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## SLOVENIANS OUTSIDE SLOVENIA

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youths in activities of  
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**NEWS**

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TABOR!

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## Lenčka Kupper wins 2018 Tischler Award

The Christian Cultural Association (KKZ) and the National Council of Carinthian Slovenians (NSKS) have announced that the 39th Tischler Award will be conferred on 22 January 2018 on Lenčka Kupper, the author of countless children's songs, puppet plays, fairy tales and stories.

The award, named after the founder of the NSKS and the first headmaster of the Slovenian secondary school in Klagenfurt, Joško Tischler, is conferred annually as the highest accolade from both organisations.

Kupper, who will celebrate her 80th birthday on 4 April 2018, will receive the award at the seat of the publisher Mohorjeva družba in Klagenfurt/Celovec from the KKZ and NSKS presidents, Janko Krištof and Valentin Inzko.

Kupper has received several awards, including the Galus Award from the Slovenia's Public Fund for Cultural Activities in 1986 and the Silver Plaque from the same

organisation in 2007 for lifetime achievements, including the promotion of music in her local environment, especially music education for children.

Kupper was born on 4 April 1938 in Feistritz ob Bleiburg/Bistrica pri Pliberku. Her poems are intended primarily for children; because of the melodies she adds to every poem, many experts recommend them for music education in kindergartens and lower grades of primary schools. She also writes stories centred around a poem. According to the website of the Association of Slovenian Writers in Austria, Kupper currently resides in Velden am Wörther See/Vrba na Koroškem.

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# Exhibition by Slovenians from Tuzla at the Office for Slovenians Abroad

An exhibition selected by the Slovenian community in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, opened at the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad on 15 December 2017. It features selected works from a regional art workshops in Tuzla created in the last two years. The workshop was organised for the fourth time in 2017 and painters of Slovenian descent from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Canada attended.

Darko Mijatović, the head of the Europe Now union of Slovenian associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, delivered the opening address and Majda Souček, the secretary of the Slovenian community in Tuzla, presented the exhibition and the workshop.

The exhibition will be on display at the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad in Ljubljana every working day between 9 a.m and 3 p.m. until February 2018.



*Darko Mijatović, head of the Europe Now union of Slovenian associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photo: Government Office for Slovenians Abroad*



*Exhibition opening. Photo: Government Office for Slovenians Abroad*







## How to involve youths in activities of Slovenian communities in neighbouring countries?

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 STA, Davor Lonzarič

Minister for Slovenians Abroad Gorazd Žmavc believes 2017 was a kind year for Slovenians living outside the homeland. A number of steps were taken to narrow the distance between Slovenians in neighbouring countries and between their compatriots in Slovenia.



2017 was a transitional year after the crisis, in which the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad set the foundation for the future, Minister Žmavc told the Slovenian public broadcaster. »We are treading this new path resolutely, with the desire of making Slovenia bigger. Our main mission is to make the policy on Slovenians abroad a constituent part of the overall foreign policy strategy, a strategic branch which provides an added value in our relations with the neighbouring countries.«

Half a million Slovenians live outside Slovenia and they make Slovenia bigger. If Slovenia is able to take advantage of this potential, it will be successful in foreign trade. The main goal is to attract young generations and address the topics they find important.

There is no common denominator for the the situation in neighbouring countries, the minister said. What is attracting attention in Austria are the changes after the last election: »I don't expect major shifts, but as our compatriots in neighbouring countries say, you always have to sleep with one eye open.«

Political change is also taking place in Italy, particularly in relation to election legislation: »We are paying special attention to this. This is a thorn in our side, a big problem for us. So far we have had an advocate in

parliament, without whom it would be hard to reach certain goals. The voice of the minority must be heard in Rome, too. Together with the foreign minister, we have been making efforts and exerted certain political pressure to find a solution within the election legislation. This is actually an answer to Slovenia having representatives of the Italian and Hungarian minorities in parliament. In my opinion, this parity should be secured in the long term.«

**“I think that the awareness is high among the young generation, which is looking for new solutions. This generation will not follow the same old patterns. They are looking for a better world and should be given the opportunity to do that.”**



Photo: Davor Lonzarič



In Hungary, Slovenians have their official advocate in parliament. »It is important that the voice of Slovenians from Porabje is heard in Budapest. She has no say in the decision-making process, but this is not important for us at the moment. We are aware that they have many more minorities - twelve. What is important is that the advocate is there and that this connection with Hungary is successful,« the minister assessed.

»When it comes to Slovenians in Croatia, we have been particularly active in Gorski Kotar, Rijeka, Istria and the Varaždin area, where we think the relations with the minority should be nourished the most. I think the process is headed in the right direction, because we have an advocate in the deputy representing several ethnic communities. We are also making an effort to make our voice heard in that part of Croatia,« Žmavc announced.

In all neighbouring countries, there are warnings about the uncertain future of the Slovenian community, primarily because of the disinterest of young people. »I think that the awareness is high among the young generation, which is looking for new solutions. This generation will not follow the same old patterns. They are looking for a better world and should be given the op-

portunity to do that. On the other hand, this young generation, as it flourishes around the world, is very well aware of its roots. I see this during my visits.« But they need help connecting with the homeland, he stressed: »We have to open these paths to the young generation. We cannot build on the current practice of having associations which operate in an old-fashioned way, with meetings, minutes and programmes, which the young have no interest in. We cannot complain about the young, we must follow them, see what content interests them, adapt the school system and help them establish start-ups or connect with scientists - this is what opens a window to the world for them. On the other hand, their culture, identity and the Slovenian language are what will help them remain Slovenian. I think this is the only way, and our activities are focused in this direction.«



Photo: Davor Lonzarič

## Happy birthday, Tabor!

Fresh, witty, untraditional and dynamic. Such was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Slovenian cultural association Tabor in the packed Culture Centre in Villa Opicina/Opčine on Saturday, 16 December. »Our biggest wish is for people to come to the Culture Centre and participate in the association's activities,« said Tabor president Dunja Sosič. Its activities are exceptionally diverse. Danijel Dan Malalan, who directed the ceremony, presented what is going on in the local Slovenian community on a weekly basis: a really colourful collage was created, intertwining words, music and theatre, and presenting their social life.

On the occasion, the former women's choir got together after thirty years under the baton of David Žerjal, performing together with the men's choir. The youngest showed what they had learned as part of a music workshop mentored by Aljoša Saksida.

The audience enjoyed sketches written by Tatjana Malalan and performed by the local theatre company, and presentations of the activities of the local Slovenian library, the local music meetings, carnival partying, the local scout association and a course of embroidery and lace making. The events were excellently connected by the local band Nebojsega, which also played the new anthem of the association, actually an anthem to

the village written by Danjel Bokja Malalan and set to music by Tommy Budin.

At the end, all former association presidents were invited to the stage, with Martin Lissiach presenting to Sosič, on behalf of the Union of Slovenian Cultural Associations, a special recognition on the jubilee. Numerous guests and friends also honoured the association on the occasion.

The celebration was a complete success: a giant cake was followed by a party with the band Nebojsega, with both the young and the old dancing around the tables until the end of the evening, creating a unique connection between generations. The atmosphere was relaxed and entertaining, but nevertheless ceremonial, the association's president said.

»Socialising is what we need badly. It does not hurt if you offer extra content,« said Sosič. In her address, she noted that the association's committee was facing the same problems as 50 years ago. After the war, it was necessary to rebuild the Culture Centre and heating was a major problem back then - and it still is today. This year, many things were done with the help of grants and neighbours, and the centre is getting a new, fresh look: windows have been replaced, but heating remains a problem. »Despite the problems caused by red tape, wonderful things are happening in the centre because we have children visiting. The association must invest in them - in schools which are visiting the library, in matinee performances for children, in music





workshops. Children need to be encouraged to come to the Culture Centre, and perhaps some of them will stay with the association. Our task is to expand the association again, to encourage socialising.«

Sosič also thanked her closest associates Martina Kosmina and Dimitrij Brundula, »who work behind the scenes, but are the staples of the association, which could not function without them.« At the end she read

the poem What Is Culture? by Ida Semenič and announced that the celebrations were not over, as the 150th anniversary of the local reading room would be marked next year.

✍ Primorski dnevnik

## Slovenian know-how in the Netherlands

On 9 December 2017, the VTIS association of Slovenians educated abroad hosted a traditional event called »Slovenian know-how abroad«. Held at the new residence of Slovenian Ambassador to the Netherlands Sanja Štiglic, the event was about sharing experience and networking of Slovenian students, academicians and researchers who live and work in the Netherlands, and about connecting Slovenians living in the country.

After the formal programme, the participants were given time for networking while they enjoyed Slovenian wine and delicacies. The musical accompaniment was provided by jazz singer Tjaša Fajdiga, a student at the Amsterdam Conservatory, and her colleague Davor Stehlik from Serbia.

The first part featured a presentation by Nina Bogerd, a researcher and lecturer at Delft University of Technology. It was followed by presentations by Silva Deželan, a sustainability director at Robeco Private Equity, and Klemen Bravhar, a young graduate trainee at the European Space Research and Technology Centre (ESTEC-ESA). VTIS members Nina Bogerd and Silva Deželan summed up their experience from academia and industry, respectively, and spoke about how they manage to balance their successful careers with family life. The event, which concluded with a lively discussion, proved that VTIS is an indispensable member of the Slovenian community in the Netherlands.



Participants of the "Slovenian know-how abroad" event in The Hague. Photo: Association VTIS

## Numerous issues without a satisfying solution

Certain staff changes took place at the National Council of Carinthian Slovenians (NSKS) in 2017. Looking back at last year, NSKS president Valentin Inzko thanked Nanti Olip, who took over on 1 September as an expert supervisor for Catholic religious education at mandatory schools in bilingual education areas, for his service as NSKS vice-president.

Looking ahead towards 2018, Inzko pointed to the European citizens' initiative »Minority SafePack - one million sSignatures for diversity in Europe« and the plan to collect a million signatures by April 2018.

He has also been analysing the path to the new state constitution, his argument being that proposals agreed between the main minority political organisations had been disregarded. He was also surprised by the recent decision of the municipal council of Sittersdorf/Žitara vas to reject a proposal to erect bilingual city limits in Sielach/Sele. He has provided an analysis of the »Mein

Südkärnten - My Southern Carinthia« platform for the 2018 Carinthian state election. There are several other topics which he believes have not been addressed in a satisfactory way, for instance the Slovenian music school and the future of the weekly Novice.

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Valentin Inzko. Photo: Sindre Langmoen (CC)



## Window to Slovenia radio show celebrates 30th anniversary

The Slovenian radio show Window to Slovenia (Okence v Slovenijo), which is broadcast from Buenos Aires, Argentina ([www.okenceslo.com.ar](http://www.okenceslo.com.ar)), is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The celebratory show was broadcast on Saturday, 2 December, by the studio of Slovenian public broadcaster Radio Slovenija in Ljubljana, hosted by editor Mirko Vasle. President Borut Pahor and Minister for Slovenians Abroad Gorazd Žmavc were among the guests of the show who addressed the listeners in Buenos Aires live.



## Fellowships for summer visits to US academic institutions

The fellowship programme of the American Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF) provides fellows with comprehensive support in their studies and research at the world's top universities. The fellowship aims to strengthen research and study exchange between Slovenia and the US, and to give talented Slovenian students a chance to realise their potential to the fullest.

The ASEF fellowship provides a summer research visit to a university or research institution in the area of the applicant's field of study or expertise. The applicant will work on a research project with a Slovenian professor and interact with other members of the professor's research group. At the same time, the student will be in

contact with the American Slovenian community.

Applications for the fellowship are open to Slovenian as well as American students of Slovenian descent. A typical applicant is a senior undergraduate, master's or PhD student in good standing at an accredited institution of higher education.

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### MORE

For more information click [here](#)

## A great success for Slovenia

On 20 December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously endorsed the Slovenia-sponsored resolution declaring 20 May World Bee Day dedicated to raising awareness about the exceptional importance of bees for human existence.

20 May is the birthday of Anton Janša (1734-1773), a pioneer of modern beekeeping from Breznica in Slovenia. On this day, experts and beekeepers will highlight the need to preserve bees and the importance of bees for the entire humankind. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), bees and other pollinators have an immeasurable value in global food security. The main initiator of World Bee Day, the head of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association Boštjan Noč, has labelled the declaration of the World Bee Day only the first stage of what has been an effort which started more than three years ago. Slovenia has proposed that World Bee Day be marked in May, when bees in

the Northern Hemisphere start to reproduce and the demand for their pollination services is greatest. In the Southern Hemisphere May is autumn, the time when bee products are harvested and honey is celebrated.

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# Preparations for 51st Kras Carnival in full swing

Carnival fever is rising on the Kras Plateau, as preparations are in full swing for the 51st Kras Carnival. This year's procession through the centre of Villa Opicina/Opčine will be held on Saturday, 10 February.

There is strong interest in this year's Carnival: there is bound to be less enthusiasm than at last year's golden jubilee edition, but this does not diminish the effort put in by the organising committee. »It's normal that everything is a bit calmer this year,« said Igor Malalan, the head of the organising committee. At least six floats and eight groups are expected to take part in the procession, and this year's royal couple comes right from Villa Opicina/Opčine. The close cooperation with the carnival from Savogna d'Isonzo/Sovodnje pri Gorici, which brought positive results last year, continues.

The organising committee has a clear vision for the future, being aware that significant and large-scale events such as this always have ups and downs. Malalan has therefore called on all carnival participants not to be discouraged by this crisis period and to look towards the future with positive thoughts. Only in this way will the Kras Carnival be able to preserve its true identity.



*Igor Malalan, the head of the Kras Carnival organising committee. Photo: Primorski dnevnik*

## Australian Hen goes online

At the beginning of 2017, the Slovenian Language and Culture Association Queensland started publishing a bilingual magazine for Slovenians in Australia named The Hen (Koklja in Slovenian).

At first, the magazine was published only in print, but recently an online edition was launched as well. The association hopes this will give it wider reach, as it believes the content is relevant and interesting for all Slovenians living outside the home country.

The four issues that have been published so far are available [here](#).

