

Foreword

Rapid economic and social changes in the Republic of Slovenia and the world are normal at the present time. We can categorise them into three mega-trends: the transition in former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, globalisation and the related connecting of states of the same cultural background into clusters such as the European Union, NAFTA etc. and, at least in the developed part of the world, the rapid transition from a classical industrial society to a post-industrial one that can be defined as the information society or the society of knowledge. If we want to succeed as a state and a society, we have to adapt our mentality and actions to these interrelated mega-trends. We have to be aware that as a state we can only insignificantly influence these trends, yet they present us with opportunities from which we can profit if we act effectively, and catch up with the developed world. Good examples of that are Finland and Ireland, which only over a decade ago were behind us by all the development indicators, whilst today they are among the most developed EU member states. The three mega-trends also require new considerations and approaches in the area of environmental protection and the rational use of space. The democratic transition has introduced private property and personal responsibility, whilst globalisation and the EU accession process require co-ordination at the global level and unification at the EU level. Still, from all the mega-trends the transition to the post-industrial society has most thoroughly modified our attitude toward the environment and space. For the first time in the history of the Western civilisation we have a realistic opportunity to achieve sustainable development simultaneously with this transition. Post-industrial society with its economic prosperity is not based on natural resources but on human resources, knowledge and innovation. Thus the scarcity of natural resources as shown in the "Limits to Growth" does not limit us anymore; on the contrary, it motivates us since it requires a rapid and successful replacement as a necessity of natural resources for economic development by knowledge and innovation, new scientific discoveries and technological achievements.

We also have to adapt the policy of environmental protection and the rational use of space to these changing aspects. Environmental damage is no longer an unavoidable consequence of economic growth, it is now more of a limiting factor. In an economy which bases its prosperity and competitiveness on the use of human resources, environmental protection and the rational use of space have become incentives. The rich and still richer post-industrial society does not build the quality of life on more of this and more of that, i. e. on quantity, but on quality. In order to be economically prosperous it has to strive for balanced development. The more we use quality, the more we can afford the reparation of damage caused by past spatial interventions. The Slovenian policy of environmental protection and use of space contains an important task.

It has to abandon the concept of protection by restriction and move towards a conscious incentive for the transition to post-industrial society and, simultaneously, to sustainable development and balanced growth. The change must be done quickly yet continuously. The old concepts need to be abandoned and new objectives and tasks adopted. Important new challenges are ahead of us and we will enthusiastically look for new solutions since it is clear to us all how important they are for the further development and positioning of Slovenia in Europe and the world.

Andrej Umek, Ph.D., Minister

Feature

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES COMES INTO FORCE

On December 21 1999 the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES or the Washington Convention). It came into force on April 23 2000. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is in charge of the implementation of the convention. The Washington Convention is the most demanding convention to be implemented in the area of nature protection. Besides the usual obligations for the parties in such international agreements, the implementation of the CITES Convention requires co-ordinated action in several sectors. Although Slovenia's official approach to the Washington Convention is ahead of the preparation of its consistent implementation, one of the ultimate steps necessary for the complete integration into international processes in the area of nature protection has now been made.

Uncontrolled exploitation of wild species together with increasing pollution and the destruction of natural areas have brought the international community to acknowledge the necessity of regulating this area. The problem was first made publicly known in 1960 at the 7th General Assembly of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Three years later the Resolution on Regulation of Export, Import and Transfer of Endangered Wild Species, Their Parts and Products was adopted. At the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on Human Environment a draft agreement was adopted. The draft received its final form at the 1973 Washington Conference and was named the CITES. It came into force on July 1 1975. Until present day more than 150 countries have ratified the Convention.

The Convention regulates the traffic in specimens of wild plant and animal species on the basis of a permit and certificate system. The permits can be issued under certain conditions. The CITES documents must be included in every delivery exported to or imported from a party to the Convention as well as those exported to or imported from other states, which can issue such documents with the special mandate of the Secretariat to the Convention. On the basis of scientific data on their status, the species are being listed in annexes I, II or III which are determined by the Conference of the Parties.

Each party has to appoint an administrative body required for issuing the CITES documents, and one or several technical bodies. When trading or trafficking in subjects of the species listed in the annexes to the Convention, the parties to the Convention must comply with its provisions and make sure that each living specimen has been prepared for the transfer and transferred in a way that minimises the danger of bodily harm, illness or cruel treatment.

The main body of the Convention is the Conference of the Parties which is held biannually. Non-member states and intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organisations are also invited to the conferences. The Conference of the Parties checks and completes the lists, identifies deficiencies in the implementation of the Convention, adopts new resolutions and decisions and modifies and completes those which are already adopted. The Conference of the Parties establishes committees, sub-committees and working groups which continue the work in particular areas in the period between two conferences. Administrative and technical tasks are executed by the Secretariat to the Convention, which functions in the framework of the UN Environment Programme.

Each party has to appoint an administrative body in charge of the implementation of the Convention. The body co-operates with scientific bodies, other parties and the Secretariat to the Convention. Besides the usual obligations that the international agreements require from the parties (the annual membership fee, participation at the Conferences of the Parties, participation in the committees, reporting etc.) each party has to incorporate provisions from

the resolutions and decisions, adopted by the Conference of the Parties, in its national legislation.

The implementation of the Convention in Slovenia is the responsibility of the CITES Group at the Nature Protection Authority of RS.

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Conventions

5TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

On May 15 - 26 the 5th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Nairobi (Kenya). Slovenia, which has already signed this convention in 1996, sent a delegation to the conference. 154 out of a total of 177 of the signatories of the Convention were represented at the conference, which was also attended by important intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations (for example IUCN, Greenpeace, Bird Life International, WWF). For the 5th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity a preparatory meeting for Europe had been organised in Riga (Latvia). The participants had formulated common views on the implementation of the Convention in Europe for the following areas: agricultural biological diversity, sustainable use, bio-indicators, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Convention, establishment of a Clearing House Mechanism and subsequent co-operation, regional co-operation and funding of the implementation in Europe.

The conclusions of the preparatory meeting were presented at the Nairobi Conference as European priorities regarding implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the Nairobi Conference altogether 1500 participants discussed current matters (reports, election of bodies - Slovenia was elected into the Bureau of the Convention where it is represented by Gordana Beltram from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning - the working programme, regional co-operation, budget, etc.), the implementation of the Convention, (the sustainable use of ecosystems, access to genetic resources, a global taxonomic initiative, biotic diversity in agriculture, alien species, the principles of the ecosystemic approach), as well as more technical mechanisms, such as the Clearing House Mechanism, and national reports. Discussions took place in smaller contact groups within two working groups. The representatives of the parties agreed upon draft decisions, which were later adopted at the plenary meeting.

The central event, which drew most of the attention of the media and the NGOs, was the signature of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety that defines preventive measures for trafficking and contained use of genetically modified living organisms. The Protocol makes possible the legal regulation of this area, in particular from the perspective of nature protection and the protection of common intellectual property. The Protocol also realises one of the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity that concerns equal distribution of goods and can thus represent a counterweight to the legislation in those areas under the authority of the World Trade Organisation. For that reason numerous organisations reacted very positively to the signature. 67 states, Slovenia included, signed the Protocol at the conference. It will come into force after the 55th ratification.

The documents from the conference can be accessed at:
<http://www.biodiv.org/cop5/index/html>.

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SIGNATURE OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Having signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (on May 23 2000 in Nairobi), through its earliest possible ratification Slovenia is moving towards one of the objectives of Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration, i. e. a preventive approach to the attainment of an adequate level of protection in the area of safe transfer and contained use of genetically modified living organisms (GMOs). The provisions of the Protocol define either GMOs intended for direct use as nutrition or fodder, or those turned into other products, which could harmfully influence the sustainable use of biological diversity and its treatment, taking into consideration possible risks for human health. The Provisions do not concern either GMOs intended for contained use in closed systems, which comply with the standards of the importer, or decisions on agricultural experiments and pharmaceutical products. The Protocol will undoubtedly help to establish the procedures of early notification on cases of trans-boundary movement, safe transfer and treatment of GMOs. At the same time it will not limit a party's rights and duties under any enforced international treaty or agreement.

After ratifying the Protocol Slovenia will have to meet the following obligations:

- ensure access to information on contained use and measures for safe treatment of GMOs, and on their potential harmful environmental impact and risks for human health;
- determine procedures for issuing permits for contained use and transfer of GMOs;
- use the right to prohibit the transfer of GMOs;
- reinforce institutions and staff in the area of evaluation of potential environmental risks and of their management;
- establish a system of socio-economic evaluation of the impact of such organisms on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- establish a system of use of an environment-friendly bio-technology with a view of an efficient implementation of the Protocol by activating the private and public sector.

By ratifying the Protocol on Biosafety Slovenia will certainly reinforce its action in the area of conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its resources. It will also develop its institutional capacities in order to ensure the implementation of the measures provided by the Protocol, its co-operation at the regional and international level, as well as its co-operation among states, national institutions and the non-governmental sector. Slovenia will thus join the efforts of the European Union to make the use of biotechnology one of the main foundations for the achievement of objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

There are still some deficiencies in the provisions of the Protocol, in particular:

- the Protocol does not encompass products,
- the implementation procedure does not provide for a direct separation of products, which are or contain GMOs;

- the procedure in cases of unintentional trans-boundary movement of GMOs and any related damage is legally vague,
- the connection between the Protocol and the Treaty of the World Trade Organisation (GATT) is unclear and
- the legal status of the states that are not parties to the Convention, yet they take part in the trans-boundary movement and contained use of GMOs is left to be defined in bilateral agreements.

For these reasons, the Secretariat to the Convention launched an initiative to found the Inter-governmental Steering Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The first condition for the improvement of the deficiencies of the Protocol has thus been fulfilled. The first working meeting of the Committee is foreseen for September.

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Europe

THE NEGOTIATION POSITION FOR THE NEW ACQUIS

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has received those additions to the Acquis Communautaire which were adopted during the whole of 1999. They were presented to the 7th meeting of the Working Group for the Screening of the Harmonisation of Legislation (Chapter 22 - Environment) which was held in Ljubljana. The principal topics of discussion at the meeting were the preparation of an additional bilateral screening of the harmonisation of legislation and the preparation of a negotiation position for the new acquis, based on the correspondence meeting of May 22 2000. The Working Group stated that no modification of Slovenia's negotiation position was necessary regarding the EU acquis adopted between January 1999 and December 31 1999 and that the additional EU Acquis could be adopted. However, it was expected that the new legislation would impose further difficulties and pressures upon the already limited human and financial resources available for the adoption and enforcement of the acquis in the area of the environment. The Working Group also acknowledged that a decision regarding complete enforcement of the Directive 1999/13 would only be possible on the basis of an additional study of the condition of the environment, which would have to be completed no later than September this year,

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PROJECT CO-FINANCING BY ISPA

Last year the European Commission adopted the new ISPA Programme for co-financing of important environmental infrastructure investment projects, which enforce National Programmes for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in particular candidate countries. The financing from this programme will be available

in the period 2000-2006 for concrete implementation of investment projects and the preparation of the investment-technical documentation necessary to obtain all authorisations, which are the pre-condition for the construction.

Since the EU Directive on the ISPA Programme was adopted only at the end of the last year, in 1999 the European Commission allocated funding from the PHARE LSIF Programme for the preparation of the necessary investment-technical documentation so that as many as possible "ready to go" investment projects would enter the implementation stage. Slovenia was granted assistance from this programme for the preparation of documentation for

the following investment projects:

- reconstruction of the Globovnik landfill site (Ilirska Bistrica), EURO 130.000
- construction of the Paloma Sladki vrh main treatment plant, EURO 130.000
- construction of a complete system of waste water drainage and treatment for the Mislinja Basin (the Dravograd TP and the Mislinja TP), EURO 310.000
- construction of a complete system of waste water drainage and treatment for the Lower Sava Basin (the Sevnica TP, the Krško-VIPAP MTP, the Brežice TP), EURO 400.000
- construction of a complete system of waste water drainage and treatment for the Coastal Waters Basin (the Izola TP, the Koper TP, the Piran TP), EURO 590.000

The contractors who are preparing the documentation for the project of renovation of the Globovnik landfill site (Ilirska Bistrica) and the project of construction of the Paloma Sladki Vrh MTP began work on the basis of a Framework Contract with the EU Commission.

On May 31 contracts for three projects were signed: for the Mislinja Basin project (the Dravograd TP and the Mislinja TP) and the Coastal Waters Basin project (the Izola TP, the Koper TP, the Piran TP) with the Danish company "Hedelseskabet - Niras", and for the Lower Sava Basin project (the Sevnica TP, the Krško-VIPAP MTP, the Brežice TP) with the Danish company "Krueger".

The realisation period for project preparation is 11 months for the Lower Sava project and the Coastal Waters project and 7 months for the Mislinja project. All the projects are eligible for 2002 and 2003 ISPA investment co-financing.

The final objective of all these preliminary contracts is to obtain the necessary construction permits, i. e. the location permit and the environmental consent that besides the technical investment-documentation represent the precondition for applying for the ISPA project co-financing.

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In Brief

CONFERENCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY OF THE ADRIATIC AND THE IONIAN SEAS

On May 19 2000 a two-day conference was held in Ancona upon an initiative of the Italian Government with a view to improve the conditions for the development of the region affected by important changes after the breakdown of Yugoslavia. The foreign ministers of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, as well as the President of the European Commission attended the conference.

The working foundations of the conference were the topics discussed by the participants at the following round tables: economic co-operation, tourism and maritime transport, the

environment and protection of the resources of the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea, co-operation among universities and crime prevention. Together with the Italian Deputy Minister for the Environment Slovenia presided over the round table "Environmental Co-operation and the Protection of Fishing Resources".

The ministers signed the Ancona Declaration, which among other things requires that the signatories co-operate with a view towards sustainable development of the region. The parties should bear in mind the official conclusions of the round tables. At the closing of the conference the President of the European Commission Romano Prodi declared that the Adriatic region would hold a high priority regarding funding of international co-ordinated projects, which would enforce the views of the conference.

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OPENING CONFERENCE OF THE PROJECT OF MODERNISATION OF REAL ESTATE RECORDING

On May 30 the opening conference of the Project of Modernisation of Real Estate Recording was held in Ljubljana. Over 200 representatives from various technical and political areas attended the conference. The participants stressed the necessity and importance of the project and listed the necessary actions at the national level which would enhance the efficiency of real estate management and the functioning of the real estate market. In the second part of the conference the project manager and the managers of various sub-projects presented the main objectives, the execution and expected results of specific phases of the project. A booklet on the project in Slovenian and English languages was also published and can be obtained free of charge from the Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS.

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Calendar

June 14 Ljubljana: Expert meeting SiP - Slovenian Space entitled "Planning Documents of the County - the Intermediary between the Local and the National level in Croatia" The lecture will be given by Aleksandar Bašič, Head of the Institute for Spatial Planning of the Ministry for Nature Protection and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Croatia from Zagreb and Miroslav Štimac, the Head planner of the Institute for Spatial Planning of the Primorsko-Goranska County from Reka.

June 21 Ljubljana: Expert meeting SiP - Slovenian Space entitled "Planning Documents for Areas (Piano di area) - Experiences of the Veneto Region"
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September 1-3 Nazarje: 1st international scientific meeting "Biology and Ecology of Alpine amphibians and reptiles", organised by the Society for Bird Research and Nature Protection and the department of Biology of the Faculty of Educational Studies at the University of Maribor. The objectives of the meeting are to present new results in the area of research of Alpine amphibians and reptiles, to promote further research in that area, to develop co-operation and exchange of experiences between amateur and professional researchers, to

discuss nature protection on the case of amphibians and reptiles as bioindicator species and to study the possibilities of inclusion of amphibians and reptiles in the educational process in the framework of the subjects of biology, natural sciences and environmental education.
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