

**Foreword**

At this year's meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development, ministers from all over the world for the seventh time discussed the open questions of sustainable development. One of the main themes of the discussion was the habits of consumers, with all of their connected problems, such as awareness raising, personal responsibility, changes to behaviour patterns, and quality of life which besides materialistic perspectives always includes elements of individual personal development, satisfaction and social wellbeing. The meeting recognised how decisive is the role of governments in motivating green consumer habits. The State needs to influence consumers' knowledge and stimulate greater awareness, and has to offer choices as well as to support habits and activities that are environmentally more suitable. Nevertheless, the consumer should ask him/herself what he/she can do for the environment as an individual and not merely expect that the State will do it instead. To grow up as an individual yet within society as a whole means to take responsibility for one's own acts, for other people's acts, and for the maintenance and improvement of the environment in which we live. In Slovenia we are only about to start an active policy of "greening of consumer habits". That is why it is particularly important that the non-governmental organisations have launched an initiative to establish - with the State support - an Independent National Information Centre where environmental information could be obtained at one spot by individuals and other interested parties. This initiative, which has still to be developed, is definitely worth our attention as well as our support, if the goals and tasks of the centre are precisely determined and the responsibility of project participants are clearly defined.

Transformation of environmentally harmful consumer habits is also one of the obligations of the Aarhus Convention which Slovenia signed last year at the ministerial conference "Environment for Europe". This new international legal instrument, designed at the initiative of non-governmental organisations and with their active participation, actually promotes a model of consensual society, and stresses transparency of official bodies, access to information in the field of environment, and the protection of rights to information. This should mean that Civil Society becomes an equal partner with the State in the decision-making process. The Convention introduces a new communication culture between Civil Society on one side and the State and local authorities on the other side. It demands a change in behaviour and actions of officials, as well as better and greater awareness of individuals and groups about their rights and obligations. Slovenia intends to ratify the Convention in the year 2000, as do the majority of other countries. A priority task for the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning concerning the Convention is to prepare its implementation programme with the active participation of non-governmental organisations.

**Pavel Gantar, PhD**

**Minister**

## **Feature**

### **1<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION**

The 1st meeting of contracting parties to the Aarhus Convention took place between April 19-21 in Moldavia. The Aarhus Convention deals with access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to appropriate legal instruments in environmental matters. Slovenia was a participant at the meeting, where the main stress was on the exchange of information among contracting parties, on ratification procedures regarding the Convention and the adoption of a working programme for the next period. The second meeting of the contracting parties is expected to be held in the Spring next year. With regard to the declarations of the participating countries we can expect that the Convention will come into force at the end of the year 2000. In order to achieve that, 16 countries must hand over ratification, adoption, confirmation and accession documents to the Secretariat. The main general conclusions of the discussion were that an intensive promotion of the Convention is needed among public administrations and civil societies; a greater participation of parliaments and local authorities in the preparation of implementation programmes for the Convention; practical arrangements for the Convention's implementation and forums for the exchange of experiences; education; liaison with other conventions in the environmental field; and the establishment of contact networks across states, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, and scientific institutions. The discussion also brought up the fact that a considerable interest exists in western as well as central and eastern European countries in the enactment of the Convention's obligations but also considerable differences persist in the actual possibilities to do so between western and central European countries on one side and eastern European countries on the other.

A work programme for the next period was adopted at the meeting. It was decided that with Danish financial support a handbook for the implementation of the Convention should be published. In the framework of the programme, Great Britain will organise next Autumn a workshop entitled "Public Participation at the Local Level". Three ad hoc working groups were also established: for co-ordination mechanisms under the leadership of Great Britain, for polluters' registers under the Czech leadership and for genetically modified organisms under Austrian leadership. States like Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands offered financial assistance with covering workshops' costs in order to enable as many participants as possible from the Central and Eastern Europe to become involved. Slovenia intends to participate actively in the activities of the international working groups and in the exchange of experiences, and then use the new conclusions to prepare the Implementation Programme for the Convention in Slovenia.

**Nataša Anderlič, Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 7334, Fax: +386 61 178 7415**

## **In brief**

### **MAY 24 - EUROPEAN PARK DAY**

This year May 24 will be celebrated in Europe for the first time as the European Day of the Parks, which was proclaimed by the European Union of Natural and National Parks EUROPARC. Ninety years ago on that day the first nine European national parks were established in Sweden. In the framework of this Day's celebration various activities will be organised between May 24 and 28 in Slovenia. A booklet "Protected areas - parks" will be

published, and the Municipality of Ljubljana intends to publish a booklet on the Ljubljansko Barje Regional Park.

The Triglav national park has organised a natural scientific, sporting and cultural day in Trenta on May 12. The Logarska Dolina Regional Park will prepare a multi-media presentation of the Solčavsko area and will organise a discussion on the development of the Park, as well as a guided walk on the natural scientific-ethnographic path in Logarska Dolina on May 23. Kozjansko Park will celebrate the European Day of Parks with an exhibition on the doctor and natural scientist Eugen Jaeger, prepared by Mojca Kunst. In the Škocjan Regional Park various activities will also take place during several days. Among other activities, an open door day will be organised at the Škocjan park, as well as an art workshop, a solemn oath and bestowing of membership cards to voluntary nature protection supervisors, and an exhibition "The Griffon Vulture, with us yesterday, today and tomorrow" etc. From now on we will celebrate the European Day of Parks each year, as a means of raising public awareness on protected areas of nature.

**Darja Jeglič, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4445, Fax: +386 61 178 4051**

### **CONFERENCE ON FREE CLIMBING IN (UN)PROTECTED AREAS OF NATURE**

On May 5 there was a conference in Osp in Primorska region on free climbing in (un) protected areas of nature, organised by the Institute for ecology Narava 2001.

The purpose of the conference was above all to establish a dialogue between climbers and ornithologists. In the last decade sport climbing has become one of the most popular activities which take place in free nature, but it endangers birds in certain places. That is why the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning Pavel Gantar, PhD signed a decree in April this year, which has banned climbing on the eastern Karst Brink (east from the railway cut by ^rni Kal). On the western brink in the Velika Stena above Osp climbing is now only allowed in certain places and at certain times. The goal of this decree is to limit those activities that represent a direct danger for endangered animals, particularly birds living in rock walls. By this decree, the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning will arrange for the monitoring of the status of endangered birds in the areas on the Brink of Karst and attempt to co-ordinate further the interests of the protection of nature and climbers on the brink of Karst.

**Tanja Košar, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4533, Fax: +386 61 178 4051**

### **THE SNEŽNIK REGIONAL PARK - MATRA PROJECT: MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Management and Development Plan is approaching its final stage. We have already completed the inventory and determined the goals, and are at present preparing the conclusions. A group of (mainly local) experts have identified proposals for future activities. They tried to define the proposals as much as possible, i. e. to identify project operators, necessary financial support and the need for each project. They also suggested areas with consistent measures (the so-called zoning) for particular activities (for example environmental protection, agriculture, forestry, hunting, recreation...). We shall now discuss the proposals for activities and confirm them during a workshop that will be held on Thursday, June 10 1999 in Postojna. Representatives of local authorities within the future park, certain companies, non-governmental organisations and ministries and their regional

bodies have been invited to the workshop. It will also be attended by the project initiators, i. e. representatives of the Dutch Embassy and the Dutch Royal Association for Protection of Nature.

In May and June we will be presenting the future Snežnik park (particularly the expected benefits and limitations) at meetings of local councils in all eight local communities. Questions and suggestions from the councillors will be of great help in the preparations for the establishment of the Park.

**Breda Ogorelec, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1. Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4514, Fax: +386 61 178 4051.**

## **BALANCED MANAGEMENT OF RIVER BASINS**

Within the framework of the DISAE program, project SLO-111 "Balanced Management of River Basins" is currently taking place. Its goal is to determine institutional and administrative regulations in the field of EU water legislation, their implementation at the level of pilot river basins and training of staff for realisation of determined goals.

A seminar was organised for that purpose at the Administration of RS for the Protection of Nature on May 12, whose participants were representatives of water management companies, institutes for protection of natural and cultural heritage, university faculties and ministries.

The seminar will continue on May 31, when the main topics will be liaison among various sectors in the field of water management and financial sources.

**Radovanka Petrič, Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 7394, Fax: +386 61 178 7420**

## **PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF ŠKOCJAN CAVES IN THE LIST OF INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT WETLANDS**

On May 6 the Government reached an agreement on the inclusion of the Škocjan caves as an underground Karst wetland in the Ramsar locality list. Since 1992 Slovenia has namely been a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention, whose main purpose is the preservation and sustainable use of wetlands. One of the possibilities in the framework of this Convention is that all those national wetlands that could be of international importance for their characteristics and functions can be included in the Convention's special list.

In the wetland typology underground wetlands (water caves) represent a new element. As the founder of Karst studies, Slovenia launched the initiative in this field by active participation in the preparation of directives for inclusion of such wetlands in the Ramsar locality list. In this context the tradition of Karst research on our territory is of particular importance. The Škocjan caves area is protected as a regional park and is intended to become a part of the future Karst regional park. In 1986 the cave system of Škocjan was included in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List. The area proposed for a Ramsar locality completely coincides with the protected area. The main purpose of the initiative is to stress the importance of the cave complex from the perspective of hydrological, geomorphological and ecological characteristics as well as the importance of cultural and natural heritage. The measures are defined in accordance with the Law on the Škocjan Regional Park.

With the inclusion in the Ramsar locality list the Škocjan caves area would profit from the status of being the first Karst wetland (water cave system) of international importance.

The inclusion of the proposed Karst wetland in the list of internationally important wetlands completes the planned directives for preservation and sustainable use for this area. It also accentuates the importance of interdependence of the water system, Karst phenomena and the habitats of plants, animals and humans.

**Gordana Beltram, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4556, Fax: +386 61 178 4051**

## **THE FORD AWARD FOR ČADRG IN THE TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK**

This year's award of the Slovenian Commission at the Henry Ford Foundation for Preservation of Nature and Environment was bestowed to the village of Eadrg in the Triglav National Park. With the expert assistance of the Triglav national park management, Eadrg defined a long-term development programme with special stress on healthy food production and the preservation of nature and cultural heritage. For this accomplishment they received an award of \$10 000 on May 17 this year.

**Janez Bizjak, Triglav National Park, Kidričeva 2, Bled, Phone: +386 61 064 741 188, Fax: +386 61 064 743 568**

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE HELIOS ENVIRONMENT FUND**

The expert commission of the Ministry granted support to four speleological associations that submitted their applications following the call for subventions from the Helios Environment Fund. In total there were nine submissions.

Financial means from the Ministry and the Helios company, which this year total 1 million tolar, will go to: Association for Cave Exploration Kranj (200 000 tolar), Speleological Association Bat (300 000 tolar), Speleological Association Danilo Remkar (250 000 tolar) and Association for Cave Exploration Luka Eee (250 000 tolar). Criteria for the distribution of financial support were above all the evaluation of the level of difficulty of the explored caves, the types and quantities of waste, and the level of its environmental impact.

**Mitja Bricelj, MA, Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 7384, Fax: +386 61 178 7420**

## **Publications**

### **REPORT ON THE STATE OF ENVIRONMENT**

On May 6 the Government discussed the 1996 Report on the State of the Environment which the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning completed at the end of last year. The report was also issued as a publication entitled Environment in Slovenia 1996 in 800 copies in Slovenian and English.

In the future a new system of reporting on the state of environment will be introduced. We will now publish yearly indicator reports, whilst integrated reports will be prepared for three to five-year periods. The first indicator report will thus be ready at the beginning of next year.

**Anita Velkavrh Pirc, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4543, Fax: +386 61 178 4051**

## **LOCAL AGENDA 21 - PROGRAM OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR MARIBOR**

The Nature Protection Authority of RS at the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and the Institute of Environmental Protection at the Municipality of Maribor have started this year the preparation of the Local agenda 21 - Programme of Environmental Protection for Maribor (LA21 for MB - PEP).

The basis for the preparation of the document is the Local Agenda 21 (preparation of action plans for implementation of sustainable development at local level in partnership with all local sectors) and the Law on environmental protection, which obliges municipalities in article 50 to prepare and adopt a local programme of environmental protection. Taking into account the above-mentioned article of the Law on Environmental Protection, LA 21 for MB (PEP) will encompass in particular:

- a description of the state of the environment, particular natural goods and threats against them;
- long-term projections of trends and the state of environment;
- definition of achievable goals and ways for their realisation;
- necessary means and sources;
- priority tasks and projects;
- directives for the development of activities and public services for environmental protection;
- evaluation of expected costs and benefits;
- criteria for the determination of the efficiency of project implementation.

The task, whose goal is to ensure the development of the Municipality of Maribor according to the principle of sustainability, foresees in its first phase for period 1999-2000 the preparation of a report on the state of environment using last year's data, the definition of problems and evaluation and analysis of trends, then the determination of goals and ways to reach them, together with priority tasks and possible project operators as well as financial sources.

**Inga Turk, MA, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4537, Fax: +386 61 178 4051**

**Brigita Čanč, Municipality of Maribor, Institute of Environmental Protection, Slovenska 40, Maribor, Phone: +386 61 062 220 1445**

## Conventions

### **3<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE SLOVENIAN COMMITTEE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES**

On May 26 the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Slovenian Committee for Climate Change Issues took place at the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning. The meeting was at first chaired by the vice-president of the committee, Secretary of State Radovan Tavzes, MA, when later on minister Pavel Gantar, PhD took over the chair.

The committee was founded by the Government of RS in September 1997 and is scheduled to meet once or twice a year. There were ten topics on the agenda of this meeting, the most important among them being: adoption of the statute, presentation of the conclusions of the 4<sup>th</sup> conference of the contracting parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change, ratification programme of the Kyoto Protocol, a report on the realisation of the 1<sup>st</sup> national report, presentation of the greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy in Slovenia according to the Kyoto Protocol obligations and the report for the Government and the Council for Environmental Protection of RS on the work of the committee and on realisation of the climate policy in Slovenia.

After having discussed some minor amendments the Committee adopted its functional statute. One of the statutory amendments that will contribute to greater transparency of committee's activities is the decision that within one month at the latest after each session the adopted documents will be published on the Internet home page of the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning.

Regarding the Kyoto Protocol ratification we were informed that the Government should consider this subject in the third quarter of this year, whilst the ratification itself can be expected at the end of this year or in year 2000.

Implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> national report in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change, financed by UNDP, proceeds according to schedule. The final draft of the report should be ready by the beginning of July and the Government should confirm it in the second half of July. In August the translation and printing will be completed. In the middle of September an expert group of the secretariat to the Convention will come to Slovenia in order to accomplish an in-depth review of the report. During the presentation of the strategy for greenhouse gas emission reduction it was stressed that the so-called "no-regret" measures should be applied at first and that in any case intensive inter-sectoral co-ordination will be necessary, which will take into account all economic, social and other perspectives. As is well known, according to the obligations of the Kyoto protocol, Slovenia should reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by 8% on average in the 2008-2012 period, the reference year being 1986.

Minister Gantar stressed that, by accepting the protocol obligations, Slovenia has joined the countries which will intensively introduce new technologies in the years to come, among others those for use of renewable energy sources, and that within a decade or two energy intensive technologies will have no future in Slovenia.

In addition, the committee also discussed the National Programme for Environmental Protection. Representatives of non-governmental organisations suggested that air quality and climate change should be included in the programme as priority issues, along with water, waste and bio-diversity.

**Andrej Krajnc, Hydrometeorological Institute of RS, Vojkova 1b, Ljubljana, Phone: +386 61 178 4255, Fax: +386 61 133 1396**

### **Calendar**

**June 3-4** Rogla (Planja Hotel): 3rd Slovenian conference on land slipping. administrative-legal and technical-technological aspects of land slipping repair.

**June 5** World Environment Day

**June 10** Postojna: The Snežnik Regional Park - Zoning the Activities (workshop in the framework of the MATRA project: Management and Development Plan)

**July 4-11** Dobrovnik in Prekmurje: International Ecological Camp, organised by the Slovenian Ecological Movement and the Pomurje Ecological Centre

**July 5-6** Geneva: Meeting of the UN Committee for Environmental Policy