

# environment & planning

## editorial

Dear reader, two years ago when I was appointed Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, I knew that many challenges lay ahead. I estimate that we have tackled them rather well considering their variety and scope, and that we can be proud of what we have achieved. I wish to point out our principal achievements so far, and what we still need to do.

We have paid great attention to spatial planning. In November Government of RS adopted the Spatial Planning Act. The Construction Act is about to be amended and completed. Principal guidelines concerning spatial legislation include rationalisation of work, acceleration of procedures of preparation and adoption of spatial documents and reduction of necessary documentation for construction and operation permits; we are trying to accelerate all procedures, make them more transparent and simple and enable our citizens to carry out their plans more rapidly.

In March the law came into force on modifications and amendments of the National Housing Saving Scheme that changed this general saving scheme into a purpose-oriented instrument. We are preparing foundations for a more substantial intervention in the Housing Act. In the field of real estate we have prepared new real estate legislation that contributes to modernisation and greater efficiency of the State Administration. In the field of surveying and real estate we are now able to satisfy more of our users' needs and do so more adequately. Since October for example, the web application for access to surveying data has also allowed the preparation of documents based on the surveying database, and users can now obtain their land plot plan or property certificate at the Administrative Unit.

An action programme has been adopted on fresh water supply and we are now confronted with the task, the State as well as Municipalities, of construction of water treatment works at all fresh water sources. Two major such projects are in progress, fresh water supply to the Pomurje region and to the Littoral and Karst regions. In the field of treatment of waste Regional Waste Management Plans have been prepared and quite a few such centres are in construction or in operation, while in the future final solutions need be found for the missing centres. We have constructed 70% of the necessary treatment plants that according to EU regulations must be constructed by 2010.

In the field of renewable energy sources interest has substantially increased for investments, including by individuals and companies. In particular, the number of biomass boilers has been steadily increasing. The GEF project Removal of Barriers to Increased Use of Biomass as an Energy Source, at present in its final stage, has greatly contributed to this development.

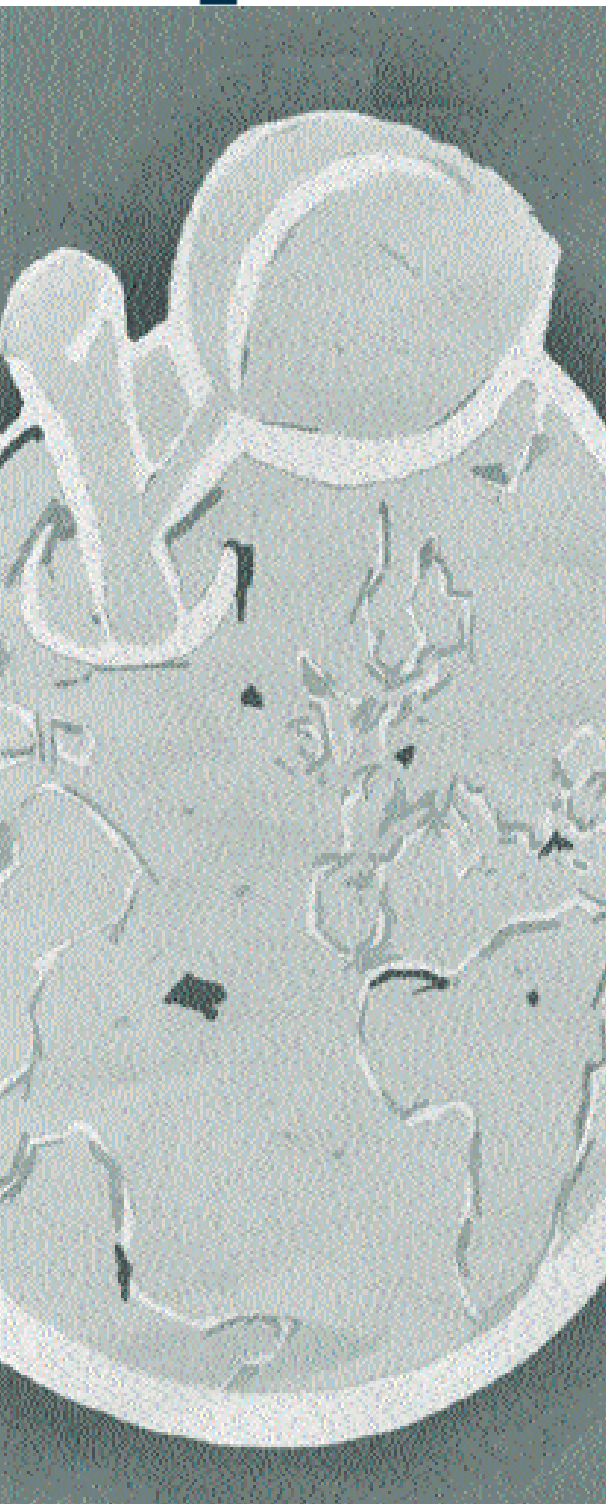
Next year a new financial period 2007-2013 begins and investments in the field of the environment will be mainly focused on treatment of waste, fresh water supply, wastewater sewerage and treatment, and reduction of harmful consequences of weather (such as floods) of total value EUR 529 million. Funding will be available in the second half of 2007 or at the beginning of 2008. We sent several appeals to Municipalities to combine their projects and for the new financial period we already have 20 important projects planned.

Cooperation is always important. In two years we could not have prepared and sent for government adoption ten new legal acts, seven resolutions and action programmes and 173 regulations, if it were not for competent staff at the Ministry. Implementation of adopted legislation however, requires constant and good cooperation in particular with Municipalities. Municipalities are responsible for local progress. Cooperation is also very important among experts in order to prepare good investment designs that can successfully compete for EU co-financing.

In the middle of my ministerial term, I wish to thank all of you for your efforts. I hope good collaboration will continue in the future.

**I wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas  
and the same for the year 2007!**

Janez Podobnik,  
Minister of the Environment  
and Spatial Planning



### In Egypt on EURO-MED Partnership

On November 19 and 20 in Cairo the 3rd Ministerial environmental conference was held of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EURO-MED). At the invitation of the EU Commissioner of the Environment Stavros Dimas the Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning Janez Podobnik attended the conference as the representative of all Mediterranean countries and the Chair of the Bureau of Parties of the Barcelona Convention.

This EURO-MED Partnership ministerial meeting was held outside Europe for the first time. The principal theme of the conference was purification of the Mediterranean Sea by the year 2020. The project includes topics and activities focused on reduction of pollution, reinforcement of regional mechanisms, research and monitoring, and management of the process.

Participants in the conference, representatives of the EU and Mediterranean countries attempted to improve cooperation towards reduction of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. Minister Podobnik reported on the role and importance of the Barcelona Convention in pollution reduction and sustainable development in the Mediterranean. To the European Commission and the non-European countries our experience represents a model of efficient cooperation in sustainable management of marine resources and coastal areas of the Mediterranean, for which substantial funding has been allocated (new EU Neighbourhood policy).

EU project Horizon 2020 is a great opportunity for the positioning of Slovenia as a modern European coastal country. It is a long-term project with precise thematic and financial structure and therefore an opportunity for the strategic positioning of Slovene scientific and development institutions (including the economic sector) in the most advanced Euro-Mediterranean structures. Reinforcement of cooperation between the Southern and Northern Mediterranean is necessary for improvement of quality of life in 21 countries around the common sea. Minister Podobnik also emphasised the importance of reforms within MAP that have been taking place in the period of Slovenia's presidency. The organisational structure of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP/UNEP coordination unit in Athens and five regional centres in the Mediterranean) can provide the EU with an established network and flexible modern approaches to implementation of activities planned by the EURO-MED project. It is a concrete demonstration of partnership of two international institutions in order to increase efficiency in the region. Minister also emphasised the role of reinforced sub-regional cooperation in developmental planning in the case of the Adriatic Sea (Slovenia and Italy – Adriatic partnership).

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### INSPIRE Directive Harmonized

In the late night hours of November 21 the conciliation procedure successfully ended as part of trilateral negotiations between the European Commission, the EU Council and the European Parliament on the draft text of the INSPIRE Directive. Compromise has been reached on all open issues concerning the draft directive, which regulates guidelines for the establishment of European data infrastructure in the field of the environment and spatial planning in the EU Member States. From that date on, all conditions have been fulfilled for the adoption of the Directive, which should happen in early 2007 and will have to be applied from 2009 onwards.

INSPIRE is the abbreviation of the English title of the document Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community. The proposed directive establishes the legal framework for the creation and operation of spatial information infrastructure in Europe. It will oblige the Member States to improve

access to services related to spatial data and ensure their use on the basis of common criteria. Spatial data search will have to be available to users essentially free of charge i.e. without unnecessary administrative barriers. The Directive regulates management and maintenance of metadata descriptions and technical details of co-use of spatial data, identifies rules of access to spatial data managed by public authorities in the EU and the price policy related to these data. It also identifies the method of coordination in the field of spatial data infrastructure among EU Member States and EU institutions. Implementation of the directive will have an impact on the operation of all public authorities that manage and maintain data identified in the annexes to the directive. The Directive does not plan for creation of new databases.

The European Commission estimated that measures related to its implementation will cost EUR million 3 to 5 per Member State in the next ten year period. Adoption procedure of the Directive formally started in June 2004 when after three years of preparation the European Commission sent the draft text of the Directive to other EU authorities to start the adoption procedure. The EU Environment Council reached a political compromise on the draft proposal of the Directive in June 2005 during the Luxembourg presidency. A common view of the Council and the Commission was officially published on January 2006. On June 13 2006 the European Parliament adopted 36 amendments in the second reading of the initial draft text of the Directive. The Council did not accept all of the proposed amendments and the conciliation procedure therefore continued as informal trilateral negotiations in the period of the Finnish presidency of the EU. Conciliating trilateral communication on the draft INSPIRE Directive lasted from November 8 to 21 2006 when finally agreement was reached on the draft text of the Directive that is at present in the process of grammatical coordination and translation into the official languages of the EU. Formal closure of the adoption procedure is planned for early 2007.

Throughout the entire period of consideration of the draft proposal most open issues have been related to the field of protection of intellectual rights of spatial data and statistical confidentiality of pricing of examination, access and use of spatial data owned by particular spatial data providers within public administrations of the EU Member States. The European Commission has been in favour of a very liberal approach, while Member States defended current status in this field.

Compromise on the draft Directive strongly echoed in European institutions and also in the EU Member States. On the day following the successful end of trilateral negotiations opinion on the European Parliament's website clearly recognised that Europe needed good quality and updated spatial data for the efficient implementation of environmental and other common policies. According to the Members of the European Parliament, the INSPIRE Directive is a precondition and a guarantee that such data and services will be available to all users in 2009.

On November 22 2006 the European Commission published on its website [www.euroopa.eu](http://www.euroopa.eu) an opinion of the EU Commissioner of the Environment Stavros Dimas. According to the Commissioner, the adoption of the Directive is merely a first step to liberalisation of the spatial data market and unification of data policies concerning spatial data of the EU Member States. A well managed policy is possible only on the basis of good and accessible data, among which data on the environment and spatial data in general hold a crucial place.

At present, a number of Slovenia's spatial data infrastructure elements are in accordance with the INSPIRE Directive; however, in the two years to come we still need to accomplish a lot with regard to harmonisation and coordination. More on that next time.

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### Surveying of the Fundamental Gravimetric Network

Surveying of the fundamental gravimetric network of RS is one of the principal tasks during transition to the new national coordinate system, identified in the Strategy on the Fundamental Surveying System, adopted by the Government in 2004. The geoid's form depends on the gravitational field of the Earth, the latter having impact on the quality of surveying measurements in the height system i. e. levelling network. Gravimetric network is therefore a special project of the Fundamental Surveying System identified in the Work Programme of the national Surveying and Mapping Authority in 2006.

The gravimetric reference system in Slovenia encompasses 35 permanently stabilised gravimetric points within gravimetric networks of 0 and 1st order (Picture 1). Gravimetric data of Slovenia has been identified by values of the gravitational acceleration on 6 absolute points of the gravimetric network of 0 order that had been measured in the course of previous projects and identified by absolute measurements of gravitational acceleration. Those refer to the international gravimetric reference system IGSN 71. Original gravitational values in this network have been identified by modern absolute gravimeters on the basis of gravitational acceleration.

Surveying of relative gravimetric points in the network of 1st order have been performed in 2006.

Measurements at all 35 points of the basic gravimetric network have been carried out by two relative gravimeters Scintrex CG-3M (Picture 2). As in Slovenia we only have one relative gravimeter (owned by the Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS), we have carried out the surveying in cooperation with the Croatian Institute of Geodesy, which contributed its gravimetric instrument for this purpose. Before and after surveying, calibration of both instruments was performed at the calibration basis in Zagreb.

The gravimetric network of Slovenia was also linked to the gravimetric network of the neighbouring countries (Austria and Croatia) as we included in the surveying the excentre of one Austrian absolute point and four Croatian relative points. Greater stability of our network has thus been ensured.

The Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS therefore collected all necessary data for calculation and balancing of the basic gravimetric network of the Republic of Slovenia by which surveying of the national height system will be improved.

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### Merger of Real Estate Registers

On November 27 the Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS organised a workshop in Ljubljana to explain the preparation of plans to merge the principal real estate registers.

Božena Lipej, PhD, explained past and current efforts in Slovenia and principal developments in Europe. Coen Aalders, MA and project collaborators of the project Harmonisation of Real Estate Registers described the experience of a single public agency on Cadastre, Land Register and cartography in the Netherlands with special emphasis on the benefits of one institution managing these registers. The final presentation was given by Miha Juhart, PhD, Head of the Task Force of the Government of RS on preparation of the Act on Real Estate Register Agency, including the principal regulations encompassed in the new law.

Dutch experience has been a good foundation for preparation of the draft new legal act that regulates organisation and merger of real estate registers in order to achieve greater efficiency, easier and faster data access, acceleration of procedures related to registration of modifications and introduction of electronic applications and reduction of delays in both systems. The Government action programme on reduction of administrative barriers in 2007 also includes integration of management and maintenance

of the Land Register, the Cadastre and the Building Cadastre by a new institution starting operation on January 1 2008, while full operation of the Agency is expected by 2010. At the workshop, foundations for merger have been publicly presented for the first time, to State Administration officials as well as representatives of the judicial branch of the Government. By the end of December inter-ministerial consideration of the draft legal act is planned, which is the start of the Government adoption procedure.

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### Workshop on Synchronisation of Cadastres and Land Registers in the EU

At the end of November, two important European real estate associations (EuroGeoGraphics with a Cadastre-Land Register Expert Group and the permanent EU Cadastre Committee) organised a workshop on synchronisation of Cadastres and Land Registers in the EU.

Upgrading of traditional systems encompassing a single institution or two institutions is necessary for modernisation of management and interconnection of data in order to improve access and make data and services available to users at one spot. Modifications in management of Cadastres and Land Registers (if interest has been expressed and criteria fulfilled) have taken place in the institutional field in order to create single-institution systems with total data coverage. As a draft new law on a Real Estate Register Agency is in preparation in Slovenia, cases of good practice from other countries are of interest to us.

In Norway the Surveying Authority has been in charge of the Land Register since 2004. By 2007 gradual transfer of Land Registers will end from 87 Courts to one Land Register Unit at the Surveying Authority. In Sweden reforms have been carried out since 2001, when the number of courts was reduced. Since 2005, transfer of Land Registers (seven of them) has taken place to the Surveying Authority, to be concluded by 2007.

Romania is a different case: in 2004 after several reforms ranging over a decade, a new national Agency on Cadastres and Land Register has been established that at present covers its operational costs and is not dependent on the State Budget.

Development of connections of European Land Register and Cadastre systems across national borders is also interesting. In November the first five countries – Sweden, the Netherlands, a part of Great Britain, Norway and Lithuania – activated the services of a unified portal as part of EULIS (European Land Information Service), through which users can access Cadastre and Land Register data from particular national registers and information on the registration procedure and transactions in particular countries. In 2007, 11 additional countries plan for connection; Slovene institutions are also preparing for connection.

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### Final Meeting of the Project on Close Inter-institutional Cooperation

At the end of November the final meeting of the project on close inter-institutional cooperation Integrated Prevention and Monitoring of the IPPC Pollution was held at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

The meeting was attended by the Bavarian Minister of the Environment Werner Schnappauf, Parliamentary Secretary of State at the German Ministry of the Environment Michael M'Yller, Belgian Ambassador Jean-Louis Mignot and the acting German Ambassador in Slovenia Anke Holstein.

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### Land Plot Plan Now Also Available at the Administrative Unit

Since December 1 citizens of Slovenia and legal persons can order and obtain at all Administrative Units various certificates from surveying databases. The legal foundation for issuing these certificates by Administrative Units has been identified by the Act on Real Estate Registration that came into force on November 24. The Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS prepared a technical design i. e. a web application that provides for preparation of documents on the basis of the Land Register, Building Register and Spatial Unit Register for the entire country. Documents are prepared in a distribution environment where data, intended for numerous users, are daily managed and updated.

The Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS along with the Ministry of RS of Public Administration and Administrative Units therefore increased the number of administrative services available at Administrative Units; until November 30 the above-mentioned certificates were only available at regional offices of the Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS.

Employees at Administrative Units have been trained on how to issue certificates. At Administrative Units, users of administrative services may now obtain the following certificates from surveying databases: land plot plan (design based on the graphic part of the Land Register database), land plot description (copy of descriptive data from the Land Register database), property certificate, ownership certificate, data on a particular building, data on a part of a building and data on the address of a building.

Users can still obtain all these certificates at regional offices of the Surveying and Mapping Authority of RS. Contact information and office hours of regional offices are available at ([http://www.gu.gov.si/si/gu\\_vstopnastran/organizacija\\_gu/ogu\\_geodpis/ogu/](http://www.gu.gov.si/si/gu_vstopnastran/organizacija_gu/ogu_geodpis/ogu/)).

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### PROJECTS Project BIOMURA

The Mura River area in Slovenia has been recognised as an important natural habitat of great biological diversity. This area has become a Natura 2000 site. From the nature protection perspective, lowland flooded forests are important as well as old riverbeds and dead river branches, river islands, sediments and eroded areas in riverbeds. The Mura River area is also an important wetland in the Danube River Basin. Conservation of biological diversity of this area and protection of wetlands depend primarily on conservation or increase of level of underground water and intensive hydrodynamic processes in the river corridor. In order to protect biological diversity and wetlands as well as quality and quantity of water sources in this area in the year 2000 the Institute of RS of Water Management proposed a connection between the main riverbed and lateral riverbeds, establishment of conditions for adequate level of water in the main riverbed at lateral effluents, local enlargements of the principal riverbed and sustainable conservation of flooded forests and lateral riverbeds. We also identified the area where these measures can have maximum impact. This was the foundation for a successful application to the EU programme Life Nature in 2006.

In October the Institute of RS on Water Management thus began implementing a five-year project entitled Protection of Biological Diversity of the Mura River in Slovenia (BIOMURA). In a large Mura flooding area of 15.2 km<sup>2</sup> between the water dams at the villages of Bunčani, Dokležovje, Izakovci, Krapje and Melinci and on 8.3 km of the River Mura stream all proposed water management measures will be carried out. Simultaneously, various awareness raising activities

and initiatives on nature protection and protection of Natura 2000 sites will be implemented. A promotion centre in Murska Sobota will be opened as well as an information centre in Mota. The Mura River area can be discovered along a new walking trail which will be connected to the existing information trail at Veržej. The project of total value EU 1.98 million is co-funded by the EC Life Nature programme 2006 (49%), the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (34%), the project coordinator Water Management Institute (11%) and partners: Inženiring za vode, d.o.o., Mura vodnogospodarsko podjetje, d.d., the Institute of RS on Nature Protection, RRA Mura, the Development Agency of the Prelekija Region GlZ, the Society for Study of Birds and Protection of Nature and the World Wide Fund for Nature Austria – WWF Austria.

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### TENDERS Tender Closed on projects Intereg III B and Cades

Interreg III B is a EU initiative that aims at reinforcement of spatial, environmental, economic and social cohesion of larger areas by supporting trans-national cooperation between national, regional and local institutions. Slovene partners are active in trans-national projects in two areas: the Alpine area, and Cades, which encompasses countries and parts of countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Trans-national projects aim at promotion of these two areas as a competitive and attractive living and economic space, emphasise development of efficient and sustainable transport systems and access to information society, rational management of nature, landscape and cultural heritage, environmental protection and prevention of natural disasters. This year's selection by trans-national calls for tenders by the Interreg III B "Alpine Area" and Cades programmes included 19 projects with Slovene partners. The total value of these projects amounts to EUR 37 million, while the financial share of Slovene partners is EUR 3.5 million.

Nineteen institutions responded to this year's national public tender on financing of activities of Slovene project partners in Interreg III B projects that will be carried out until 2008. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning approved co-funding of projects of total value of SIT 45 million. More information on the tender and the Interreg III B is accessible at <http://interreg.gov.si>.

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### Slovenia Reduces CO<sub>2</sub> Seminar in Bistra on Vulnerability of Agriculture Owing to Climate Change

Slovenija  
znižuje  
↓ CO<sub>2</sub>

On November 13 the British Embassy, Ministry of RS of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the British Council and the Ministry of RS of Agriculture, Forestry and Food organised a seminar as part of the initiative Slovenia Reduces CO<sub>2</sub> entitled Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change. The seminar was held at the Technical Museum of Slovenia in Bistra near Vrhnika and it began with an introductory address given by the Secretary of State Marko Starman, MA. Owing to global warming Slovenia will be increasingly endangered by extreme climate phenomena such as drought, hail and floods that cause substantial harm to farmers. It is therefore necessary that we start adapting to climate change as soon as possible. Adaptation concerns primarily agricultural policy, market mechanisms and new development and technological approaches.

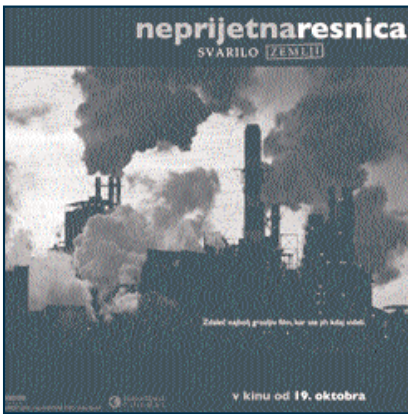
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## Historical Documentary "An Inconvenient Truth"

The Documentary An Inconvenient Truth shows and explains the phenomenon of global warming presented by former American Vice-President Al Gore who in the past 20 years has held over 1000 such lectures around the world. In the first such documentary that explains global warming in a way understandable to general public, the director Davis Guggenheim managed to present natural disasters and climate change in a new light, by a visually and statistically rich discourse based on more than 900 studies on climate change.

### Global Warming and its Consequences

Global warming is a concept narrower than climate change and stands for the increase in average temperature of air and water that we have observed in recent decades. The majority of experts agree that this intense increase of temperature has been caused by man who in the past 30 years has released almost entire accumulated energy under Earth's surface into the atmosphere. Such a sudden change causes



drastic climate change. The principal reason for global warming of the atmosphere is the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emission in the air along with the increase of other greenhouse gasses. What are then the probable consequences, explained in the movie? Experts united under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change with the United Nations (IPCC) estimate that the temperature of Earth's surface will increase by 1,4 to 5,8°C by 2100. By the end of the century sea level is to rise by 1 meter according to IPCC estimates, while Al Gore emphasises in the movie that the increase can even be of 6 meters, if melting of Antarctic ice continues at the current pace. Warming of oceans will cause more tropical storms. Global warming also causes massive melting of glaciers and snow all around the world. Melting of ice and rise of sea level will cause mass movements of the so-called environmental refugees. According to Al Gore's estimates in the movie, the increase of sea level will affect approximately 200 million people, in particular in countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, China, India, Thailand and Philippines. Owing to global warming an increasing number of animal species and ecosystems are also endangered.

### Documentary of Great Quality

The movie is very convincing owing to updated data and increasingly obvious global warming. It brings to Slovenia two principal messages: global warming is proved to be a phenomenon caused by humanity; governments and all inhabitants of the planet need immediately to start implementing mitigation measures on climate change and reduction of global warming; in ten years we are going to reach the "no return point"

when our planet will be irreparably damaged. Since October 19, the movie in which for the first time such a high profile politician plays a role, has been viewed in Slovenia by over 17.000 viewers, among which were many youth and students. The movie will be shown in our cinemas at least until January 2007; at present already, it is the second most popular documentary in Slovenia.

Positive and awareness raising message of the movie has also been emphasised by large support that the movie received in Slovenia – viewing has been encouraged by many Slovene celebrities, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and environmental nongovernmental organisations.

Since its release (May 2006) several million viewers around the world have seen this movie, of which solely in USA there were 2.3 million in the first five months.

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## Autumn 2006

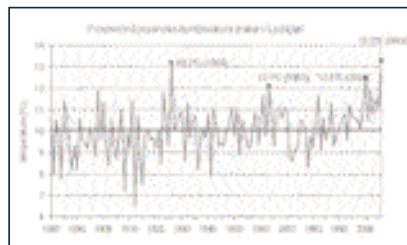
Meteorological autumn includes September, October and November. These months were all warmer than the long-term average, although none has been a record month. If we consider the entire three-month period, this autumn was extreme for extraordinarily high air temperature as well as lack of precipitation.

Let us look at particular elements of the climate. Autumn 2006 was in most parts of the country the warmest ever, while the long term average in most parts of the country was exceeded by 2 to 3°C. On the Coast a similarly warm autumn was in 2000; in the Prekmurje region autumn 2000 was slightly warmer than 2006, but there was more rain.

Sunny weather was everywhere more frequent than usual, while excess was the most important in Eastern Slovenia, especially the towns of Celje, Ljubljana and Maribor, where there were more sunny hours by one third. In the west of the country the excess of sunny weather over the long-term average was the lowest as the prevailing southwest wind frequently brought clouds over western Slovenia. On the Coast the long-term average of sunny weather was exceeded by a few percent only.

Everywhere, precipitation was less frequent than usual. The closest to long-term average were the Julian Alps where up to 400 mm were registered at places and the long-term average was missed by one tenth only. Elsewhere in the country precipitation was scarce. In most parts of the Primorska, the Notranjska and the Prekmurje regions less than half of the usual autumn precipitation was registered. Autumn was the driest on the Coast where only one third of usual precipitation was registered. This area had the driest autumn on record.

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