

# novičke

Summer 2002

Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week 2002 \* Ten years of educational activity for the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education \* Success of PLYA programme in 2000/2001 school year \* Accreditation of Vocational Qualifications \* Some information on the scope and content of guidance centres \* The Study Circles Caravan – a caravan of culture, co-operation, creation and understanding \* Motivation in Adult Education

3-15

SIAE EVENTS

The Knowledge Exchange Centre at DOBA celebrates its 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary \* Establishment of Society for Experiential Learning

16-18

SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

Seminars for study circle mentors in the last school year \* KISS in Belgrade \* European Certificate of Basic Skills \* European Thematic Network on University Continuing Education \* About the Right to Learn project \* Education of the Elderly

19-29

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The Aim: 35 students per 1,000 citizens \* European Linguistic Atlas \* The 7th International Educational Conference on Computers in Slovenia \* 1.3 Million active internet users by 2006

30

SLOVENIA FROM NOVIČKE TO NOVIČKE

 10 years together

Andragoški center Republike Slovenije  
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education



## PROGRAMME BASIS OF NOVIČKE

Novičke (The News) is an information bulletin with which we wish to inform individuals and organisations abroad with adult education and learning in Slovenia.

We plan to provide the following types of:

- description and presentation of events and activities in adult education;
- development, research and other programmes and projects;
- information on organisations, their needs, plans and activities;
- information on policy and strategies of adult education;
- the latest news in administration and legislation;
- statistical data;
- information on forthcoming events, workshops, seminars and conferences;
- presentations of new books and articles.

Novičke will provide brief, concise, objective and unbiased information.

Novičke will be published three times a year in English language.

Users will receive Novičke free of charge. This is a policy we intend to continue, provided we are able to cover the costs of publishing from the public funds allocated to adult education.

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## SIAE EVENTS

### 7<sup>th</sup> Celebration of learning Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week 2002

The Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week will be held from **14 - 20 October**. As an annual promotional event initiated by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) and organised in co-operation with numerous learning providers and other stakeholders throughout the country, it will celebrate the state-of-practice as well as the state-of-art of lifelong learning in Slovenia for the **seventh successive year**.

In line with the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI, 1996), the CONFINTEA V Declaration and Action plan (1997), the EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000), the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000), and other international as well as national strategic orientations, the LLW has thus become a traditional celebration of organisations, interest groups and individuals acting in the field of learning – be them in the role of those who enrich the knowledge of others or those who are involved in learning themselves.

Providers of LLW events (such as private educational organisations, folk high schools, societies, associations of societies, clubs, municipalities, local communities, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, universities of the third age, NGOs, libraries, museums, study circles, learning exchanges, development centres, agriculture advisory offices, employment offices, medical institutions and many others) regard LLW as an opportunity to present themselves to the public by investing their time, money, enthusiasm and other resources to generate increased participation in their programmes and activities. The interest of participants and their positive attitude towards the Week are best shown, among other things, by the high attendance figures for events, the lively and involved discussions both during and after events, and expressions of satisfaction and gratitude passed on to event organisers. Encouraging figures on the continual increase in numbers of LLW providers, events and participants between 1996 and 2001 confirm that the LLW is helping to raise public awareness on the importance and omnipresence of learning for all.

Currently, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, as well as diverse partners at the local and national level, are busy with preparatory activities for the upcoming Week. The scope of LLW is expected to expand once again: some aspects will be enhanced in line with findings from an evaluation of the last LLW; and a number of new features will be added in order to strengthen the nationwide promotion of the event.

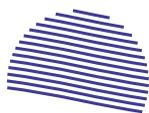
Traditionally one of the most attractive events of the Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week at the national level has been the presentation of SIAE awards given to individuals, groups and organisations for exceptional achievements in adult learning. The presentation of SIAE awards 2002 will take place at the grand LLW opening ceremony on 14 October, which for most SIAE award-winners presents one of the few – if not the only - occasion to escape anonymity and present their achievements in learning and creativity to a wider public, thus attracting media attention and contributing their share to this nationwide festival of learning. Another important LLW event organised by SIAE will be the traditional Adult Education Colloquium, this time focusing on the theme *Motivation in adult education*.

Let us not forget to emphasise that the Slovenian LLW 2002 will once again have a strong international impact, given the fact that partners from the Grundtvig project titled 'Widening and Strengthening the European Dimension of the Lifelong Learning Movement' will visit national as well as local LLW events and attend a task force meeting as well as a workshop in order to make a start with project activities.

On the other hand, Slovenia has joined forces with partners from the Stability Pact project EBIS (Erwachsenenbildung in Suedosteuropa, co-ordinated by IIZ/DVV, Bonn) with the aim to organise a learning festival in South Eastern Europe. Two workshops have already been carried out regarding this project, and some preliminary plans have been made. You will soon be able to read more about these activities on the website <http://www.inebis.com>.

Regretfully, SIAE was not able to publish LLW-Novičke 2001 with the usual report and analysis of the event. Due to a shortage of funds it is not certain whether we will be able to provide you with extensive information on this year's implementation of LLW, either. Consequently, we are inviting readers who are interested in the Slovenian LLW to visit the LLW website (<http://llw.acs.si>).

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, SIAE



Proper and sustained values ensure knowledge

## Ten years of educational activity for the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

Learning is a lifelong process, the most natural path of human self-development. We all realise that we learn many things in life spontaneously, while for other things we simply “mature”, and just a little learning is necessary for success. Other more complex processes we learn throughout our life, improving and developing them and always realising anew that we must constantly learn and build on them.

And it is precisely in the area of permanent professional training of adult educators that the SIAE has made major progress over the last 10 years. We have continually followed the objective of the image of a modern adult educator – a dynamic person filled with the spirit of lifelong learning who knows the secret of adult learning, respects the rich life and work experience of participants in the learning process, respects the individuality of adult learners, and is familiar with various strategies, methods and styles.

The educational activity of the Institute is always geared towards training and bringing together adult educators and adult education workers from all over Slovenia. Our educational programmes are therefore “open” to all educators who teach or advise adults, or who organise various forms of education for adults.

We formulate and supplement educational programmes gradually, with research and evaluation activities playing a special role, and always take advantage of foreign examples of good practice.

### Some general data

We began in 1992 with 5 educational programmes and 300 participants. Two years later, the number of programmes increased to 11 and the number of participants to more than 700. After another two years, we had 24 educational programmes and more than 1,100 participants. In 2000, we had 46 educational programmes with 1,100 participants. The number of programmes and participants grew in 2001 – 62 educational programmes, and nearly 1,200 participants. We still face many challenges and plans, which we will accept with pleasure.

## Our most established programmes are

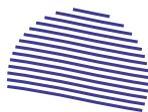
Training for leaders and mentors of study circles, Adults want effective teachers, Basic and further training for mentors in the Project Learning for Youth programme, Additional training programme for teachers, education organisers and counsellors in educational programmes for the unemployed, Guidance in adult education, Methods for comprehensive teaching and successful communication in learning groups, Skills for persuasive appearances and effective learning, Training for assessment and certification of knowledge and skills obtained informally, Development of the individual and his or her skills for effective communication in learning and counselling processes – NLP practitioner, Master of business communication – NLP master practitioner, NLP Trainer, ...

Throughout the year, we also organise **professional, information and educational meetings** intended for SIAE staff and other participants from various educational institutions and environments interested in AE. Such meetings are intended for the exchange of opinions, presentation of professional themes or short training programmes linked to SIAE projects and activities, or programmes and results of educational practice. In 2001, we also organised a number of presentations of master's and doctoral theses in the area of AE; these were excellent and highly successful, and we would very much like to continue them in the future.

Over ten years, we have organised a series of meetings and conferences, and throughout this period we have strived to respond as quickly as possible to the wishes and suggestions of our participants. We realise that

“The highest reward for a person's toil  
is not what they get for it,  
but what they become by it.”  
(J. Ruskin)

Zdenka Birman Forjanič, SIAE



## Project Learning for Young Adults Success of PLYA programme in 2000/2001 school year

This article presents the most important conclusions of the Report on the implementation of the Project Learning for Young Adults – PLYA – programme in the 2000/2001 school year.

The PLYA programme is an education programme intended for young people aged between 15 and 25 who for various reasons have left education without any qualifications, and whose lack of experience in the labour market means that they are difficult to employ. Their social status is thus defined by having dropped out and being unemployed.

**The basic objective of the programme** is to help young people acquire the experience and skills for success in continuing their education or in their chosen professional career. In addition, the acquisition of functional knowledge which develops general education, broader perspectives and flexible thinking, the acquisition of positive learning experiences, clearly defined vocational wishes and the development of the capacity for critical and problem-oriented thinking are also of key importance.

Work in PLYA takes place using project work methods. There are no classic school methods – curricula, assessment, or selection; instead, work is based on projects. Through various projects, such as films, theatrical performances or newspapers, young people acquire basic functional knowledge and skills (functional use of Slovenian, mathematics, computing, expansion of vocational information, etc.), obtain experience and knowledge for success in continuing their education or in their chosen professional career, gain positive learning experiences, clearly define their vocational wishes and prepare vocational or employment strategies.

In the 2000/2001 school year, seven organisations provided PLYA: Maribor Adult Education Institute – Folk Highschool, MOCIS Centre (Slovenj Gradec), Memory Education Centre (Koper), Ajdovščina Folk Highschool, Murska Sobota Folk Highschool, Radovljica Folk Highschool, SKALA (Celje) and the TIN Institute Ljubljana.

We conducted two forms of evaluation in the 2000/2001 school year: **current evaluation** at monthly meetings of mentors and directors of provider organisations, and **final evaluation** at the end of the programme. The latter contained: analysis of 73 monthly and 8 final reports of PLYA programme provider organisations, analysis of 41 learning project forms implemented by provider organisations in the 2000/2001 school year, and analysis of 8 reports from provider organisations on participants (age, sex, previous education) and their achievements.

26 mentors worked with participants in the eight provider organisations. Over the whole school year, **325 participants** attended the programme. We obtained data for 246 of them on age, sex, previous education and achievements, while the remainder (79) did not provide this data, either because they attended the programme solely for information purposes, or because the mentors felt that the programme was inappropriate for them.

Of the 246 participants, 148 were male and 98 female. The 1999/2000 school year showed the same ratio.

The **age** of participants is shown in the following table:

Age	Number of participants
15	16
16	18
17	19
18	34
19	39
20	29
21	31
22	19
23	21
24	9
25	4
26	3
27	1
No data	82

The dominant age group in the programme (18-21) was expected, since most participants left education in the first or second year of secondary education, and most young people who drop out of education do not join PLYA immediately.

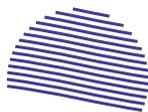
**Previous education** of participants varied considerably. Among the 246 participants, the education statistics were as follows: 27 had not completed primary school; 27 had completed primary school only; 61 had attended 1 year, 34 had attended 2 years, 21 had attended 3 years and 18 had attended 4 years of secondary education, and 4 participants had dropped out of programmes for retraining for another profession. 2 had dropped out of higher education, 6 had still to pass the final examination, 4 had still to pass the *matura*, 27 had already completed secondary school (for the most part, lower or secondary vocational education). There was no data as to the year in which they had dropped out of school for 15 participants.

The **basic objective** of the programme – **motivation and preparation for continuation of abandoned education** – was achieved by some **129 participants**; this is 52% of the total. Most continued their education (resits, *matura*, final examinations, examinations in individual subjects, returning to education, enrolment in higher education). 17 participants obtained a formal education while attending the PLYA programme – 2 primary school, and 15 secondary school. The **goal of employment** was also achieved. **45 participants** found employment while attending the programme, although in 15 cases this was only temporary. Again this year, the goal of finding employment was not emphasised in PLYA so much as the continuation of education. There were also excellent results in the **social-personal area**. Mentors reported that most participants had made outstanding progress in this area.

In the end, we can sum up by saying that implementation of the PLYA programme in the 2000/2001 school year was exceptionally successful. The objectives of the programme – particularly the basic objective, preparation for continuation of abandoned education – were achieved.

This year we again hope for similar results, but at the same time we would like the eight provider organisations to be joined by new ones providing the programme in areas PLYA has yet to reach.

Andreja Dobrovoljc, SIAE



## Presenting a training programme for the assessors of the national vocational qualifications accreditation **Accreditation of Vocational Qualifications**

The concept of lifelong learning emphasises the importance of knowledge and training, not only for the individual but also for the family, company, community and the country in general. For this reason, adult education emphasises basic education of the population and the acquisition of key qualifications among its goals; these should provide the foundations for successful acceptance of work and life tasks. In this way, we would improve the training of the population, which would also remove the structural imbalance in the labour market, and in the final phase also reduce the unemployment rate. In the labour market we quite often encounter cases where companies employ individuals who perform certain work satisfactorily without any officially recognised qualifications. They have often obtained so-called internal qualifications, recognised only within

the company in which they worked and not in the general labour market. Rapid technological and social changes have brought about numerous changes in the labour market. Many employees have been unable to keep up with such changes due to a lack of formal education. A trend is increasingly emerging in which such individuals formalise their informally acquired knowledge and skills without having to attend a formal adult education programme. It was necessary to establish a system of accreditation of knowledge and skills or accreditation of vocational qualifications enabling acquisition of qualification certificates (vocational qualifications) which would be recognised not just within the company but in the labour market generally.

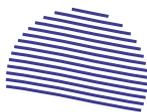
With the goal of systemic implementation and establishment of a procedure for accreditation of vocational qualifications, the National Vocational Qualifications Act was adopted in 2000, defining the conditions and procedure for the acquisition of national vocational qualifications. The Act defines among other things membership of examination committees performing accreditation, and the conditions to be met by such persons in order to perform assessment. Apart from work experience and appropriate professional education, members must also complete a training programme for members of examination committees in procedures for accreditation of national vocational qualifications. Training programme providers are defined by the adopted implementing regulation, which appoints the SIAE or other providers authorised by the National Examination Centre as programme providers. On the basis of successful completion of the training programme, participants should obtain public certification which, provided they meet the other conditions, enables them to obtain a licence for members of examination committees for accreditation of vocational qualifications.

Regarding the role of the SIAE, we formulated a programme which is a condition for the acquisition of a licence. This was the origin of the Training programme for accreditation of vocational qualifications confirmed in July 2001 at the Professional Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Professional Education and ratified by the minister of Labour. The programme involves 34 teaching hours, of which 30 are organised education and 4 are intended for accreditation of the training of participants. Training is verified in writing and practically, with the written text covering knowledge of the system of national vocational qualifications, knowledge of the portfolio, catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills, ethical principles of accreditation, direct assessment methods and the characteristics of communication in exam situations. Practical testing comprises presentation of the procedure for portfolio assessment, preparation of a task for assessment and a range of direct assessment methods. Practical assessment is conducted in simulated situations, with participants acting as members of examination committees, assessing the evidence in portfolios in groups of three. Assessment of the evidence is followed by individual defence of the progress of assessment and justification of the final assessment.

Participants in the programme must have professional education in accordance with the relevant catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills for an individual vocational qualification, and at least five years of work experience in the profession of the vocational qualification. In order to obtain the certificate on successful completion of training, they must also perform the previously described accreditation of knowledge and skills. By completing the training programme, participants obtain knowledge and skills required to implement the procedure for accreditation of vocational qualifications and which are a condition for the acquisition of a licence. They thus learn the normal arrangements for the system of national vocational qualifications, train in direct assessment and certification of knowledge and skills, practice for the role of both member and chairman of accreditation committees, learn about the characteristics of quality understanding and about the highly diverse influences creating the exam situation, and practice action and responses. A particular feature of the training programme is training for accreditation of knowledge, which candidates demonstrate through various evidence, both formal and informal; this represents an absolute step forward in the practice of assessment of the knowledge and skills of adults.

So far, 89 candidates for membership of examination committees have successfully completed training at the SIAE; they have been trained to verify and certify vocational qualifications in the areas of transportation of hazardous materials, home care, beekeeping, bread and cake baking, fruit, meat and milk processing, pharmacy and care-taking. Given that so far assessors have been trained for 10 vocational qualifications, and that 24 catalogues of standards of professional knowledge and skills have been adopted, there is much work awaiting us in the area of training members of examination committees.

Vera Jakara, SIAE



## Guidance activities in adult education

### Some information on the scope and content of guidance centres

Five guidance centres for adult education have been operating in Slovenia since September 2001 in Koper, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Novo Mesto and Žalec. The guidance centres offer adults in their local environments guidance **before they enrol** in education, **during** education, and **on completion** of education. In doing so, they follow their **basic operating principles**: accessibility for all target groups of adults, free of charge services, impartiality and confidentiality of data.

Guidance activities **take place** over an open telephone line (with specific working days and times), through special guidance (with specific working days and times), through information materials and by electronic or ordinary mail. Most information and guidance activities operate on individual basis, although centres may also organise group or combined forms. Guidance activities take place on the premises of the centre, or by agreement within another organisation in the same location or elsewhere.

The data for all five guidance centres covering the period from September to the end of March 2002 shows that the guidance centres were well attended, with services provided over this period on 3,194 occasions. The combined data for all centres and throughout the observed period shows:

- Prevalence of initial telephone calls,
- Follows by initial personal visit,
- And other forms (responses to letters and questions by electronic mail, provision of written material – e.g. adult education tenders, etc.).

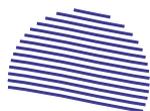
Advisers in guidance centres continually update data on the **characteristics of clients**. Data for the initial months of operation show that assistance is sought in guidance centres:

- By more women (two-thirds) than men,
- By more young adults,
- Mainly by clients with up to and including secondary education (roughly one-third of all clients have completed only, or have not completed, primary school),
- By adults with various employment status (of the 80% of clients for whom we obtained this information, 33% are employed, 30% are unemployed and the remainder are divided among pensioners, school pupils and adults with other specific status).

In terms of the **type of guidance**, the combined figures for all five centres show that most **discussions took place before the start of education** – total share is **75%**. There were fewer **discussions during education** – total share of **19%** - and even fewer **discussions on conclusion of education** – a total share of **6%** in the observed period. When the guidance centres began operating, we expected such figures, but in future, in addition to guidance prior to enrolment in education, we will pay particular attention to the development of new forms of and approaches to guidance during and at the end of education, particularly for those target groups of adults most in need of this type of assistance (less educated, adults with learning difficulties, those with poor functional literacy, etc.). Through guidance at the end of education, we will develop and foster planning by adults of their own lifelong learning strategies based on their needs, with the progress and method of learning adapted to their needs throughout their lives.

Data on the **content of guidance** indicates that most guidance concerned the acquisition of education at a higher level – 48% – followed by informal forms for work and professions – 16% - and requalification – change of profession at the same level – 9%.

Tanja Vilič Klenovšek, MA, SIAE



Study Circles

## The Study Circles Caravan

– a caravan of culture, co-operation, creation and understanding

Many ethnologists and anthropologists believe that humanity was young and the “spirit of the world” in full bloom while people were nomads. After they began hiding in fortifications – once carved out of stone, today concrete – the spirit became increasingly clumsy until it became almost fossilised. It can only be revived by a reawakened openness to difference, creativity, co-operation, learning, and starting anew – in other words, spiritual nomadism!

In Slovenia the study circles movement was born in the 90s, a time when civil society required a new impetus after the political and economic transformation. Slovenians had to shed their skin of “dependency on society” and become independent subjects, while at the same time avoiding the danger that in the new circumstances, people would act defensively, becoming introverted and following only their narrow personal interests. Survival and new quality of life required an open, democratic approach to knowledge and other cultural goods required for comprehensive development of each individual. Thus were study circles born. Socialising and learning in study circles meant an open, non-institutionalised approach to knowledge, co-ordination of tasks, exchange of information and responsibility towards the environment in which the circle operated. And so it remains today, when study circles have a decade-long tradition in Slovenia. This is also a period after which the initial idea, which bore such rich fruit, could ossify if there is no fresh wind for the sails to catch.

The idea was born of Study Circle Caravans, caravans of culture, learning and co-existence. It should encourage participation in various forms of lifelong learning, recognition and preservation of the natural and cultural heritage and the related tourist potential, responsibility towards the environment, personal development and efforts to improve the quality of life in the local environment, as well as fostering a reading culture among the general public. The

caravan should be open-ended, probably running throughout the year, with each new event building on previous ones. Individual “way stations” along the caravan’s route should as a rule be in places where study circles are most active as a form of creative curiosity.

We followed the study circle caravan on its route around Slovenia in the month of culture, on 22 February at the Prešeren<sup>1</sup> house in Kranj, where there was a meeting of “Let’s read with Manca Košir” circles and study circles from Gorenjska, and their leaders and mentors. The Gorenjska Museum in Kranj hosted the event. After a guided tour of the Prešeren House museum, the guest circles “Words of Slovenian Istria” and the Sirtaki SC from Radovljica. The caravan then moved on the Blue Hall of Kishlstein castle, where members of study and reading circles from Cerklje, Kranj, Radovljica, Šenčur, Tržič and Železniki presented the fruits of their work.

On 24 May, the Caravan stopped at Remšnik, in the shelter of St George. Remšnik dominates the Koroška hills close to the Austrian border. Local communities are proud that by raising living standards – in which the very active study circles played their part – they have managed to stem the tide of emigration from this remote area. Old crafts have been learned, fruit growing has been revived, the village centre has been arranged (a Horticultural Society has grown out of the study circle). Remšnik has thus become a place organised for tourism, with an interesting ethnographic range of home-made crafts goods. All of this was well presented at the event, some of it live in the form of workshops, performances and guided tours of the area, and some in exhibitions. The meeting at Remšnik was also enhanced by the guest study and reading circles from Dravograd, Maribor, Radlje, Ruše. Slovenska Bistrica, Velenje, Slovenian Istria, Muta and Ptuj.

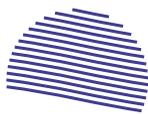
The caravan will of course also visit other places: it will head from the north of Slovenia towards the south, where it will stop in the autumn in Komen and Ilirska Bistrica, and probably in December it will join up with “circlers” from Prekmurje at an event in Gornja Radgona.

Entrance to all events was free for all visitors. Events were financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of RS and the Slovenian Association of Publishers and Booksellers.

Slavica Borka Kucler, SIAE

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<sup>1</sup> Dr France Prešeren is the greatest Slovenian poet.



## 6th Adult Education Colloquium

### Motivation in Adult Education

The Adult Education Colloquium is traditionally organised by the SIAE. The colloquium forms part of the Slovenian Lifelong Learning Week (LLW), which was created in 1996 to contribute to the development and dissemination of the theory and practice of lifelong learning. One of the primary aims of this event is to raise public awareness about the importance, necessity and omnipresence of learning, required by all people at all stages of their lives to develop and understand numerous aspects of their personalities – physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. This year's Adult Education Colloquium deals with

#### Motivation in Adult Education.

There is persistent interest in adult education in an exploration of the reasons and factors influencing adults to participate in education. It has long been recognised that learning continues throughout life and is not restricted only to school environment. Learning is therefore lifelong and is related to all kinds of learning experiences. Motivation is, according to Cropley (1980), the principle individual prerequisite for lifelong and life-wide learning. Motivation is usually a combination of many factors, such as attitudes to learning, particular goals, beliefs about learning and schooling, social norms, etc. Although participation in education usually depends upon the willingness of the individual to engage in learning activity and upon the personal characteristics necessary for the learning process, it is also a result of the economic opportunities of the individual. We can conclude that motivation is a complex interdisciplinary problem area e.g. didactics, psychology, sociology, etc.

Goals of the 6<sup>th</sup> Adult Education Colloquium are:

- to review and update our knowledge about motivation in adult education,
- to compare psychological and socio-economic aspects of motivation in adult education,
- ways to promote motivation for education and learning (teaching staff, educational institutions),
- characteristics of motivation of different target groups in AE,
- current issues in research of motivation.

Adult Education Colloquium will be held at SIAE on 15 October 2002.

Marko Radovan, SIAE

#### References:

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## SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

DOBA

### The Knowledge Exchange Centre at DOBA celebrates its 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary

The first Knowledge Exchange Centre was established in 1992 as a pilot project. This was followed in 1996 by the first regional information centre, which operates on the same concept.

Everybody knows that the Knowledge Exchange Centre operates on the concept of gathering, processing and dissemination of information on non-formal learning sources free of charge. Exchanging knowledge, information, skills and experience from the formal educational system is still very successful. The operating concept of Knowledge Exchange Centre is well known among adult educators and the professional public, but the situation is different for the general public hearing about this kind of information centre and visiting or calling us for the first time. They are all pleasantly surprised, and support the idea. Although the Knowledge Exchange Centre was established ten years ago and there are seven regional and local centres all around Slovenia, many people remain completely unaware of its existence. The main goal of the Centre is to provide information about people who can teach other people or who would like to know more about certain subjects, e.g. breeding pythons in urban environments, traditional Slovenian embroidery, playing tom-toms and much more. For these reasons, a constant media presence is required to help spread awareness of the possibilities provided by the Knowledge Exchange Centre.

The 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Knowledge Exchange Centre was one more reason to present more about what is happening to people connected through the Knowledge Exchange Centre in the Podravje region. We prepared some suggestions for possible co-operation with local and national media in promoting events, and outlined possibilities for permanent co-operation. Nearly all local media were prepared to publicise the events and to explain the concept of the Knowledge Exchange Centre. Nevertheless, it was not easy to persuade them to publish the requests and offers available on the exchange, as we are unable to pay them. We had to rely solely on media editors and their perception of the importance of sharing knowledge in non-formal situations.

People sharing their knowledge learn and teach each other in a natural way in their own homes, and they arrange learning hours to suit themselves.

## **Where do people mostly learn about the Knowledge Exchange Centre?**

Our data indicates that most people hear about the possibilities of such learning through the local media and also at Doba – Doba provides various educational programmes, and at the start of each participants are told about the possibility of sharing knowledge in our Knowledge Exchange Centre.

## **What kind of knowledge is exchanged through the Knowledge Exchange Centre?**

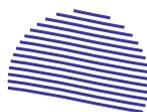
We have more than 2,200 members seeking or offering more than 3,000 different kinds of knowledge, information, skills and experience. The ratio between requests and offers is 2:1. Of the members, 55% are women, 29% are employed, 18% are retired, 14% are students, 14% are school pupils and 7% are freelancers and self-employed. The age structure is quite evenly distributed – 15% under 20, 23% between 21 and 30 years old, 19% between 31 and 40, 17% between 41 and 50, 14% between 51 and 60 years old and 12% over 60. The most popular fields for exchanging knowledge are: various languages, all kind of music knowledge (national to trans-national), painting, various types of information on the preparation of healthy food and healthy living, handicrafts and traditional Slovenian designs, etc. However, there are also many unusual requests and offers, such as how to produce handles for various agricultural implements, and we have certain problems in classifying such requests and offers into the various categories.

## **Conclusion**

The Knowledge Exchange Centre is an important source of lifelong learning in Slovenia, representing a rich part of non-formal learning. It is also an indicator of what people want to learn. These reasons provide the rationale for the funding of the Knowledge Exchange Centre. The Knowledge Exchange Centre at Doba represents an important addition to other educational programmes. Everyone involved in the Knowledge Exchange Centre – participants and staff – learn continuously. There are many opportunities for open-minded thinking, the development of new patterns of thinking, fostering curiosity, communication, different forms of social contact, and the promotion of knowledge. The direct impact of the Knowledge Exchange Centre can be seen in the connections among people who teach and learn from each other. The indirect and broad impact of the Knowledge Exchange Centre should be researched in the future.

People exchange knowledge, information, skills, experience and much more: they become friends through learning. Don't we all want to learn in a friendly atmosphere?

Ena Perme, Doba Maribor



Finally in Slovenia!

## Establishment of Society for Experiential Learning

So it's also happened in Slovenia. The birth spasms are past, the name and custodians have also been chosen. At the first meeting of the society, on 20 February this year, attending members unanimously adopted the name, the full form of which is the Adult Education Group for Experiential Learning. "Why not?" was the response of one of the participants in the meeting to the question posed by Neda Đorđević as to whether the name was suitable. People should know that we only have experts here. Even though a different proposal was adopted, it should nevertheless be known! And that's the way it will stay.

After we had officially christened the society (or in dry legalese, after establishment of the society was officially confirmed), the president, deputy and secretary were elected. Evidently, the fates smiled on the newborn infant. Dr Nena Mijoč was voted in as president of the society, Neda Đorđević as her deputy, and student Sonja Rotar as secretary. The society's office is at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. However, the ball started rolling long before. The idea was to provide young graduates and other adult education staff the opportunity to establish experience-based programmes. Society participants are a diverse group – including university professors, practising adult educators, students in their final years – in short, there are no conditions for participation. The society provides people with an opportunity to exercise their professional interests, with the emphasis on non-formal education. Since there are no membership fees or sponsorship, there is no funding, but where there's a will there's a way, and the possibility of society members publishing their own journal has not been excluded.

We should not forget that societies like this and others do not come about of their own accord, but because of us. Let's not hesitate, let's take what's on offer.

Sabina Jagodnik, Faculty of Arts, Department of Education



## INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Visitors from abroad

### Seminars for study circle mentors in the last school year

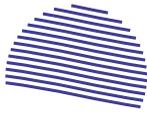
We are pleased to report two successful seminars – one held in Fužine Castle on 30 November 2001 by **Dr Michal Bron** of Sweden entitled *Actual situation of Swedish Study Circles on the basis of field investigations with particular emphasis on the mentors' role and results of SC activity on the local level*, and the other held at the SIAE on May 13 2002 by **Rachel van Riel**, from the UK, entitled *Reading Groups*. More than forty mentors from all over the country attended, while Ministry and University representatives also attended the first seminar. After a detailed and thorough presentation, lively discussion developed in both cases.

Dr Michal Bron kindly and thoroughly supported our efforts to deepen our knowledge of the role of non-formal adult education, especially in a rural environment. We were pleased to see that the differences between the implementation model and reality are not so large as could be expected given the different historical developments and cultural traditions in Sweden and Slovenia. In addition to the admirable tradition and mass participation in Sweden, we concentrated on an area where we definitely differ – action goals. However, Slovenians choose comparable topics to Swedes.

Ms Rachel van Riel, *spiritus agens* from the Opening the Book institution, particularly addressed those involved in reader development. By introducing and practising some useful ideas, she encouraged new ways of “opening the book” and initiated cross-border co-operation in form of an Internet discussion among SC participants.

The rising number of participants and new areas of SC development (e.g. reading circles) forces us to accelerate the creation of the first Slovenian SC Association, which has yet to happen.

Nevenka Bogataj, SIAE



## Communication between Slovenia and Serbia

### KISS in Belgrade

Competency based education, international co-operation, transfer of examples of good practice, establishment of networks, informal learning, learning by doing, exports of know-how and similar expressions are a “law” of the modern world. This of course applies to all areas of human activity, but particularly to learning, where “cast iron” patterns are increasingly joined by new and innovative approaches to knowledge transfer. We have used one of these – moderation – at VITRA in Belgrade, where in a weekend seminar we trained 12 representatives of non-profit and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for independent project work. Two experienced mentors combined extensive practical instruction, tools and working methods into the seminar. The TASK project (Tools and Skills for NGOs) was financed by the US Embassy in Ljubljana, and was realised in co-operation with the partner organisation CER (Centre for Environmental Development) of Belgrade.

Let’s take one step at a time. The reasons for the preparation of the TASK programme touch upon the paradox that NGOs have exceptional quantities of energy and ideas but have problems in transferring them to practice. The decline of the state – as predicted by philosophers – is happening here and now with the transfer of certain work and tasks to civil society; this applies to all countries, but particularly to those in transition. Indeed, it is in the transition countries that NGOs are engaged in a mission independent of the current political orientation of the government. By easing the burden on the state, they are providing stability in individual areas and assisting target groups. Civil society is organised in NGOs, but in order to fulfil their mission, they need four basic resources: materials, time, people and money. All too often, NGOs seek only money while neglecting the other resources, although it is people who produce strategic plans and implement programmes. Members also like to join such NGOs (so-called non-profit shareholders); and financiers only support well-prepared programmes (projects) and professionally operating NGOs.

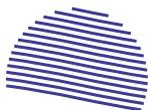
Following the major political changes in the 90s, the situation in Central and Eastern Europe is becoming increasingly similar to that in countries with long traditions of civil society, elements of which are: independence (professional, content and financial) from authorities, voluntary work, developed sponsorship and donations, democratic work and procedures, public participation in decision-making processes, work for local or wider communities, etc.

The level of development of civil society in Serbia can be compared with the situation in Slovenia around 1993 (flourishing of new organisations, lack of connections, lack of knowledge and initia-

tive, etc.). Based on the experience of the development of Slovenian civil society, Serbia can reduce the development phases which are otherwise essential in any process. The TASK weekend seminar was dedicated to useful knowledge for the successful operation of civil society. Interactive learning of skills of design, writing, presentation project implementation and evaluation was received enthusiastically by representatives from Serbia (an increasingly important part of civil society). A short, intensive, useful and high-quality seminar was the briefest assessment provided by the 12 participants from environmental, youth, women's, research and educational NGOs.

What does KISS, as used in the title, mean? It is the name of a virtual non-governmental organisation (*Komunikacija između Slovenije i Srbije* – Communication between Slovenia and Serbia), which was created for the duration of the seminar, although the end of the seminar did not mean the end of co-operation activities we developed at the seminar and in other discussions. The doors of co-operation are open even though the initial activities and the TASK seminar are over. Everyone involved is convinced that this is just the start of a long tale. We are convinced that the US embassy in Ljubljana made a good investment by providing financial support.

Bojan Žnidaršič, VITRA Cerknica



Presenting a new project

## European Certificate of Basic Skills

At the SIAE, we are starting a new project – European Certificate of Basic Skills – EUCEBS. This is an international pilot project, the goal of which is to introduce a European certificate of basic skills in the European Union. This certified document will demonstrate that an individual has mastered basic skills in the areas of communication, arithmetic, learning to learn, relations with other people and active citizenship – skills they need to work successfully in their personal, working and social lives. A special feature of EUCEBS is that it is based on assessment and determination of basic knowledge and skills on the part of adults in the areas mentioned, and will be intended for the general population. The project will be provided via the world wide web.

The following are participating in the implementation of the project, which is part of the Leonardo da Vinci II programme (2000-2006), specifically part of the action programme for vocational training in the community: project co-ordinator from the University of Edinburgh

in the United Kingdom, Deutsches Rotess Kreuz in Bremen, Germany, CEJAC Barcelona, Centre Populaire d' Enseignement, Marseilles, Consorzio Universitario della Provincia di Ragusa, Kerry Education Services, Tralee, Ireland, Universitatea din Craiova, Romania and the SIAE.

The certificate in the aforementioned basic skills will be a first in Europe and Slovenia, although we can compare it conceptually to the European Computer Driving Licence – ECDL – which certifies that the recipient has knowledge of the basic concepts of information technology and is able to use personal computers and basic computer tools.

The basic objectives of the project are:

- To raise the level of literacy and other basic skills in individual segments of the European population;
- To contribute to greater social inclusion;
- To develop and advance the benefits of electronic learning;
- To foster greater mobility in the European labour market;
- To engage ethnic and other minority groups in education;
- To contribute to the transparency of certificates (qualifications), both on the national level within individual countries, and on the European level, which is a key objective of EUCEBS.

The project also has some specific objectives, such as:

- To develop European knowledge standards in basic knowledge and skills, and to test them on groups of participants in an online educational environment;
- To enable education for trainers (tutors) who will help participants to use EUCEBS web pages;
- To develop assessment procedures for participants and their trainers;
- To contribute to systematic development of procedures for recognitions of the standard for basic skills on the part of appropriate bodies – first at the level of the individual country, later on the European level.

The certificate will be intended for various target groups: adults with no formal education, young school drop-outs, adults with special needs, employees with fewer years of education, unemployed, immigrants from non-European countries.

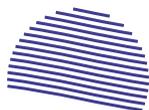
EUCEBS is distinguished by innovative approaches. It is different from other national and international educational programmes in that it is based on standards of testing (verification and assessment of knowledge) and not on standards of teaching; even the procedure for verification and assessment of basic knowledge and skills will take place online, which is a special feature of this project. The innovativeness of the project is also reflected in the predominantly electronic form of work as a whole.

In terms of the nature of work, EUCEBS is a dissemination project. Syllabuses and assessment criteria for the basic skills which participants require to work successfully in the personal, working and social spheres, are the result of the previous CALABAT<sup>1</sup> (Computer Aided Learning in Adult Basic Training) project; through EUCEBS, we will introduce them to a new, online environment. CALABAT represents a framework or foundation for EUCEBS. It introduces as the basic principle determination of basic skills (competence) of participants in five areas: understanding and the use of modern information technology; arithmetic; interpersonal relations; learning skills; and citizenship.

Although this is a dissemination project, thematic analysis of professional themes will run throughout the project. Within each theme for which they are chosen, each partner will establish communications with government policy – on both the national and European levels. The following themes have been chosen:

- Raising the literacy level in the European population (Ireland, United Kingdom, Slovenia);
- Increasing social inclusion (Germany);
- Development and benefits of electronic learning (United Kingdom, France);
- Fostering increased mobility in the European labour market (Romania);
- Engaging ethnic and other minority groups in education (Spain, France);
- Achieving transparency of certificates/qualifications (United Kingdom, Italy, Slovenia, Romania).

Melanija Končina Boltin, SIAE



## Gruntvig 1 project

### About the Right to Learn project

All partner institutions involved in the **Right to Learn project** (9 partners from 6 European countries<sup>2</sup>) operate in the adult education sector. In all institutions, there is a large and growing percentage of adults belonging to the target population.

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<sup>1</sup> CALABAT operated within the Leonardo da Vinci I programme. Participants were United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain and Finland. The first three are also partners in the EUCEBS project.

<sup>2</sup> The project partners are: Jesenice Folk Highschool and Velenje Folk Highschool from Slovenia, BFI Steiermark Graz from Austria, Scarabeus Livorno and L.Ū.E.T.E.C. Napoli from Italy, Edinburgh's Telford College from UK, Fundatia H Bucharest and Centru Logistic Tactic Bucharest from Romania and Pučko otvoreno učilište Koprivnica from Croatia.

The target population for the project comprises adults with a maximum of 10 years of schooling who are weak in writing, reading, calculus, and social communication, as well as in general knowledge. The main project objective is to help this population overcome their situation by raising awareness and by educating. This objective will be achieved by using education in the field of basic human rights as the medium for the development of basic skills.

## **Present situation and needs analysis**

Present situation and needs analysis in the field of education for basic skills and human rights was conducted in the first year of the project using the methodology of guided interviews. Each partner institution interviewed ten teachers in adult education and ten adult education providers.

In the first part of interviews, we asked teachers and providers to describe the characteristics of the target group. In the second part, teachers and providers demonstrated the methodical approaches they use in working with members of the project target group. In the final part of the interviews, we asked about existing basic human rights education and methodical approaches to basic human rights teaching in their countries.

## **Present situation and needs analysis results**

### **Characteristics of target population**

Trainers and providers in all countries stress that typically a low socio-economic background of the target group members accompanies bad school experience.

People lacking basic skills are often long-term unemployed and under-qualified. There are more women than men, and they come from urban areas. It is not insignificant that many of these people are immigrants and that they have problems with alcohol and drug abuse.

### **Methodical approaches used for learning basic skills**

Trainers and providers do not have adequate methods and techniques to enhance the target group's basic skills. The teaching materials they use are generally inadequate, as they are not oriented to the real needs and capabilities of members of the target group.

Trainers and providers emphasise that good, adequate teaching materials for basic skills learning would improve their ability to work with the target group. Teaching materials should stress the importance of self-confidence, personal development, flexibility, adaptability and problem-solving skills.

### **Basic human rights education**

Results in this part of the survey from different countries varied considerably. In some countries, basic human rights education as a form of adult education does not exist at all, while other countries already practice adult basic human rights education. Trainers and providers from all countries are convinced that basic human rights education is more than needed. However no adequate teaching materials are available for such education, and trainers emphasise the importance of the availability of such materials for successful work.

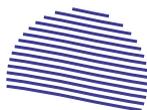
### **Conclusions**

Analysis of interviews conducted in all participating countries clearly demonstrates that trainers and providers need new methodical approaches to the development of the basic skills of the adult population.

The concept and main objective of the Right to learn project, to develop adults' basic skills using education in the area of basic human rights as the medium, was well received and will form the basis for work in the second project year, when teaching methods and materials will be developed.

For more information about the project, see: <http://right-to-learn.com>.

Maja Radinovič Hajdič, Jesenice Folk Highschool



### **Presenting a THENUCE+ project European Thematic Network on University Continuing Education**

Developments in society over the past decade have also influenced higher education, forcing universities to face new social and economic challenges. The demand for adult education and training is constantly growing, and is reflected in increasing demand for university continuing education. New information and telecommunication technologies offer new opportunities for education, especially in terms of flexibility. Higher education is becoming a business, and universities are increasingly acting as global providers in an education market.

Some of the biggest challenges facing universities today include: how should they transform themselves, how should they participate in efforts to realise the concept of lifelong learning, how should they react to the growing expectations from society regarding improving the educational level of the population, combating social exclusion and fighting for greater social cohesion.

The THENUCE+<sup>1</sup> project will attempt to answer some of these questions, supporting universities by providing ideas and examples of good practice on how to serve the needs of society, and how to adapt to new circumstances and pressures without jeopardising academic excellence.

THENUCE+ is an international project supported by the European Commission under the Socrates-Erasmus Programme. THENUCE+ is a three-year project officially launched in 2000. The current THENUCE+ project originates from the THENUCE project, which ran from 1996 to 2000 and which was co-ordinated by the international organisation EUCEN<sup>2</sup> (European University Continuing Education Network).

THENUCE+ is co-ordinated by the University of Liège, Belgium. There are more than 140 partners (mostly universities, but also some national university continuing education networks and European university networks) from 28 European countries involved in the project.

The main aims of the project are to improve the quality of university continuing education and to promote Europe-wide campaigns in order to foster its further development. It is envisaged that the results of the project should contribute to better understanding of the significance of university continuing education and its positioning as a normal activity of a modern university.

Project work is implemented under nine interconnected thematic groups, each with its own objectives and planned activities. The objectives of thematic groups are as follows:

- to produce and distribute a management handbook on university continuing education,
- to develop and maintain a European Observatory in order to monitor and predict the evolution of university continuing education,
- to prepare comparative analysis of European university continuing education,
- to promote open and distance learning on the basis of the link with the ODELUCE project<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed information on THENUCE+ is available at <http://www.thenuce.net>.

<sup>2</sup> More information on EUCEN is available at <http://www.eucen.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Additional information can be found at <http://www.odeluce.stir.ac.uk/>.

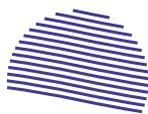
- to establish and maintain Dissemination Relay Centres in Central European and Baltic States,
- to research and disseminate best practice in the field of recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal learning in university continuing education,
- to promote the establishment of national networks,
- to research and disseminate best practice on quality of university continuing education and to evaluate the THENUCE+ project itself,
- to prepare comparative analysis of teaching and learning methodologies and adult learner support systems in close connection with the ALPINE project<sup>4</sup>.

Within the project, systematic research on university continuing education is conducted from different viewpoints. On the basis of research outcomes, recommendations and guidelines will be prepared for universities, ministries, governments, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Partners in the project learn from each other, exchange their experiences and create an open forum for discussion in the area of university continuing education.

Project activities in Slovenia are implemented by the SIAE, which has been working on the project on the basis of a co-operation agreement with the University of Ljubljana. The University of Maribor was invited to join the project this year by the THENUCE+ management.

The THENUCE+ project will be concluded in September 2003. The partners have already agreed that the network should continue to operate in the area of university continuing education after the expiry of the current project.

Margerita Zagmajster, SIAE



## International seminar

### Education of the Elderly

The initiative for the international seminar **Education of the Elderly** was provided by Mr Uwe Gartenschlaeger of the Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association. The idea was to invite to Slovenia people from South-Eastern and Eastern European countries involved in the education of the elderly who do not have sufficient opportunity for discussion and exchange of experience. An additional aim of the seminar

<sup>4</sup> More information on ALPINE project are available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/alpine/>.

was to stimulate various kinds of collaboration, such as bilateral co-operation between East and West, as well as joint projects within EU programmes, and others. However, the lack of international and cross-border co-operation is sufficient. Whereas other parts of the education system are already closely linked in Europe, there are few initiatives to connect stakeholders in elderly citizen education.

The seminar was organised by:

- the SIAE, Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- the Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association, Bonn, Germany, and
- the Municipality of Žalec, Slovenia.

Žalec was chosen in order to familiarise participants with an environment in which the local authorities are strong advocates of adult education, providing financial support for its development.

Four distinguished professionals with international references were kind enough to provide main articles, thereby demonstrating once again their professional as well as whole-hearted commitment to the education of the elderly. Consequently, we are very much obliged to Dr Dušana Findeisen, Mr Jumbo Klercq, Dr Toshio Ohsako, and Dr Michael Knauf for their gracious contributions and permission to publish their articles.

The leading articles covered the following thematic areas:

- Education of elderly workers,
- Pre-retirement Education,
- Third Age Education,
- Intergeneration Education.

Seminar participants came from Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Yugoslavia and Slovenia, and were asked to give short presentations on:

- The position of the elderly in their country,
- Activities and measures in the area of education of the elderly,
- The contribution made by their institution to the development of education of the elderly in their country,
- Developments to date, and particularly noteworthy points.

One important outcome of the Žalec seminar was the initiative to establish a **European Forum Education of the Elderly**. In brief, this initiative aims to exploit the potential of international and intercultural exchange throughout the whole of Europe.

The **Forum** wants to organise:

- A **regular conference** of specialists and activists (e.g. bi-annual) as a meeting point for networking and the exchange of experience,
- A **permanent website** for the exchange of information, to be used also for interactive discussions and as a resource centre offering key documents in the field, good practice, ideas, etc.,
- Opportunities for **publication** of interesting research and project experience, including opportunities to translate and publish books on the education of the elderly.

It is essential that the Forum is pan-European and not restricted to the European Union member countries; rather, it must be open to all partners, especially from Central and Eastern Europe.

It was to my greatest delight that I was able to play an active role in the planning and organisation of the seminar, as well as editing the publication **Education of the Elderly**. This publication presents in full the invited papers, the reports of participating countries and the conclusions.

Metka Rečnik



## SLOVENIA FROM NOVIČKE TO NOVIČKE

### Higher education

#### **The Aim: 35 students per 1,000 citizens**

Slovenia's national higher education programme is one of the most important documents necessary for the country's development in this area over the next five years. In line with European orientations, the higher education programme aims to enable as many people as possible to obtain graduate and postgraduate degrees. A key point of the programme is to increase the share of employed people with a graduate or postgraduate degree to 25 per cent by 2005. The quality of study programmes will also be measured by their international comparability and competitiveness in the European higher education arena.

The programme also encourages the international co-operation of higher education institutions, particularly in the EU's specialised projects (e.g. SOCRATES-ERASMUS) and regional programmes (e.g. CEEPUS) as well as in creating a European higher education area in line with the joint declaration of European Ministers of Education (Bologna, June 1999) entitled 'The European Higher Education Area'.

Under the programme, an increasing number of students will be able to enrol in higher education programmes. Therefore, in this decade there should be approximately 35 students per 1,000 citizens, while 50 percent of every generation should be enrolled in various forms of tertiary education.

The programme envisages an increase in the number of enrolment places in the entire tertiary education offer, while limits on the number of students in most programmes will gradually be eliminated. Part-time university courses are gradually to become co-financed (there will still be no fees for full-time courses), while the present number of postgraduate students is set to double.

The formation of a decentralised network of higher education centres is envisaged in the programme, along with improved co-operation between universities, faculties and companies. The number of beds in student dormitories is to rise, and the standard of student living is to go up substantially.

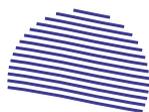
Standards in providing higher education and a rough definition of the required funds are also needed for the final organisation of financing higher education.

## Part of the European Higher Education Area

The recently adopted programme brings several principles into reality: higher education needs to be regarded as a public good; it is and will remain in the public realm; programmes for acquiring education are to be directed differently and tailored to suit the needs of individuals, education per se and the labour market.

Instruments for realising these goals include: establishing a system of credits such as the ECTS system; implementation of the Diploma Supplement; assuring academic quality; preparing quality study programmes that guarantee employability, are internationally comparable and will be competitive in the European higher education area; and the introduction of lifelong learning. All of this is in line firstly with the objectives of the Bologna Declaration entitled **The European Higher Education Area** and secondly with the view that the most important thing in the mutual recognition of qualifications should not be the duration of studies or the institution providing them, but the required standards of study and competencies determined in advance.

On March the Slovenian Parliament also passed the Act on the Recognition of the Professional Qualifications of EU citizens, as Slovenia pledged in its negotiations with the EU that it will set up an appropriate EU-compatible framework in the field. The Act is in effect a summary of EU directives on the issue, and applies to EU citizens seeking work in Slovenia and citizens of third countries who have obtained degrees in the EU. Provisions of the Act will also be applied to other citizens of third countries, provided they have signed appropriate bilateral agreements with Slovenia.

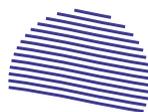


ZRC SAZU

## European Linguistic Atlas

On 17 and 18 May, the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) in Ljubljana hosted the editorial board of the European Linguistic Atlas, comprising some thirty home and foreign linguists-dialectologists from 23 European

countries, who are preparing and editing extensive material about the dialects of all European languages. The project of the European Linguistic Atlas was launched in 1970 under the auspices of UNESCO. In Slovenia, the seventh successive volume is currently being prepared while, at the same time, scientists are also preparing a Slovenian Linguistic Atlas.



MIRK 2002

## The 7th International Educational Conference on Computers in Slovenia

On May The center for project and research activities on Internet - MIRK, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Slovenian National Institute, Academic and research network of Slovenia – ARNES together with Center for Vocational Education and Training – EU Programs Agency and with Primary School Cirila Kosmaca are announcing the seventh International Educational Conference on Computers MIRK 2002 organised in Slovenia on Primary school Ciril Kosmac in Piran. The main theme of the conference was **The use of the information and telecommunication technologies (ICT) in the classroom.**



Internet use in Slovenia

### 1.3 Million active internet users by 2006

Dr Vasja Vehovar is the head of the Internet-use survey entitled Raba interneta v Sloveniji (RIS; <http://www.ris.org>), which has been one of the most resounding academic research projects undertaken at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. The project aims to study the changes new technologies are bringing to modern society as well as changes originating in the methodology of social science research (e.g. public opinion polls via the Internet). The project has been carried out since 1996 and is revised every year. Parts of the project are also based on orders from the public sector, including the Internet and ICT surveys in companies and households, which provide official data for Slovenia (EU benchmarking indicators) and survey on the digital gap in Slovenia. Other commissions for research come from the business sector, where their most important clients are big IT companies, as well as some companies from abroad. A major part of work is dedicated to specific and applied scientific research within the projects of the Ministry of Science, as well as within

the EU's 5th Framework Programme, says Dr Vehovar, who also told us in the following interview what Slovenians are like as Internet users and what they will be like in the future.

**The results of your surveys show that Internet use in Slovenia has grown rapidly in the last few years. According to current figures, how do Slovenians rate as Internet users compared to other European nations?**

There is no great difference as far as the structure of Internet users is concerned, but there are two other specific characteristics. The first one is that, due to favourable public access (public network ARNES), computer-oriented users started using the Internet very early and in great numbers. Around 1997, Slovenia was one of the leading European countries regarding penetration of the Internet. The influence of the public network ARNES was still visible last year, when its share in households was the same as that of the biggest commercial bidder Siol, which is quite specific compared to other countries. The second specific characteristic is that openness to the information technology in Slovenia is very high. Compared to other EU countries, Slovenia stands out in mobile telephony (some 1.5 million connections per 2 million inhabitants) and can only be compared with Scandinavian countries and Italy. There is a similarly high share of households owning a PC (more than half of all households), which results in relatively common access to the Internet at home. However, after the first wave in spreading of the Internet, a slowdown occurred between 1999 and 2001. The main reasons for this were the lack of an active government policy in this field and too-slow market deregulation. During this time, Slovenia fell to the EU average. In 2002, we have again registered increased growth.

“Use of the Internet in companies is somewhere within the EU average, whereas in past years it was even above the average. Nowadays, practically all companies, except for some smaller ones, use the Internet and have their own home pages. Electronic business operations are also gaining ground fast.”

**What do Slovenians mostly use the Internet for?**

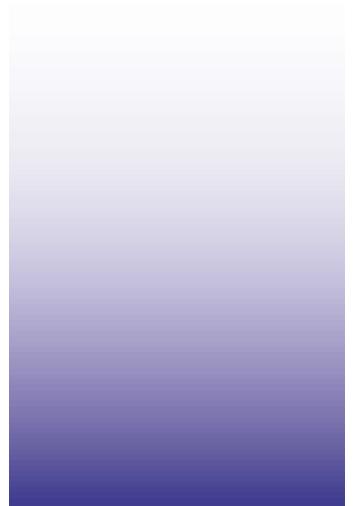
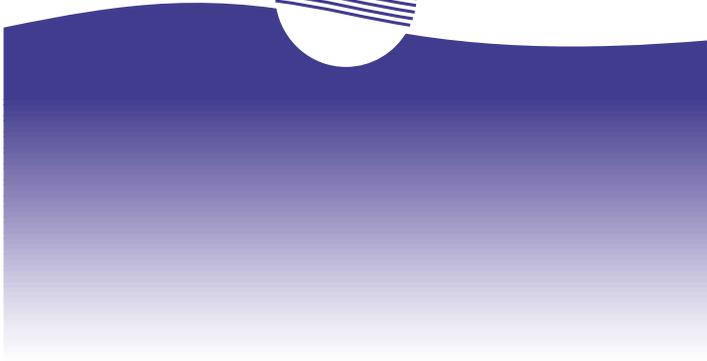
The average user still spends most time on foreign, i.e. non-Slovenian, web pages, as there is a huge lack of quality sites due to a small critical mass. Particularly critical are people's operations with the state, where Slovenia greatly lags behind developed countries, although this could become one of its advantages, as informatisation of the public sector as well as register-oriented statistics are relatively high. For example, we still don't have the possibility of electronic income tax or posting of public orders, and other applications for citizens' operations with the state are relatively limited. Things started changing more quickly when the Ministry of the Information Society was established. On the other hand, there is an extremely high use of e-banking.

### **What are your predictions for future Internet use in Slovenia?**

Recently we have recorded an increase in use of the Internet in Slovenia compared to the EU. In my estimation, after several years of neglect the Government will start adopting many active measures to stimulate the effective use of ICT technologies (some have already been adopted, like publicly accessible posts), which have been known and tested in developed countries, like the promotion of public and official contents and applications, ICT equipment in the education system, suitable income tax relief, etc. However, in the middle of 2002, there are some 600,000 Internet users in Slovenia, while our projections show the number will increase to some 800,000 active (monthly) users in mid-2003 and 1.3 million in mid-2006.

### **Considering Internet use as an indicator of the level of development of information society, how do you compare the development of information society in Slovenia with that in other EU countries?**

As I said before, Slovenia is somewhat below the European average, although it still stands out in some respects. More active measures in this area and particularly the release of competition can bring Slovenia back to the level where it would be slightly above average regarding the use of information technologies. However, situations are changing very fast. These days, we are carrying out a survey about households by using the Eurostat questionnaire about the use of ICT, whereby we will obtain the same criteria for Slovenia and the EU for the first time. Towards the end of June, we will thus have the most recent estimations. A similar survey among companies will be launched in autumn.



God's blessing on all nations,  
 Who long and work for a bright day,  
 When o'er earth's habitations  
 No war, no strife shall hold its sway;  
 Who long to see  
 That all men free  
 No more shall foes, but neighbours be.

*F. Prešeren: The Toast*  
 Slovenian national anthem



**AREA** (sq km): 20.256 • **POPULATION**: 1.990.600 • **POPULATION GROWTH (%)**: -0,3  
 • **DENSITY** (inhabs. / sq km): 98,3 • **POPULATION OF LJUBLJANA** (capital): 330.000



Andragoški center Republike Slovenije  
 Slovenian Institute for Adult Education