and the construction of the connection channel CO in the City of Ljubljana.

For the first part of the project, the Municipality of Ljubljana plans to construct a sewage system of 88.3km for the collection of municipal waste water, 13 waste water pumps and three vacuum stations. This new public sewage system will have 17,500 inhabitants connected. The construction will take place on more

than 260 streets in Ljubljana. In the area of the agglomeration of Ljubljana, connection to the sewage system will increase to 98 percent.

The upgrading of the sewage system also includes the construction of a 22km sewage system in the Municipality of Medvode, 9.1km in the Municipality of Vodice and 12.1km of connection channel, which will significantly reduce the burden on the existing sewage system in Ljubljana.

## Cooperation has brought a win

The project will be financed from the European Cohesion Fund and the national and municipal budgets. In 2008, the project covered only two parts. More recently, the construction of a sewage system in the City of Ljubljana was linked to the connecting channel and the upgrading of the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant, enabling the project to get 'Major Project' status, which required approval by the European Commission following review and approval by JASPERS (an independent European institution). In addition to the technical, financial and economic content, environmental documentation was prepared as part of the proposal, including an expert assessment of possible significant environmental impacts, an environmental impact assessment report, an assessment of the impact for climate change, all in accordance with the instructions and recommendations of the European Commission and JASPERS. Representatives of local communities participating in the project have stressed many times the importance of cooperation between different institutions and highlighted the common goal of the best outcome for the people and for nature. ◀



01

01 Mayor Zoran Janković stressed that this project is a typical example of good horizontal and vertical cooperation and praised the work of his colleagues, their perseverance and courage. He also highlighted the environmental significance: "It is true that more than 260 roads will be dug up but we want to give to the people of Ljubljana what they deserve."

02 Construction of Phase III of the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant Ljubljana includes an increase in the cleaning capacity to 555,000 population units, thus ensuring a sufficiently high cleaning capacity for the future.

02





Ljubljana Castle; Photo: P. Hieng

# Ljubljana

## extremely popular with tourists

*Visits by tourists to Ljubljana have been growing steadily in recent years. Visitors from near and far recognise Ljubljana as an exceptionally pleasant, hospitable, well-organised, green and above all, a safe city in which they feel comfortable. In the first eight months 976,764 overnight stays were recorded, a nine percent increase over the same period last year.*

Ljubljana's castle remains the most visited tourist spot. In the middle of September, the 1,000,000<sup>th</sup> visitor was registered for this year, a month earlier than in 2016 and more than three months earlier than in 2013 when it first exceeded one million visitors in one year. In the first eight months of this year, the castle had an 11 percent increase in the number of visitors compared to last year, and the exceptional results were also replicated in the number of users of the funicular. On 14 August, a new daily record of 3,324 passengers used the funicular and in the first eight months of this year there has been a 27.2 percent increase in the number of passengers compared to the same period last year.

Among foreign tourists visiting Ljubljana castle, most visitors come from Italy, followed by Great Britain, Germany, USA, Spain, France, Netherlands, Korea, Croatia and Austria. The number of visitors from Italy is growing rapidly and so Tourism Ljubljana has started regular summer tours in Italian which are run twice daily with the number of participants have more than doubled from last year.

It must be remembered that in 2017 Ljubljana has been celebrating the year of **Jože Plečnik** and is therefore supplementing its range of tours with two guided adventures of Plečnik's heritage (on foot or by bicycle), that connect architecture and cultural institutions and also a culinary treat. ◀

# Golden basketball players welcomed in Ljubljana

After returning from the European Championship in Istanbul, a spectacular crowd of supporters enthusiastically welcomed Slovenia's gold medal winning basketball players, the European Champions, in the centre of Ljubljana.

More than 20,000 fans gathered at Kongresni trg to greet the champions who beat Serbia's national team in the final and finished the championship without losing a game.

Mayor Zoran Janković presents the golden team with a statue of a Ljubljana dragon, inscribed **Golden in Heart, Golden in Europe**.



↑ Culture

**National song and dance ensemble "Voronezh Girls"**

5 October 2017, Cankarjev dom (Cultural and Congress Centre), Ljubljana

The "Voronezh Girls" choir was formed in 1966 as part of the Voronezh National Philharmonic. It was formed by the famous Russian composer, M. A. Galinker, who also directed the Philharmonic Orchestra at the time. The ensemble became a laureate of numerous national as well as international festivals and singing competitions, leading to national recognition in Russia and in all the countries where they had performed. Their repertoire is based on female lyrical song, characterised by profound emotion, diversity and the enchanting beauty of mellifluous female voices.

↑ Culinary / Festival

**Old Vine Festival**

1 October - 11 November, 2017, Maribor: Old Vine House, Trg Leona Štuklja and other venues

The Old Vine Festival is a culinary and cultural tribute to the oldest vine in the world, growing in Lent, the oldest part of Maribor. The Old Vine is the pride of Maribor, Styria and of Slovenia. For all the visitors, it is the introduction to Slovenia's extraordinarily rich wine tradition and the success stories of the winegrowers. From the ceremonial grape harvest of the Old Vine at the beginning of October until the largest celebration of St. Martin's Day on 11 November, Styria will once again celebrate the symbol of Slovenian wine and persistence. There will also be numerous wine-tasting events.



↑ Sport

**Football Match, Slovenia vs Scotland**

8 October 2017, Stadium Stožice, Ljubljana

The Slovenian national football team will play a qualifying match for the 2018 World Cup against Scotland.



↑ Culture / Exhibition

**Jewellery - the architecture of eternity exhibition**

12<sup>th</sup> October - 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2017, Feniks Gallery, Ljubljana

Everyone is invited to the exhibition opening on Thursday, 12 October at 7pm, at the Feniks Gallery Tavčarjeva 3, Ljubljana.

Plečnik year 2017 will be enriched by Slovenian designers of contemporary jewellery, who will present their ideas and creative thinking in their jewellery.

Karin Košak Arzenšek and Neža Žehelj, Exhibition curators



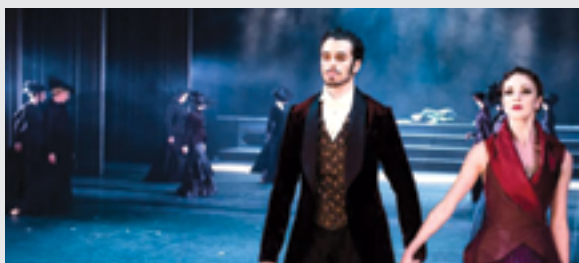


↑ Culinary / Festival

## Beer & Burger Fest

14 - 15 October 2017, Ljubljana, Central Market

Beer and burgers make a perfect combination that never goes out of fashion. The Beer and Burger Fest gives an opportunity to taste both staple Slovenian burgers and beers, and get to know the flavours and methods of preparation that push the boundaries of the familiar. Just as the choice of quality Slovenian beers has considerably broadened over recent years, thanks to a growing number of Slovenian microbreweries, so the burger scene in Slovenia has been flourishing, with numerous new burger varieties being prepared, often in innovative or even 'green' ways.



↑ Culture

## The Glembays, Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb

16 October 2017, Cankarjev dom (Cultural and Congress Centre), Ljubljana

Choreographed and directed by: Leo Mujic  
Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, Sergei Rachmaninov

Miroslav Krleža's most famous drama, *The Glembays*, first premiered in 1929 at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb and was an instant success, becoming one of the most performed Krleža's dramas, both locally and internationally. The story begins with the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Glembay Bank, in the palace of old Glembay, the head of the family. The entire family reunites after a long time, including the estranged son Leone who cannot resist sarcastically narrating the family's history. When the fears of approaching bankruptcy are confirmed, frenzied scenes follow with a mad tempo, all of the hidden secrets, adulteries, insanity and deceit come out, and everything ends in blood.



↑ Culture / Festival

## 52. Maribor Theatre Festival (52. Boršnikovo srečanje)

20 - 29 October 2017, Slovene National Theatre Maribor, Maribor

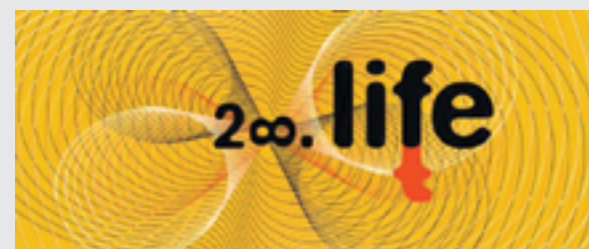
The festival is also a competition. At the end of the event, awards will be presented for best performance, best stage management, best actors, best music and other artistic achievements. Special attention is given to the bestowal of the Boršnik ring –which is presented to an actor or actress who has left a deep artistic trace. Visitors can also watch some of the outstanding repertoire achievements of the past season.

Sport →

## Volkswagen 22<sup>nd</sup> Ljubljana Marathon

28 - 29 October 2017, Ljubljana

The Ljubljana Marathon is the largest running event held in Slovenia. Its international recognition is largely due to its highly attractive course, running through the streets of Ljubljana. The marathon begins in the city centre, traverses much of the city and then ends in the city's central Kongresni trg. Last year, more than 28,000 runners participated in one of the numerous running events organised by the City of Ljubljana. The marathon always draws a crowd of spectators around the city and this annual event has become a showcase of the active and outdoorsy lifestyle in Slovenia.



↑ Culture / Festival

## 28<sup>th</sup> Ljubljana International Film Festival – LIFFe

8 - 19 November 2017, Cankarjev dom (Cultural and Congress Centre), Ljubljana

The Ljubljana International Film Festival (LIFFe) began in 1996 as a way to feature contemporary world film and promote emerging directors and trends in film. The festival is organised by the Film Department of the Cankarjev Dom Cultural and Congress Centre. The festival typically boasts more than 100 different films from Slovenian and international directors and producers and also includes discussions with directors and other film artists. In 2017, LIFFe will focus on the recent French production, genre-coded works addressing acute present-day issues (xenophobia, migrants, the financial crisis, rise of the right-wing populism) or the historical excesses that France cannot steer clear of (colonialism, the exploitable economy in the third world, Algeria).





**FOOD  
BLUZ**

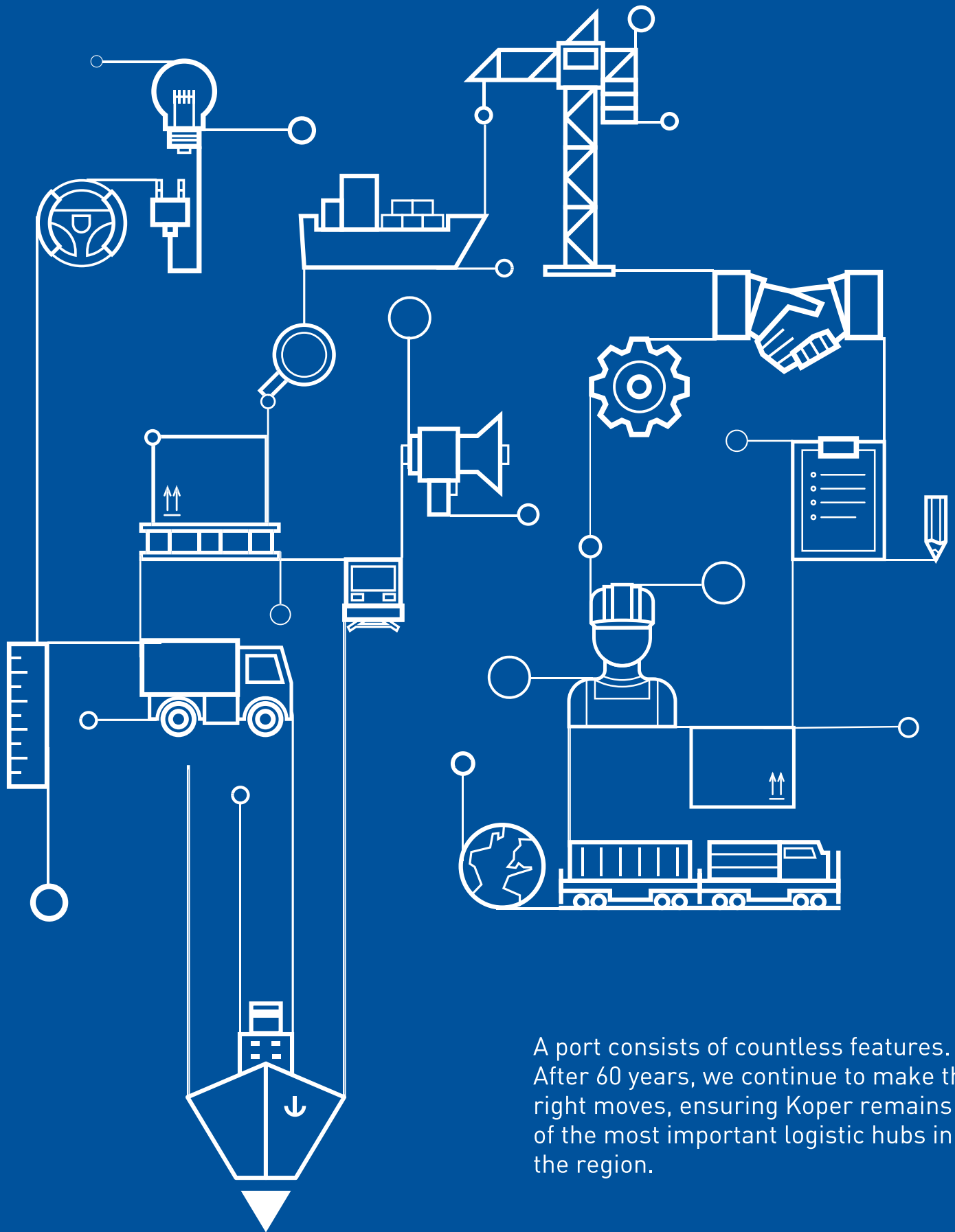


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