

Foreword

INFORMAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FROM THE CANDIDATE COUNTRIES FOR EU ACCESSION WITH THE EC COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

On October 9 the ministers of the environment from the candidate countries for EU accession and the EC Commissioner for the Environment Margot Wallstrom informally met in Brussels. The Slovenian delegation, lead by the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning Andrej Umek, Ph.D, took part in the informal meeting. The participants discussed three main topics: the integration of the EU accession countries in the area of the environment, the financial aspects of integration, and climate change. Besides, mayors of eleven European towns from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Turkey received the so-called EU Compliance Award for the compliance of their local policies with the EU directives for the year 2000 aimed at a healthy environment.

Prior to the official opening of the meeting the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning Andrej Umek, Ph.D., signed the Final Negotiation Act for the adoption of the treaty between the European Community and the Republic of Slovenia on the membership of the latter in the European Environment Agency, as well as in the European Environmental Information and Communication Network. As the initiator and coordinator of the accession countries Slovenia played an important role in the negotiations for the membership in this agency.

The EC Commissioner noted a delay in harmonisation of the legislation in the accession countries and tried to identify the reasons for that delay. The introduction of the so-called fast-track procedure is an important mechanism for a faster adoption of the regulations. At the meeting attention was also focused upon the implementation of the Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment and public participation in this process. Obviously EU integration will be demanding, in particular from the perspective of funding. The issue of funding has become essential for an effective implementation of numerous directives. The first estimates show that EURO 100-120 billion will be necessary for the implementation of the environmental Acquis in the ten candidate countries. They have already been entitled to financial assistance from the funds such as Ispa, Sapard and Phare. A new programme, the Priority Environmental Investment Planning for Accession – PEPA, has also been introduced to ensure technical assistance to the candidate countries for the preparation of targeted investment programmes aimed at the implementation of the Acquis.

Finally, the participants stressed the importance of the earliest possible ratification of the Kyoto Protocol since the European Union wants it to come in force at the end of year 2000. The candidate countries believe that this step needs to be thoroughly prepared not only at the international but in particular at the national level, from the perspective of domestic policy and actions as well as from the financial perspective.

At the end of the meeting the EC Commissioner for the Environment suggested to the candidate countries that they should reflect on potential topics for the next informal meeting as well as on the ways to acquaint children and youth with environmental issues.

Marko Slokar, State Secretary

Feature

1ST MEETING OF THE SLOVENIAN COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On September 23 1997 the Government of RS created the Slovenian Council for Sustainable Development as a consultative body. The Council assists the Government with the realisation of sustainable development in Slovenia. The Council adopts guidelines and recommendations for sustainable development in Slovenia, evaluates documents related to sustainable development and provides inputs in accordance with the principles of sustainable development to the National Environmental Protection Programme and other sector strategies.

The members of the Council are: the Prime Minister of RS who presides over the Council, the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Minister of Science and Technology, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Transport and Communications, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Minister of Finances, the Minister of Education and Sports, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Minister of Economic Relations and Development, and representatives of the Government Office for Women's Policy, the Council for Environmental Protection, the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts, the University of Ljubljana, the University of Maribor, the Slovenian Chamber of Economy and the Chamber of Crafts as well as three representatives of environmental non-governmental organisations.

The first meeting of the Council was held on October 11. Prime Minister of RS and President of the Council Andrej Bajuk, Ph.D., opened the meeting with a speech on the importance of sustainable development in the new millennium and of broad social consensus and long-term co-operation between governmental and non-governmental institutions with the science and business sectors. The environmental sector is important as an indicator of the condition and a catalyst of action, but it cannot be burdened with the responsibility for the sustainable development of the country. Some shifts toward sustainable development have already been accomplished in governmental sectors, economy and science, but they need to be completed at the national level.

Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Andrej Umek, Ph.D., gave an introductory speech on the concept and formalisation of sustainable development that had been publicly launched by the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. The message from Rio was clear – we cannot and must not stop economic development, yet we have to change its direction so as to make it less harmful for the environment. Sustainable development has been explicitly defined as a strategic task of the state that is becoming more and more important. It has been introduced into the developmental guidelines of every sector and at every level of social organisation – from the national level to local communities, as well as into the co-operation with the civil society and business. Sustainable development is a multidisciplinary project in which every participant needs to accept his share of work and responsibility. Sustainable development also remains of importance in the European Union. This year for the first time Slovenia has an opportunity and duty to participate actively in creation of the EU environmental policy as the preparation of the 6th European Environmental Programme for the next mid-term period is at its peak.

In the period of enforcement of the 6th European Environmental Program (2000-2005) Slovenia will likely become an EU member state and the obligations in the framework of this program will also become our obligations.

The third introductory speaker, State Secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology Anton Jeglič, Ph.D., presented the role of science and technology in the service of

sustainable development. Science has been the generator of developmental initiatives, which have conditioned the present social development, and are the co-creator of our present living conditions. Numerous technological solutions from the past no longer match the new criteria which are defined by requests for a sustainable development, and by the responsibility for the life and development of future generations. This year the Ministry of Science and Technology started a long-term project entitled "Technological Development Forecasts" which will bring answers to many issues on potential future technologies and their economical and environmental impacts. The experience of developed countries, especially the EU member states, show that national projects "Technological Development Forecasts" represent an efficient way of reaching a general consensus on fundamental developmental issues that are related to technology and thus to sustainable development.

The discussion among all the members of the Council brought up the following principal findings:

- The strategy of economic development in Slovenia which is in preparation needs to include all the elements necessary for a sustainable development.
- The next meeting of the Council should be held at the beginning of the year 2001 and the participants should discuss the Council's Rules of Procedure.
- The Council represents the interests of all inhabitants of Slovenia in regard to the Government of RS and the European Union.
- The problem of status and legal condition of non-governmental organisations needs to be addressed.
- Sectors should co-operate in the preparation of all governmental strategies.

At the 1st meeting of the Council the following conclusions were adopted:

1. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning shall prepare draft Rules of Procedure. On the unanimous agreement of all members of the Council it should be adopted at the next meeting of the Council presumably in the first half of year 2001.
2. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning shall publish all information on the Council's activities on its web pages.
3. Before the next meeting the members of the Council will prepare a written report on the consideration of sustainable development in sector policies and the activities of the institutions, which prepared them.
4. The members of the Council who cannot personally fulfil their tasks related to sustainable development will at the earliest convenience appoint a contact person within their institution and communicate the person's name to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.
5. The Council for Sustainable Development will suggest to the Government of RS that the Council's membership be enlarged to include representatives of Slovenian local communities. The Council for Sustainable Development believes that, although there is a great public interest in its activities, it believes that enlargement of the Council beyond this would not make sense, as the representation of the most important social segments has already been ensured. Its members from non-governmental organisations are requested to ensure the appropriate flow of information with regard to the Council's activities.

Dragica Bratanič, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 7329, Fax: + 386 1 478 7415

Conventions

SIGNATURE OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

In March 1994 a resolution was adopted at the 3rd Council of Europe Conference of the Mediterranean Regions, by which the participants called for the preparation of a framework convention on management and protection of the natural and cultural landscape all over Europe. On July 19 2000, after long preparation and consultations with the working bodies for culture and nature, governments and experts, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the final text. On October 20 at the ministerial conference in Florence, 18 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldavia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey) signed the Convention. Slovenia did not sign the Convention in Florence; the signature and the ratification of the agreement had been processed but the procedure had been temporarily stopped because of the general elections. The text of the Convention is accessible at <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/cadreprojects.htm>.

Peter Skoberne, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 4539, Fax: + 386 1 478 4051

1ST CITES INFORMATIVE SEMINAR

On September 19 an informative seminar on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was held in Ljubljana by the Nature Protection Authority of RS. The representative of the Secretariat of the Convention Ger van Vliet, Ph.D., took part in the seminar. The Convention intends to regulate the international trade and to control the commercial exploitation of endangered wildlife species. The participants were acquainted with the CITES Convention and its expected implementation in the Republic of Slovenia.

In his introductory lecture the representative of the CITES Secretariat presented the history of the Convention, its structure and its main working bodies. He also gave a short description of the use of the annexes to the Convention as well as of the form and contents of its documents. During the seminar the participants made presentations on the activities of the various services which are likely to participate in the Convention's implementation in Slovenia. They discussed the following topics: the customs procedure for import, export and transit, the work of the phytosanitary inspection service, the import procedures for non endemic wildlife, some infectious diseases of small animals, environmental criminal offences and Interpol. The participants expressed interest in co-operation, which is the first condition for a successful implementation of the Convention in Slovenia.

The Nature Protection Authority of RS, which is in charge of the implementation of the CITES Convention, will continue the training of particular services (the customs, inspection services). For the monitoring of the import, export and repeated export of species listed in the annexes to the Convention, the Nature Protection Authority will establish an information system and keep a central database. The seminar underlined the necessity of co-operation among governmental services and non-governmental and scientific organisations in order to prevent and combat illegal trade in endangered wild fauna and flora.

Urška Mavri, Nature Protection Authority of RS, Vojkova 1b, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 4411, Fax: + 386 1 478 4052

THE MURA RIVER AND ITS WETLANDS

On the basis of the Convention on Co-operation in Protection and the Sustainable Use of the Danube River a special Danube Programme has been implemented. The Republic of Slovenia has estimated that in order to attain the declared goal – a protected area of nature along the Mura river – a technical analysis of present conditions in flood plains, taking into account the integrity of the river basin, was needed. The project, officially entitled “Cross-border Co-operation in Conservation of the Mura Wetlands and the Management of the Lower Mura Basin”, has been financed by Phare.

Last July the project manager Halcrow Water and the Ljubljana Water Management Institute prepared a preliminary report and a draft action programme for water protection and management aimed at the conservation and restoration of the Mura wetlands. The project manager sent the report to the competent governmental institutions, the research and planning institutions, the local communities in the Pomurje region, fishing associations, non-governmental organisations and the Danube Programme implementation services in Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Especially non-governmental organisations in Slovenia and the neighbouring countries were invited to participate in the project.

The project approach promotes an active participation of public stakeholders. By having acquainted themselves with such an approach the Pomurje developmental planners have acquired an important and so far the most complete master plan for the integration of protected areas of nature (the Mura wetlands) into regional development plans.

Mitja Bricelj, MA, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 7384, Fax: + 386 1 478 7424

2ND WORKSHOP FOR THE PREPARATION OF A STRATEGY ON BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE VARIETY IN SLOVENIA

On September 26 the 2nd workshop for the preparation of a strategy on biotic diversity and landscape variety was held at the Training Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief in Ig. The workshop was organised for representatives of governmental sectors as well as business companies.

The preparation of the strategy on biotic diversity and landscape variety, to which Slovenia is bound by the Convention on Biological Diversity, started in autumn 1999. At the start, a technical overview and a workshop for technical collaborators and co-ordinators of working groups were carried out. This was followed by the preparation of a draft strategy on biodiversity and landscape variety and an analysis of the condition of biodiversity and landscape variety in Slovenia.

The aim of this second workshop was to present the foundations and the concept of the strategy, to review the potential visions in particular sectors, to exchange opinions and experiences with regard to the conservation of biodiversity and landscape variety, as well as to discuss the recommended approach to Slovenia's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The workshop also pointed out some potential forms of future co-operation in the preparation of the final text of the strategy, as well as in its subsequent implementation, in particular with regard to the sector action plans.

Helena Krivec, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 7389, Fax: + 386 1 478 7424

In brief

EURALILLE - AN EXAMPLE FOR LJUBLJANA, MARIBOR, KOPER?

The old mining city of Lille on the French-Belgian border with its 175.000 inhabitants is an example how middle-sized European cities should use their development opportunities based on their location near to fast trans-European railway corridors. A group of managers and experts from the municipalities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Novo mesto, the Slovenian Railways, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ljubljana television network paid a visit to Euralille, a new district in the centre of Lille that has been constructed at the TGV (European fast railway) station. In a record period of nine years that elapsed between the conception and the realisation, a multi-functional centre of European importance with business, congress, market, exhibition, entertainment, cultural, sport, recreational, commercial, banking, service and supply facilities has been constructed over and around the station, which is actually a hub for the TGV, regional, local and other transport systems. The centre not only meet the needs of Lille and the surrounding region (1, 150.000 inhabitants) but has become an important European facility for business, congresses and other meetings as it is accessible by fast train from Paris, London and Brussels i. e. the fifty million North-Western European hinterland within an hour. Travelling by fast train directly from one European city centre to another is substantially more comfortable and environmentally more sustainable than travelling by car or plane.

Similarly ambitious is the project of a new urban district over railway tracks that we visited in Paris. It is called 'Paris - Rive Gauche'. By constructing a six- to eight-story business-apartment building and all the accompanying facilities over the railway infrastructure of the Austerlitz Railway Station, the city of Paris intends to connect a part of the 13th arrondissement with the river bank of the Seine that have until present been separated by a vast area located in the very centre of the city and used only by the railways. The project will receive substantial state assistance.

In Slovenia we also have several cities, especially Ljubljana, Maribor and Koper that are located at inter-modal crossings and terminals of the railways of the V. and X. trans-European transport corridors. We are about to reconstruct railways and railway stations along the trans-European transport corridors and it would make sense to follow during that reconstruction the above-mentioned examples as well as the European policy of integral development and transport infrastructure. As many activities as possible which are vital to the functioning of the city should be located at railway and other traffic hubs/stations. Such districts could then become important areas of urban activities and could efficiently promote revitalisation of city centres, substantially reduce the use of cars and thus improve the urban environment.

Would it be possible to connect Ljubljana city centre with Bežigrad (an inner suburb) over or under the railway tracks at Ljubljana railway station? Money should not be a problem; it could be a safe investment into an international, multi-functional business centre beside the railway station in the very centre of Ljubljana. The interest of foreign capital in such a facility at the 'passage gate' between the Western and Eastern Europe would probably be substantial.

The visit to Euralille and Paris Rive Gauche, as well as discussions with the managers of both projects, were organised by the CFME ACTIM Slovenia. The participants agreed that more Slovenian planners, financial experts and politicians should learn about such projects, especially about their organisation, funding and management so that they could appropriately apply foreign experiences to our urban environments.

Aleš Šarec, National Office for Spatial Planning at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Dunajska 47, Ljubljana, tel.: 478 7014, fax: 478 7064

KOPER GRAMMAR SCHOOL PUPILS TAKE PART IN THE GEYC 2000 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

Last autumn a distance learning programme which was part of an international environmental project entitled "Global Environment Youth Convention Year 2000" was initiated all over the world. The project had been created and managed by the Swedish International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at the University of Lund.

Pupils from Koper Grammar School took part in the distance learning on the Internet. Throughout the year they actively learned the basics of ecology and sustainable development. They then produced a project study on the issue of waters in which they researched the management of drinking water and wastewater in the coastal area and made a projection for the next 20 years.

Between June 15-19 the Slovenian representatives participated in the international convention in Lund where they gave presentations of their study and took part in environmental workshops held by experts from all over the world.

They took with them to Sweden water from Koper bay and solemnly mixed it with the waters brought by the delegates from the other participating countries. Even the Swedish king Karl Gustav XVI attended the ceremony. Among approximately 500 participants from 80 countries the organisers selected 12 young people who would take part in the World Conservation Congress, which was held in October in the Jordan capital of Aman. Marko Baruca was one of those selected, having been awarded by the IUCN and the Reuters for the best essay. In Aman he joined the group of young journalists who reported from the conference world-wide.

Barbara Dobrila, the Koper Grammar School, Cankarjeva 2, Koper, Phone: + 386 5 627 2185, Fax: + 386 5 627 4670

Europe

PREPARATION OF DRAFT ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS FOR THE AREA 22 (THE ENVIRONMENT)

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning unofficially received the draft European Commission common position and has already prepared the answers. Slovenia will give up the transitional period in the area of air quality and waste management (regarding the heavy metal content in packaging and the special matters). This month the European Commission will forward its official position to Slovenia. Depending on the final EC document Slovenia will effectively complete the draft additional clarifications and send them to Brussels according to the standard procedure.

Tea Glažar, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 478 7333, Fax: + 386 1 478 7419

TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

In September Government Public Relations and Media Office issued two new informative publications on the European Union entitled "Roaming Europe" and "Slovenia in the European Union". With the first they wish to acquaint the youngest Slovenians with other European countries, the member states as well as the candidate countries, and the second contains 109 answers to the most common questions on Slovenia's accession to the EU.

Evrofon, Slovenska 29, Ljubljana, e-mail: evrofon@gov.si

Calendar

October 17 - Slovenian E-forum organises a technical meeting entitled "Oil Prices Gone Wild – Birth Pangs of the New Economical-Technological Paradigm or the Beginning of the

End of the EU Green Public Finances Reform?"

Andrej Klemenc, Slovenski E-forum, Dimičeva 12, Ljubljana, tel./Fax: + 386 1 588 8473, e-mail: andrej.klemenc@guest.arnes.si

October 19-22 - Bled, the Park Hotel: Meeting of the EEAC- Steering Committee and the CEE Countries

Council of Environmental protection of RS, Slovenska 56, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 430 6070, Fax: + 386 1 430 6075

October 25-26 - Nova Gorica: the Jožef Stefan Institute and the Nova Gorica Polytechnic organise a two-day intensive seminar entitled "Environmental Impact Assessment: Legislation, Theory, Practice".

Security Technology Competence Centre for Central and Eastern European Countries (SETCCE), the Jožef Stefan Institute, Jamova 39, Ljubljana, Phone: + 386 1 477 3539, e-mail: ct3@ijs.si

November 28 - Ljubljana: technical seminar entitled "New Water Legislation: the EU Water Framework Directive and the Draft Water Act", organised by Umanotera, the Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development with the financial support of the EU, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Government Public Relations and Media Office Marjana Dermelj, Umanotera, Ljubljana, tel: 439 7100, <http://www.umanotera.org>