

**Foreword**

**SPACE, ONE OF MANKIND'S FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES**

In the last decade the attitude toward living space as a limited resource has greatly improved. The housing culture has changed. The quality of housing, its equipment and access to infrastructure have improved; in general, newly constructed buildings are more carefully planned and located. Agro-technical uses of land are less of a problem for the environment, since we started using more environment-friendly technology in agriculture. Wetlands and seas are less often used as wastewater channels etc.

The situation is still far from satisfactory. According to the results of an inquiry carried out in expert circles, we need to pay attention to the following key land use issues:

- in spatial plans and in general, public benefit is often not clearly defined; we tend not to consider it as a whole or with sufficient thought.
- some settlements have been spreading extensively without first using up the existing suitable building land and above all, renovating the existing buildings, which are often in poor condition;
- degraded urban space (dilapidated industrial complexes, deserted mining and military areas, abandoned public areas, certain urban surroundings etc.) is a consequence of conflicting economic interests and sometimes also of social poverty, lack of environmental awareness and uninspired urbanism;
- low quality i.e. low price off-the-shelf projects and a mediocre construction culture (people often planning and constructing themselves) endanger the identity and are destroying the balanced image of some Slovenian settlements;
- inappropriate use of agricultural land, ranging from exaggerated intensification on one hand to the abandonment of agricultural areas on the other hand, and sometimes insufficient adaptation of agriculture to climatic and hydrographical change, are tending to degrade our cultural landscape as we attempt to prepare our agricultural economy for competition in international markets;
- environmental pollution, mainly caused by years of neglect of the construction of communal infrastructure, the wasteful use of energy, and the remains of outdated technologies, is the greatest burden for spatial development;
- surface mining activities taking place without consideration or forethought, together with various illegal landfills, degrade the landscape and are particularly unacceptable close to more important roads and urban agglomerations as well as to nature protection areas
- although sufficiently large (often even too large) areas of building land have been included in the spatial plans, for various reasons they are not sufficiently accessible to the market and they are definitely too expensive, their price non being competitive in comparison to European real estate markets;

- insufficient traffic infrastructure and undeveloped public transport limit the quality development of urban and rural areas.

Slovenia has some good experts in various specialities who each deal with space from their own perspective, yet this is not enough. Space can only be shaped by synergy -- well or not well. Problems can only be solved, if experts and politicians realise that their mission has a long-term and national dimension: space has never been so important to man.

**Jože Novak,**

**State Secretary for Space**

### Feature

#### **NEW REGULATION ON WASTE**

On January 1 2002 a new regulation on waste treatment will come in force -- the Regulation on Environmental Hazard as a Consequence of Waste Disposal (Ur. l. RS, No 70/01, 31. 8. 2001). The legal foundation for the adoption of this regulation is Article 80 of the Environmental Protection Act (Ur. l. RS, No 32/93, 1/96, 9/99). The Article provides that the polluter pays the hazard tax for water, soil and air and also for the created waste. The Regulation on Environmental Hazard as a Consequence of Waste Disposal determines the sum, the manner of calculating, assessing and paying the environmental hazard tax as a consequence of waste disposal in landfills. It also defines the standards for reduction or exemption of soil hazard tax as a consequence of the quantity of disposed waste, and of air hazard tax owing to the emissions of methane (as a greenhouse gas) as the consequence of disposed biodegradable waste.

The tax consists of two accounting items: soil hazard and air hazard. It is calculated on the basis of the quantity, and price per unit, of soil hazard units and air hazard units. The Government of the RS decides on the prices for both hazard units. The price of an air hazard unit is based on the consequences of carbon monoxide emissions.

The tax must be paid for the environmental hazard due to waste disposed in landfills, including inert, non-hazardous or hazardous waste. The legal person managing a landfill is required to pay the tax, the amount of which is based on an assessment of the waste disposed at the landfill in the calendar year. The assessment of tax can be reduced according to the proportion of methane in the measured landfill gas which is burned in the calendar year for which the assessment of tax is in force, and that only for the landfill where waste was disposed. By March 31 of the current year, the company under the obligation is required to send to the Agency for the Environment of the RS the tax declaration for the previous year, including all the information necessary for the assessment of taxes. The company under the obligation can obtain tax exemption or reduction, if rehabilitation or other works aimed at the reduction of soil or air hazard had been performed at the landfill in that year.

The Inspectorate of the RS for the Environment and Spatial Planning will control the implementation of the Regulation. For those who violate its provisions, fines have been determined: SIT 200,000 for legal persons under the obligation and SIT 50,000 for the executives of those companies.

The tax sum that companies under the obligation will pay depends on the quantity and type of waste and the quantity and type of emissions of landfill gases into air. For example, the price (or partial tax) for 1 kg of disposed inert waste will be SIT 0.5 and for 1 kg of disposed hazardous waste which does not emit landfill gases SIT 5. In case of disposal of mixed,

unsorted communal waste and without measuring or processing the landfill gas the price for 1 kg of disposed waste is SIT 4.5. Considering average quantities of disposed waste (i. e. 400 kg of waste per inhabitant per year) the average Slovene will annually pay SIT 1800 or monthly SIT 150. If one considers the expected amount of collected taxes (50 billion SIT in 10 years), the current level of investment provided by the State and local budgets in the area of waste management, the expected EU funding and the investments of the private sector in the area of industrial waste, the financial resources should be sufficient. The introduction of the tax on environmental hazard due to the disposal of waste has introduced an appropriate financial resource into the area of waste disposal.

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### *In brief*

#### **THE BONN COP 6-2 MEETING**

The second part of the 6<sup>th</sup> conference of the contracting parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change -- COP 6-2 was held on July 16-27. The meeting was of special importance as the decision whether the Kyoto Protocol would stand or fail depended on it. It ended successfully and opened the way for the ratification of the Protocol by the industrialised countries, including Slovenia. The possibility has been renewed that the Protocol could come in force in the near future, perhaps already next year since in 2002 we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Rio de Janeiro Summit (Rio+10) at which the Convention on Climate Change was adopted. The Slovenian media have already covered the meeting, so in this article we shall give a summarised account of the activities and the principal conclusions, which were adopted or drafted at the meeting.

Last November the agreement on the extension of COP6 was made at the end of The Hague Conference, as it became obvious that an agreement on the Kyoto implementation mechanisms would not be reached. Approximately 4600 attendees participated in the Bonn Conference, of which around 1800 were delegates from the 179 contracting parties and 2 observer states. The Minister Janez Kopač, MA, led the Slovenian delegation (Marjan Vezjak, Ph.D., and Andrej Kranjc).

In the evening of July 19 the first negotiations at ministerial level began with the participation of approximately 30 invited states, including Slovenia. The COP6 Chairman, the Dutch Minister for the Environment Jan Pronk, chaired the negotiations. After a lengthy discussion on the format of negotiations it was at last agreed that negotiations would take place in smaller groups of approximately 30 countries and in the presence of a number of representatives of the groups of countries.

The essence of the adopted compromise is that the activities of the Compliance Committee will be focused on initiatives for the fulfilment of obligations and not on penalisation. Those states that will not fulfil their obligation concerning the permitted amount of emissions in the first period, will have to make up for having exceeded the permitted amount in the second target period. Besides that, they will have to adopt an action plan for the elimination of non-compliance. There will be no fines. The composition of the Compliance Committee, i.e. the number of the representatives of the Annex I countries and the number of representatives of the countries in development, was also agreed upon.

At the plenary session that started one hour after the successful closure of negotiations in the smaller group, a document on the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan was adopted. The document had been coordinated at the ministerial level and had been named the Bonn Agreement. The Bonn Agreement is of particular importance as it is generally

thought that it provides for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the industrialised countries. For Slovenia and other countries in transition it is essential that they are not bound to participate in the funding for countries in development. That is obligatory only for the Annex II countries (the industrialised countries) although others, i.e. the countries in transition, should participate in the funding if possible. The document provides all of the key elements for the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan.

At the end of the first week the Slovenian delegation managed to increase the quota of sinks according to Article 3,4 of the Kyoto Protocol (forest management, overgrowing) from 0,18 to 0,36 Mt C, which means close to 6% of the starting-point emissions if we manage to fill the quota. In the second week we tried hard to increase the quota further, which would make the fulfilment of our obligation concerning the emissions of greenhouse gases substantially easier but we could win no further increase.

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## **THE BARCELONA CONVENTION**

On September 11-14 the regular meeting was held in Athens of the national coordinators of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP/UNEP) whose legal framework is the Barcelona Convention and its protocols.

The participants adopted the 2002-2003 Work Programme and Budget in which the mid-term project of the preparation of a coastal management strategy for Slovenia played an important part. Besides other things the strategy concerns a functional connection between areas such as the sea and fresh water quality monitoring, nature protection areas and the rehabilitation and development plans of three local communities. It is the intent of Slovenia that our activities would also be adopted on the Italian and Croatian side of the Trieste Bay (by the permanent Slovenian-Italian-Croatian Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea and the Coastal Areas from Pollution).

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## **SLOVENIA WILL HOST THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RAMSAR COP**

On October 13-18 the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ramsar Convention Bureau will organise the European regional conference of the so-called Ramsar Convention -- the International Convention on the Protection of Wetlands. The Bled Conference is the forerunner of the COP8 planned next year in Spain. Prior to every COP, regional conferences are held at which the contracting parties from a particular region prepare common positions to be defended at the COP.

This year we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the signature of the Convention on the Protection of Wetlands, with which the signatories, including Slovenia (42 European states altogether) accepted the obligation to implement a development policy that would not threaten the existence of wetlands, but ensure their rational use and conservation as well as sustainably preserve the biological diversity of all wetlands, natural wetlands (marshes, fens and peat lands) as well as human-made wetlands (saltpans, ponds and mud pools).

So far Slovenia has listed only two areas on the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Localities): the Sečovlje salt pans and the Škocjanske caves. We have a number of other internationally important areas that would deserve this status, such as the Mura floodplain and ox-bows, the old Drava riverbed with Šturmovci and the Ormoško lake, the Krakovski forest and the Lower Sava wetlands, the Ljubljansko moor, the karstic Ljubljanica River and the Čezsoča gravel-beds.

Slovenia will use the Bled Conference to have Slovenian wetlands listed among the Ramsar localities, since the agenda of the conference also includes the definition of criteria for internationally important wetlands. Since Slovenia plays an important part in the definition of criteria for the listing of Karst wetlands on the list of the Ramsar localities and is otherwise a very active signatory of the Ramsar Convention, the success of this conference is of extreme importance for our country. You can find more about the international convention on the protection of wetlands at the web site: [www.ramsar.org/mtg\\_reg\\_europe2001\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/mtg_reg_europe2001_index.htm).

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## **INTEGRAL MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL AREAS**

On July 4-6 an Advanced Research Workshop was held in Ljubljana under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Marine Policy at the University of Delaware and the Ljubljana International Centre for Public Enterprises. Besides the leading American and European researchers in this area the workshop was also attended by representatives of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the University of Ljubljana. The second day of the event was aimed at activities on the Slovenian coast, and included a visit to the Marine Biological Station, a workshop on the national situation in this area, and a presentation of the spatial planning issues in the local community of Piran.

On the third day back in Ljubljana the participants in the workshop appealed to the Slovenian technical experts and the State Administration to become actively involved in an interdisciplinary management programme for the coastal area, which is going through rapid changes. In order to preserve the developmental advantages of this area responsible developmental planning process will be necessary.

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## **BIOMASS AND OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

In Ljubljana on September 3- 4 the Union of Associations for Biomass of Slovenia organised the third international conference "Biomass and Other Renewable Energy Sources for the 21st Century". The conference was co-organised by the National Council of the RS, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Austrian Union for Biomass.

Besides experts from Slovenia, Croatia, Austria and other EU member states the conference was also attended by the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministers of the Environment and Spatial Planning from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Austria, the Chairmen of Unions for Biomass from Italy, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, South Tyrol and Slovenia as well as by the Chairman of the European Union for Biomass. The guests at the conference were the Manager of the EC Directorate for Energy and Transport

Günther Hanreich and the Regional Counsellor for the Environment of the UN European Economic Commission Branko Bošnjaković, Ph.D.

The purpose of the conference was to create a proposal for cooperation on an energy transformation towards a priority use of renewable energy sources for the EU border states, which is an important ecological, economic and social prerequisite for EU membership. On the first day the participants were presented with the economic and political situation in certain attending countries, as well as the EU goals from the White Book, the Kyoto Protocol and the EU Green Book. The Ministers of Agriculture presented the natural potentials of particular countries and new developmental possibilities in national agriculture and forestry. With respect to natural resources, Slovenia is considered to be among the richest European countries, so the use of biomass as well as other renewable energy sources could enable us to reduce our energy dependence and help the local and national economy to prosper. The Slovenian Ministers But and Kopač presented current instruments for encouraging biomass use in Slovenia and the Draft National Action Plan for the Use of Forest Biomass which the Slovenian Government intends to adopt in the near future. The Action Plan will have to be completed by other uses of biomass such as the production of bio diesel fuel and biogas and the energy exploitation of other renewable energy sources. That is why Slovenia needs an appropriate legal regulation. On the second day the experts in this area presented in detail the possibilities and the most advanced technologies for exploitation of renewable energy sources.

The conference ended with a presentation of a final declaration to be studied and signed by the Ministers present.

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## **THE EU COMPLIANCE AWARD**

This year the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) announces the 2001 EU Compliance Award for CEE towns and cities with the financial support of the EC Directorate General for the Environment Programme in the framework of Phare.

The competition was first held in 1999. Its purpose is to stimulate and support the local authorities in their efforts for complying with the environmental requirements of the EU integration process and also to acknowledge the progress of local communities in the implementation of EU environmental legislation.

The 2001 EU Compliance Award will be focused on selected priority areas from the 6<sup>th</sup> EU Environmental Action Programme entitled Our Future, Our Choice. These priority areas are of particular importance for the activities of local communities which are committed to reach sustainable environmental goals.

In order to participate in the competition inquiries in three areas need to be filed:

- implementation of EU environmental legislation in the areas of air, waste and water;
- integration of the environment into other sectoral policies;
- informing and environmental awareness raising.

Participation in the competition gives valuable support and assistance to the cities and towns of Central and Eastern European countries in the evaluation of their readiness for EU membership.

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### **Car-free day**

#### **SEPTEMBER 22, EUROPEAN CAR-FREE DAY**

This year Slovenia again joined the European Car-Free Day action that was held on September 22 under the title Without The Car In Town. The main purpose of the action was to raise awareness of the inhabitants on issues connected with air pollution, noise, lack of parking, illegal parking and other consequences of the fact that there are too many cars in urban areas. Last year's results of the measurements of traffic emissions showed that in Ljubljana on the day of the action the concentrations of benzene and nitrogen oxide were halved. These parameters depend mainly on the density of traffic and last year's figures were comparable to those measured at weekends.

By this action we wanted to influence drivers to leave their cars at home at least once a year and come into town on foot or by other transport means that are harmless to the environment. This was also an opportunity to present to the people less hazardous and more appropriate transport means (trains, buses, bikes etc.) as well as walking that all contribute to the improvement of the living environment of each of us. This way we can leave the town centres to children, pedestrians, bikers, elderly, handicapped, i.e. all those whose freedom of movement is hindered because of too much car traffic.

Last year 760 towns participated in the European Car-Free Day by partially blocking traffic, whilst an additional 509 towns joined the action through other activities. Last year in Slovenia 11 towns partially blocked traffic; other towns participated in the action through other activities.

This year 25 local communities participated in the action. At the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning we issued a leaflet and clips for the occasion, informed the media (national as well as local) on the agenda of the action and organised a press conference on September 19. You can find additional information at: <http://www.22september.org>.

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### **Calendar**

#### **September 22** European Car-Free Day

**October 1-2** Portorož (The congress centre at the Slovenija Hotel): seminar entitled 2001 Fresh Water Quality.

Institute for Technical Education (ZTI - Zavod za tehnično izobraževanje), Langusova 21, Ljubljana, Milica Komac, Phone: +386 1 241 6200, Fax: +386 1 241 6213

**October 4-5** Ljubljana, Conference Hall of the Danfoss Trata Ltd.: seminar entitled Integration of Management Systems for Quality, the Environment, Health and Safety, Public

Responsibility, Food Safety, Automobile Industry and Business Excellence in Production and Services.

Institute for Technical Education (ZTI - Zavod za tehnično izobraževanje), Langusova 21, Ljubljana, Mojca Stamač-Šereg, Phone: +386 1 241 6209, Fax: +386 1 241 6213

**October 13-18** Bled: European Regional Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention. More about the conference at:

[www.ramsar.org/mtg\\_reg\\_europe2001\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/mtg_reg_europe2001_index.htm).

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**October 18-19** Ljubljana: Official visit of the EC Commissioner for the Environment Margot Wallström.

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