

Foreword

TARGETS AND DIRECTIVES FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

The adoption of the EU Water Framework Directive, which is a binding piece of legislation for the Republic of Slovenia as an associated EU member state, has clarified some important fundamentals for the design of water management policy and activities in the future. The new Water Act, which is in its final draft stage and represents the fundamental legislation for the implementation of water policy, confirms the main principles and purpose of the Directive, which are to ensure the high quality of waters and water ecosystems. At the same time it exceeds the requirements of the Directive by laying out the basis for water management with regard to the protection of man and material goods from waters.

The main objectives for the achievement of protection and use of waters in the new law are:

- the protection and use of waters in order to ensure the sustainability of this natural resource;
- managing waters on the basis of of integral hydrographical areas – i.e. river basins;
- the introduction of an economic price for the use and pollution of waters;
- public participation in water management planning.

The main objectives in the area of water management are:

- the protection of wetland and coastal areas in order to ensure sufficient space for water and its dynamics;
- the limitation of development in areas which are endangered by floods;
- the appointment of public service providers who will be required to work in the public interest.

The objectives and contents of the new Water Act will have to be interpreted and implemented in close connection with the Environment Protection Act and Nature Protection Act as well as with the relevant regulations. The most important future activities in this area will be:

- the definition of new organisational, financial and expert foundations for water management;
- preparation of legal provisions and standards for water management;
- preparation of fundamental strategic documents (the National Water Action Plan and the Strategy for the Preparation of Water Management Plans);
- preparation of regional water management plans (an international obligation);
- preparation of water management plans for individual river basins as the basis for implementation of water policy.

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning as the competent ministry for waters, and the “water” departments are thus going to be faced with a number of very demanding

tasks. In order to implement them we need to acknowledge the new objectives, use multidisciplinary knowledge and above all become aware that water protection and management is important for the achievement of universally recognised environmental goals and not only for the achievement of narrow economic targets.

Gabrijela Grčar, State Vice-Secretary for Waters

Feature

SECOND MEETING OF THE SLOVENIAN COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On June 20 the second meeting was held in Ljubljana of the Slovenian Council for Sustainable Development, the highest consultative body of the Government of the RS for issues of sustainable development. The meeting was opened and initially chaired by the Prime Minister Janez Drnovšek, Ph.D. In his opening speech the Prime Minister emphasised that sustainable development had been included in governmental legislation, and the Government paid significant attention to it. He stated that the Slovenian Government would also attempt to improve the activities in this area through cooperation with civil society, especially the environmental nongovernmental organisations.

After his departure the Vice-president of the Council and Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Janez Kopač, MA, assumed the chair of the meeting. The members of the Council first discussed and adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Council that defined its activities at regular meetings (at least twice a year), the convocation to the meeting, the agenda and the decision processes at the meeting, and the reporting on the activities of the Council. In accordance with the adopted Rules of Procedure and the Decree of the Government of the RS on the Foundation of the Council (Ur. l. RS, 59/97 and 16/01) Inga Turk, MA, Counsellor to the Government at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning was appointed Secretary of the Council. The members of the Council then considered and adopted a draft working programme which proposed that the activities of the Council be divided among several specialised working groups in the following areas:

- integration of sector policies and programmes into the framework of sustainable development;
- monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development;
- cooperation with the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UN CSD);
- "green" tax reform – the environmental reform of public funding;
- education, promotion, institutional reinforcement and research in the area of sustainable development.

Also included in the activities of the Council will be the analysis of national development programmes and strategic plans for particular sectors. It was therefore agreed that at its next meeting, probably in September or October this year, the Council would discuss the draft Strategy for Economic Development of Slovenia and the National Development Programme. Some projects which have already been launched by the Council are expected to be continued as part of the new working groups' activities, and reports on these projects were next presented to the Council. Anita Pirc Velkavrh from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning presented the project on environmental indicators for reporting and cooperation of the RS Environment Agency with the European Environment Agency. Aleksander Zidanšek, Ph.D. from the Jozef Stefan Institute presented the project on

preparation of sustainable development indicators that had been designed at the International Centre for Sustainable development. Nives Nared, MA, from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning presented the basis for the implementation of the environmental reform of public funding, and Vice-Secretary of State Mladen Berginc from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning attempted to provide an answer to the question why we need parks. The members of the Council agreed that the above-mentioned projects would continue in the framework of the working groups that would report to the Council on their activities. All materials considered by the Council, as well as the minutes of the meeting together with the adopted conclusions and other information, are accessible at the web site of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning at www.sigov.si/mop under the heading Feature.

Inga Turk, MA, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Dunajska 48, Ljubljana, tel.: 478 7360, fax: 478 7420.

GERMAN-SLOVENIAN CONFERENCE ON WASTE

On June 28 and 29 a German-Slovenian conference entitled Development of Waste Management in Slovenia was held in Ljubljana. The conference was organised by the Association for Promotion of International Transfer of Environmental Technology (ITUT) and co-organised by the German Economic Representative in Slovenia, the Chamber of Economy of the RS (Association for Environment Protection) and the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the RS. Seventy-three participants from various levels of the administration, the economy, media and non-governmental organisations attended the conference. The main topics of presented papers were: general concepts of management at the national level, packaging and packaging waste management, the importance of costs in waste management, the funding of waste management, and concrete examples of legal, organisational and practical solutions and experiences. The principal conclusions of the conference were as follows:

1. Waste management is a process that has undergone various developmental phases in Germany. Slovenia is in this area approximately 15 years behind.
2. Regardless of the big difference in economic capacities of both countries the exchange of experience is more than welcome since the results from Germany, where waste management is among the most advanced in the world, can be usefully applied in other countries, Slovenia included.
3. Although Germany has a long tradition in this area, waste management legislation has only recently been adopted in Slovenia; in the institutional area we are absolute beginners, although in practical implementation of certain waste management concepts some model and experimental situations can be compared to those in Germany.
4. "Circular waste management" prevails in Germany in this area. Although Slovenian national strategic documents also include such elements, these could be enhanced significantly using the results, models and experiences from Germany, after adaptation to Slovenian conditions.
5. Public participation, cooperation among the economy, non-governmental organisations and the media has improved in the area of waste treatment in Germany and Slovenia alike, although in Germany the syndromes "not in my back yard" and "not in my term of office" have not been acknowledged so distinctively.

6. The contemporary concept of circular waste management certainly doesn't exclude incineration of waste, yet the need for such capacities can be substantially reduced by the use of other complementary processes.

7. A logical comparison between Germany and Slovenia is possible when the preparation of legislation and some practical and organisational solutions are considered; however, it is not possible when considering administrative organisation because of different levels of authority (national vs. federal, land and local) and neither can certain practical experiences be directly compared because of differences in geography, economy, logistics, spatial planning, settlement patterns etc. Direct comparisons are exceptional (for example between Leipzig and Ljubljana).

The organisation of the conference was highly professional, and the treated topics very well presented. However, in spite of the high professional level of all those present, the discussion took place almost exclusively between the lecturers and particular interested participants.

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SECOND INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FROM THE EU ACCESSION CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

On June 28 and 29 the second informal meeting of Ministers of the Environment from the EU accession candidate countries was held in Istanbul at the invitation of the Turkish Minister of the Environment H. E. Fevzi Aytekin. Representatives of the European Commission, the Swedish EU presidency, the UN/ECE and REC were also present.

The purpose of this second meeting of Ministers of the Environment was to overview the progress of candidate countries in the area of EU accession since the first meeting of the Ministers of the Environment in May 2000 in Slovakia. They paid special attention to the state of negotiations, the Nice treaty and the issue of enlargement, the flexibility of funding mechanisms provided to the candidate countries by the EU, and the position of the candidate countries regarding the 6th EU Environmental Action Programme. The participants also discussed the preparations for the Environment for Europe Conference to be held in 2003 in Kiev, and the preparation for the Rio+10 Conference. It was stated at the meeting that in spite of numerous requirements and financial burdens all candidate countries have demonstrated a visible progress in the EU accession process. The candidate countries expressed satisfaction with the political support from the European Commission and the EU Presidency regarding the integration of the environment into other sectors, and with the 6th Environmental Action Programme. The need for cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels was emphasised. The participants also discussed the importance of the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the financial consequences of the ratification for the candidate countries.

With regard to the EU funding mechanisms it was emphasised that the European Commission should consider the environmental specifics of each candidate country separately when distributing funds. The European Commission was asked to advise the candidates on the possibility of including bilateral and multilateral projects into the framework of Ispa. The candidate countries emphasised the importance and the role of the Regional Environment Center in Budapest in the EU accession process and agreed that they would actively participate in the preparation of the Environment for Europe and Rio+10 conferences. The Ministers of the Environment stressed the importance of informal meetings

and, following an invitation by the Maltese Minister of the Environment, agreed that the place of their third meeting would be Malta.

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RATIFICATION OF A SLOVENIA-EU AGREEMENT

On June 28 the National Assembly of the RS ratified the Agreement Between the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union on the Membership of Slovenia in the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Information and Observation Network (EIONET). On June 18 the agreement for similar cooperation with the 13 candidate countries was ratified by the Council of Ministers of the EU. Slovenia has thus become a member of the European Environment Agency. According to Domingo Jiménez- Beltrana, the EEA manager, by the beginning of 2002 the EEA will be the first EU body to accept the candidate countries and will thus substantially enlarge the geographical scope of its membership and become a truly all-European agency.

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE BONN CONVENTION PAID A VISIT TO SLOVENIA

On June 12 the Executive Secretary of the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species, Arnulf Muller-Helmbrecht, paid a visit to Slovenia and met the Slovenian coordinators of the Convention and its agreements. The State Vice-Secretary for Nature Mladen Berginc presented the current state of nature protection in Slovenia. Muller-Helmbrecht summarised the vision of the Bonn Convention and its agreements and explained what he expected from Slovenia as a relatively recent contracting party. A discussion then followed on financial and other obligations that our country would have to fulfil after the signature of particular agreements which are part of the Bonn Convention. As a contracting party Slovenia is bound to respect the provisions of the Convention and sign the agreements that concern our country as a country of passage for numerous migratory species. This year's ratification programme includes: the agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory water birds, the agreement on the conservation of European bats and the agreement on the conservation of whales in the Mediterranean and the Black sea. Slovenia has also been invited to sign the memorandum on the Central European population of the great bustard (*Otis Tarda*). In the light of the enlarged scope of international obligations in the area of conservation of nature and the ramifications of the Bonn Convention, additional coordinators of the Convention and the agreements have been appointed. Herr Muller-Helmbrecht then met with the Minister Janez Kopač, MA and presented to him once again the fundamental goals of the Convention and his expectations regarding the expected signature of its agreements by Slovenia. Minister Kopač emphasised that he was well aware of the significance of Slovenia as an important territory for migratory species in Europe and expressed support for the proposed new ratifications.

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PRESENTATION TO NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS OF PROVISIONS IN THE AREA OF TREATMENT OF WASTE

On June 27 the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning organised its third meeting with a group of representatives of non-governmental organisations with the purpose of discussing the implementation of the communication strategy in support of the implementation of the waste treatment programme in Slovenia. At this meeting State Secretary for the Environment Radovan Tavzes, MA, presented the provisions in the area of treatment of waste and their implementation and monitoring plan.

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PLENARY MEETING OF THE EU IMPEL AND AC IMPEL NETWORKS

On June 19 the first joint meeting of the EU Impel and AC Impel networks was held in the Swedish town of Falun. The AC Impel network was founded in 1998 and was primarily intended as assistance to the candidate countries in the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation to enable them to become better prepared for EU membership. On the other hand the role and importance of the EU Impel network has been mainly focused on development projects with the purpose of improving the levels of implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation which have already been reached. In Falun the representatives of the candidate countries participated in the discussion concerning the report on project activities and the gradual merger of the EU Impel and AC Impel networks into one network. In the course of the discussion on the EU Impel projects in the first part of the meeting, those projects already closed were presented and their final reports were made available to the representatives of the candidate countries. The current priority is the annual report on the preparatory activities for the implementation of the recommendation on the minimum environmental inspection criteria. We expect that the European Parliament will upgrade the recommendation into a Directive within two years. The EU Impel Secretariat had prepared a questionnaire that will represent the basis for reporting from the candidate countries to the European Commission; the latter would then report annually to the Parliament. The associate member states such as Slovenia need not to file a report yet, though it is useful for us to have an opportunity of following this activity in the member states. The second part of the meeting was intended for discussion on the future role of both networks and their merger. Since the two networks play very different roles they cannot simply be put together. No final decision on the manner of their unification had been adopted yet, though several proposals have been made:

- representatives of the associate countries should attend the joint meeting of both networks next year when the EU Presidency is assumed by Spain;
- the associate member states should become observers at those meetings prior to their EU accession;
- members should draft and coordinate the agenda of the next meeting in advance;
- the emphasis should be on joint projects of interest to both the member states and the associate member states;

The representatives of the associate member states have not yet been informed on the final decisions of the plenary meeting concerning the merger of both networks since they were made by the member states in our absence on the last day of the meeting.

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Projects/programs

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION TO OVERVIEW AND EVALUATE THE AGENDA HABITAT IMPLEMENTATION

Between June 6 and 8 a special UN General Assembly session was held at the UN headquarters, to overview and evaluate the implementation of the Agenda Habitat entitled Istanbul +5. A Slovenian delegation, led by the State Secretary for Spatial Planning Tomaž Kancler, MA attended the session. Other members of the delegation were the Slovenian Ambassador at the UN Ernest Petrič, Ph.D., the Manager of the Office of the RS for Spatial Planning Jože Novak and the Senior Counsellor and the Slovenian coordinator for the Habitat process Janja Kreitmayer, MA.

At the session Slovenia presented the national report on the implementation of the Agenda Habitat. In accordance with the directives adopted by the Government we presented the main emphases and contents in the report i.e. the implementation of the Agenda Habitat at the national as well as local/urban level, the latter including the reports on Ljubljana, Maribor and Koper. The report also encompasses a comparison of basic indicators of urban development and certain examples of good practice as an instrument for the monitoring of development. The basic structure of the report has been designed according to the instructions of the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UN CHS). The report was also issued as a publication which we distributed to the attendees of the session. The EU representatives as well as several other national delegations very positively received the opening speech given by the State Secretary Tomaž Kancler, MA and the national report itself. In his speech the State Secretary outlined the main topics of the session and emphasised the most important achievements of Slovenia in these areas. He also mentioned the position of Slovenia with regard to the importance of the conclusions of the Agenda Habitat, its experiences and its proposals for the selection of further priority activities, and expressed support to the Declaration on Towns and Urban Settlements in the New Millennium. One of the main topics discussed at the session was in fact the coordination and adoption of the Declaration on Towns and Urban Settlements in the New Millennium. The Declaration represents a renewal and a reconfirmation of the conclusions and recommendations already adopted and issued by the Agenda Habitat. The main topics in the declaration are expressed in four points which are as follows: the renewal of obligations from the Habitat II Conference, an overview of progress in the implementation of the programme, the definition of obstacles and problems to overcome in the course of its implementation, and an agreement on future activities. The Slovenian National Report on the Implementation of the Agenda Habitat is at present only available in English but it will also be issued in Slovene, probably in September. The National Report will also soon be accessible at the Government web site at www.gov.si/upp. We will also translate and issue the Declaration on Towns and Urban Settlements in the New Millennium the implementation of which will be particularly enforced at the local level and will take place simultaneously with the drafting of the spatial plan of Slovenia and the development of settlements and rural areas.

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THE LILLEHAMMER AWARD TO LIMNOS LTD.

On July 11 a press conference was held at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana, at which the award-winning environmental project "Second Generation of Vegetal Wastewater Treatment Plants in South-eastern Europe" was presented. The project was designed by Limnos Ltd. In June 2001 at the annual Ministerial Conference of Eureka in Madrid the project received the prestigious 2001 Lillehammer award. Eureka is the largest European industrial development programme. After the press conference the participants could visit the bio-rehabilitation facility of the communal waste disposal site in Barje with the reed-bed treatment plant and poplar-trees.

Bogdan Macarol, Limnos, Company for Applied Ecology, Podlimbarskega 31, Ljubljana, tel./fax: 505 73 86

Calendar

July 16-27 Bonn: COP+6 of the UN Convention on Climate Change

Andrej Kranjc, RS Environment Agency, Vojkova 1b, Ljubljana, tel.: 478 4047, fax: 436 1713

July 22 Podsreda Castle, Kozjansko Park: opening of the exhibition "National Parks of Poland" at 5 p.m. The exhibition has been organised by the Kozjansko Park in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Slovenia and the Ministry of the RS of the Environment and Spatial Planning

Kozjanski Park, Podsreda 45, 3257 Podsreda, tel.: 03 800 7100

September 12-14 Visit of the RS Environment Agency delegation to the European Commission and the TRAFFIC international headquarters in Brussels with the purpose of consultations on the implementation of the CITES Convention in the EU, organised by the Taiex office.

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