

Foreword

SLOVENIAN MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The European Environment Agency (EEA), together with its EIONET network, is the leading European institution that collects and analyses environmental data and uses the collected information for the evaluation of the state and the changes of the environment. This way the agency contributes to a better understanding of environmental problems and a better access to information during the environmental decision-making process.

The EEA and the EIONET (Environmental Information and Observation Network) were established in Copenhagen on the basis of the EC Regulation 1210/90 (amended in 1999). The EEA has about 70 employees and has a budget of EURO 18,3 million of funds for the year 2000. The EIONET is an organisational and a communication network that enables the flow of environmental information between national levels and the European level, as well as the exchange of information, skills and experiences. National centres in particular countries are the links between the EIONET, which is managed by the Agency, and national systems built on the same principles. Until now all the member states of the European Union and three EFTA states (Norway, Island and Liechtenstein) have become EEA members. Slovenia and other Phare countries have participated in EEA programmes since 1996. The co-operation encompassed analysis of the information needed for European reports on the state of the environment, the establishment of EIONET structures at the national level, the participation in workshops and meetings and the establishment of Corine Data Bases (Corine Land Cover, Corinair, Corine Biotop). The Phare programme co-financed the above-mentioned activities. In 1998 11 Phare countries applied for EEA membership prior to EU accession in order to ensure the continuity of the existing programmes and the smooth preparation for accession with respect to certain obligations, particularly those in the framework of the horizontal legislation which we will have to meet as an EU member state. On February 14 2000 the Council of Europe authorised the European Commission to start negotiations for EEA membership with 10 Phare candidate countries, together with Turkey, Cyprus and Malta. Thus the EEA is the first European agency which admits non-member states as members. In March the European Commission presented the contents, timetable and funding of the membership programme and by the end of the year the Agreement should be formally signed and ratified by the Slovenian and the European Parliament. The Republic of Slovenia will then become a fully entitled EEA member under the same conditions as the EFTA states. In the first three years the membership fee will be co-financed by the European Union i. e. the Phare programme. The Slovenian share will gradually increase so that in the fourth year we shall be paying the full membership fee from our own national budget.

Information is one of the important strategic pillars of any political decision-making. With the co-operation with the EEA we have not just obliged ourselves to fulfil the EU harmonisation requirements; we have also taken a step towards improved political and public dialogue, communication and inter-sectoral co-operation, by means of a well-regulated and efficient information system. The EEA work programme supports, facilitates and promotes numerous priority tasks which will result in the establishment of a reporting system, an indicator system and relevant integral aggregated data bases, in structuring and evaluation of global, regional, and local issues and in the integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies. All the above-mentioned goals are important to the member states and to the Agency, and can be reached only by a joint effort and mutual co-operation. Slovenia has identified the right

direction, and now advances with clear goals and with the intention to overcome any obstacles and to construct the missing bridges.

Marko Slokar, State Secretary

Feature

EUROPEAN CAR FREE DAY

September 22 is the European Car Free Day. Its motto is "In Town, Without My Car". Eleven EU member states (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) have joined the consortium and signed the European Car Free Day Charter.

Last year 66 towns in France and 90 towns in Italy organised a car free day. Public opinion polls in Italy showed that 83% of town dwellers expressed a positive opinion and support to this event. One half of those interviewed backed the idea that such days were to be held several times a year. That is how Italian "Eco-Sundays" were created last February and continued until May. Every Sunday had a different topic (for example children in traffic, bikers in the city, less noise in the city, a safer city etc.), to be discussed in round tables, shown in exhibitions and supported by other events. 156 Italian local communities and approximately 18 million of their inhabitants participated in the project.

Why the European Car Free Day? Above all, the main purpose of the day is to raise awareness on issues related to air pollution, lack of parking space and incorrect parking as well as other consequences of excess cars in cities.

According to the data issued by the European Commission (Eurobarometer, 1999) more than one half of harmful substances (particularly nitrogen oxides - NOX, carbon monoxide - CO and carbon dioxides CO₂) come from motor traffic emissions. 70% of Europeans admit that they are more worried about the quality of air they are breathing than they were in 1994. More than one fifth of Europeans say that they are annoyed by traffic noise.

In the 1996 Report on the State of the Environment in Slovenia we can also find data on pollution caused by road traffic. EU sources report that road traffic represents approximately 45% of all nitrogen oxide emissions; in Slovenia this percentage is 65%, additional 3% coming from other means of transport. NOX emissions indirectly contribute to the greenhouse effect and directly cause acid rain and tropospheric ozone. In Slovenia we emit 33,5 kg of NOX per head (in Japan 10,6 kg, in USA 74,2 kg, in Austria and Germany 40,6 kg, in Italy 34, 7 kg, in Norway 51 kg and in OECD countries 43,3 kg per head).

Nitrogen oxide emissions are increasing because of the increase in traffic and the growing speed of vehicles, since speed and the quantity of nitrogen oxide emissions are co-related. In 1996 NOx emissions increased by 5% compared to 1995. Traffic also increases the CO and CO₂ emissions that contribute to the greenhouse effect. The share of traffic in CO emissions is 91% and 30 in CO₂ emissions it is 30%. According to the 1996 Report on the State of the Environment in Slovenia both are still increasing.

The purpose of the European Car Free Day is to reinforce and raise the awareness of drivers so they would leave their cars at home at least once a year and walk or use environment-friendly transport means to access urban areas. It is also an opportunity for the promotion of less harmful transport means (such as railway, buses, cycling) that contribute to the improvement of each individual's environment.

What can we as individuals do to improve urban living conditions? The September 22 - Car Free Day is a real possibility and an opportunity to reach that goal. Let us join millions of Europeans and leave our cars at home that day. Let us run our errands on foot or by some other environment-friendly transport means (bicycle, bus, and train). The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has invited all local communities to celebrate the day in the most appropriate way. For one day we can make the city friendlier and more accessible for ourselves and for others, especially children, pedestrians, invalids, the elderly and cyclists.

More information on the European Car Free Day can be found at <http://www.ecoplan.org/carfreeday> or <http://www.22september.org>.

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In Brief

RENOVATION AND MODERNISATION OF THE BJELAŠNICA OBSERVATORY IN BOSNIA

An expert group from the Hydrometeorological Institute of RS conceived a project idea for renovation and modernisation of the Bjelašnica meteorological observatory at 2067 m in Bosnia-Herzegovina which was destroyed during the military conflict in that country. The project was carried out in the framework of the bilateral co-operation of meteorological services and state aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina. It encompasses meteorological measurements, air pollution measurements, laboratory support to the measurements, computer support and protection of the observatory measurement equipment from atmospheric discharges and the procedures ensuring the quality of the measured data.

The project was presented at a celebration and a press conference held on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the membership of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the World Meteorological Organisation. Both events took place on June 29 2000 in Sarajevo. The Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organisation Prof. G. O. P. Obasi also took part in the celebration. The Meteorological service of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be relying on international support in order to realise the project, and Prof. Obasi promised assistance of the World Meteorological Organisation.

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INFORMAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

On June 19 an informal meeting of the Ministers of the Environment from Central and Eastern Europe was held in Szentendre in Hungary by the Regional Environmental centre. The Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning Andrej Umek, Ph. D. and the Secretary of State Marko Slokar also took part in the meeting. The participants, among whom were some EU ministers and the EC Commissioner for the Environment Margot Wallstrom, discussed the EU enlargement process in the area of the environment and analysed enlargement in the context of the 6th Environmental Action Programme. The main topics of the meeting, which was also a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Regional Environmental Centre were the process of integration of the candidate countries into EU policy making, transport and the environment in the context of enlargement, protection of

biological and landscape diversity in the candidate countries, climate change and enlargement, and the financial investment mechanisms in regard to enlargement.

The ministerial meeting was also devoted to discussion on co-operation in South-Eastern Europe with the purpose of assistance in implementation of the Regional Environmental Programme in the framework of the Stability Pact. Attention was drawn as well to the topics and results of the ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" which is going to be held in 2002 in Kiev.

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2000 REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA TOWARD EU ACCESSION

The Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for European Affairs has prepared the Slovenian 2000 Report on the Progress of the Republic of Slovenia toward EU Accession that was sent to Brussels at the end of June. The structure of this year's report is similar to the structure of the negotiation position. The first part describes progress regarding the adoption and enforcement of legislation, the implementation of policies and the development of administrative capacities. The second part generally evaluates the Country's readiness in the three above-mentioned areas. This year the European Commission will prepare a double analysis for each of the three areas, i. e. the screening of the last year's progress (only with respect to the adopted legislation) and in addition to that a general evaluation of the readiness of the candidate country in a particular area for EU membership. In the year 2000 the Commission is paying most attention to the implementation of the so-called Madrid Criterion which concerns administrative capacities for the implementation of the EU Acquis. All modifications, including the list of all laws and sub-legal documents adopted until mid-September, will be transmitted to the European Commission at the end of September and included in the 2000 Regular Report by the European Commission on Slovenia's Progress toward EU Accession. The Commission will adopt the Report in November.

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EXPERT MEETING SiP - SLOVENIAN SPACE

On June 14 the National Office for Spatial Planning organised a presentation in the framework of the expert meetings SiP entitled "Spatial Plans of the County - an Intermediary between the Local and the National Level in Croatia". Aleksandar Bačić, Head of the Spatial Planning Institute at 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 Rijeka presented the importance and the contents of the county spatial plan as an intermediate spatial instrument between the state and the local community. Particular emphasis was given to the presentation of the mechanisms and procedures for the co-ordination of national and local interests in the case of the spatial plan of the Primorsko-Goranska county.

At the last SiP meeting on June 21 Romeo Toffano, Head of the Spatial Planning Agency of the Veneto Region and local planner Mario Laurenti presented the importance and the contents of the special area plan as an instrument at the intermediate level between the region and the local community. Last year the makers of the plan received the European award for the best special area plan. In the recent years this spatial instrument has been

widely used because it takes into consideration the principles of transparency and subsidiarity and encourages the public to participate in developmental decision-making processes.

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LECTURE BY FLEMISH EXPERTS AT THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING

On July 11 the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning organised two lectures in the framework of the project "Regional Development Strategy and Regional Development Program for Slovenian Istria". More than thirty participants attended the lectures, among them the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Slovenia, Sami Godart. The project has been carried out on the basis of an agreement between the Flemish (Belgian) and the Slovenian governments. Besides the Flemish partner three local communities from Slovenian Istria, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (National Office for Spatial Planning) and the Regional Development Centre from Koper have taken part in the project. Its results will serve as a foundation for the preparation of the regional spatial plan of the area in the next twelve months.

Werner Maurice Foblets, Senior Councillor at the Ministry for the Flemish Community (Department for Spatial Planning), presented the characteristics of structural planning in Flanders (pro-active planning, participatory planning, integrated approach, international orientation, political responsibility, support to entrepreneurial initiatives, realistic planning, flexible planning for uncertain future) as well as the contents and the design of a structural plan.

Werner Desimpeleare, architect-urban planner, expert with the Council of Europe for cultural heritage presented certain aspects of the identity of historical towns and their capacities for change. The lecture was based on his extensive experiences with the renovation of the town of Brugge/Bruges. Mr. Desimpeleare has been participating to the renovation of Brugge from its very beginning in early seventies.

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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA WILL PRESIDE THE CEMAT OVER THE PERIOD 2000-2003

On September 7 and 8 the 12th session of the Conference of European ministers in charge of spatial planning (CEMAT) will be held in Hannover. The conference will adopt the main principles for the sustainable spatial development of the European continent, and will appoint the state which will chair the CEMAT for the next three-year period. Since its admission to the Council of Europe Slovenia has been successfully active in this body. It is among the most active countries especially when conception of the principles of European spatial development is considered. In the elapsing three-year period (1997-2000) under the presidency of Germany Slovenia has held the vice-presidential duty. An unwritten rule provides that the vice-president is supposed to take over the presidency in the following period. On June 29 the Government of RS at its regular meeting adopted the decision that Slovenia would also officially run for presidency in the coming three-year period.

The main activity for the 2000-2003 period will be the implementation of the principal CEMAT material i. e. the Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European

Continent. The guiding principles will be implemented in order to solve concrete spatial issues and in specific areas. In the framework of the Guiding principles the implementation of spatial planning at the level of local communities and inter-municipal communities will be given a special importance. The local and regional spatial planning levels are particularly important as they represent the more tactical part of spatial planning. At the same time they ensure that the interests of national and international spatial planning are taken into consideration in the context of globalisation processes.

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PROPOSED DIRECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE SNEŽNIK REGIONAL PARK

On July 13 in the area of the future Snežnik Regional Park a three-day Europarc seminar and workshops were concluded. The participants analysed the development opportunities of the Park and put forward fundamental proposals for the continuation of procedures leading to the establishment of the Park, which should bring new development initiatives to its entire surrounding area i. e. the people who live and work there. The Snežnik Regional Park will encompass territories of the local communities of Logatec, Pivka, Postojna, Ilirska Bistrica, Bloke, Loški potok, Loška dolina and Cerknica and will be the largest natural park in Slovenia.

As well as ecologists and managers of parks from Southern and South-Eastern Europe, representatives of some local communities that would be a part of the future Snežnik Regional Park attended the seminar. The eighteen participants of the workshops devoted most of their time to the analysis of co-operation with local authorities and public stakeholders and developmental possibilities of the Snežnik area which would balance economic interests with environmental protection and nature conservation.

The Europarc organisation unites managers and experts from about 311 bodies from 35 European countries. Its main purpose is to preserve European natural landscape, promote co-operation between nature protection areas, to improve the quality of life there and to initiate the exchange of experiences. The seminar that was held in Slovenia is integrated in the European Phare project on sustainable nature protection.

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WORKING VISIT OF THE SPANISH EXPERTS FOR HABITAT TYPES MAPPING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

From June 5 to 8 two Spanish experts in the mapping of habitat types and the establishment of the Natura 2000 network visited the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning in the framework of the TAIEX program. During the four-day visit they presented Spanish experiences with the making of a national list of areas according to the Habitats Directive 92/43 CEE with a special emphasis on the methodology, typology and organisation of the entire project. The experts of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning presented the Slovenian approach to this issue as well as the results of the pilot project for the area near Osp, which the experts visited. Their visit ended with a public presentation.

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Climate Change

A VISIT TO USA

From June 26 to 30 a practical course for government officials "The Basics of CAP and Trade" was held in Washington. The course concentrated on emission trade, which is an important mechanism for air pollution reduction at optimally low costs. Upon an invitation by the US Environmental Protection Agency, Dušan Hrček and Andrej Kranjc from the Hydrometeorological Institute of RS took part in the conference. The US have most experience in this area because they have been implementing the sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emission trade for a number of years.

The conference was organised for Central European countries as part of the process of EU accession. It came at an important moment when the EU is also about to introduce trade in greenhouse gas emissions in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Besides domestic mechanisms, the Protocol provides for three so-called Kyoto mechanisms for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. These are: Joint Implementation (projects involving several industrialised countries bound by the Protocol to reduce their emissions in the first target period 2008-2012), the Clean Development Mechanism (joint projects between industrialised countries and developing countries) and emission trade. The three mechanisms should reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally, in particular at places where the reduction will be the cheapest, and by employing the cheapest possible manners to do it. The implementation rules for the mechanisms are still being drafted and should be adopted at the COP6 to the Convention on Climate Change in November 2000 in the Hague.

During their stay in Washington the Slovenian delegation also paid a visit to the US senator Tom Harkin. At that occasion Dušan Hrček, the manager of the Hydrometeorological Institute of RS, presented Mr. Harkin with a painting of the house where the Senator's mother was born in Suha, near Škofja Loka. The painting was a gift from the Mayor of Škofja Loka, Igor Draksler.

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CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES

On July 10 a meeting of the European Collegiate Body of the Slovenian Government was held at which the issue of climate change was presented in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The Government adopted a decision that the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning would be in charge of the activities in this area and would co-ordinate the relevant sectors.

On July 12 a meeting of the parliamentary group GLOBE was held for a presentation on the Kyoto Protocol, Slovenia's obligations and the draft strategy for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

In August 2000 the second version of the draft strategy for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol will be ready. In September co-ordination on this subject between the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and other sectors and non-governmental organisations will continue. The Slovenian Climate Committee will appoint new members and confirm the current members.

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Calendar

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.

September 11-13 Malmoe, Sweden: 23th General Assembly of the CERCO/Megrin (National Mapping Institution)

September 18-20 Geneva, Switzerland: Meeting of the UN/ECE Committee for Human Settlements and a ministerial meeting. Additional information is available at <http://www.unece.org/env/hs/>

September 28-29 Madrid, Spain: UN/ECE (European Association for Land Administration) workshop: Safety Mechanisms for Establishment of Real Estate Markets: Protection of Rights

November 22-25 Budapest (Buda Castel Hill and Hilton Hotel): The Third CEI Summit Economic Forum, with the participation of Prime Ministers from 16 CEI Member Countries. Additional information is available at <http://www.ceinet.org/CEIForum>