



Consular Newsletter

November 2005

United States Embassy
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Consul's Note

It has been only a few months since I arrived, but already I have seen that Slovenia is a country blessed with a beautiful environment, friendly people, and delicious wine. Slovenes assure me that the chilly and rainy late summer weather was unusual, and more recently the autumn colors have been complemented by warmth and sunshine.

Here at the Embassy, we played host recently to several well-known visitors, including Representative James Oberstar (R-MN), Senator Tom Harkin (R-IA) and Democratic Party Chairman Howard Dean, who each came separately to Ljubljana for meetings with the Government of Slovenia.

In December, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will meet in Ljubljana, and we hope that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will attend.

Unfortunately, we also were forced to increase our security, partly in response to the bombings in London in July. All visitors now proceed through a small outer building for x-ray and metal detector screening before entering the chancery building. If you come here to renew your passport or for any other reason, you'll see these and other new security measures in place.

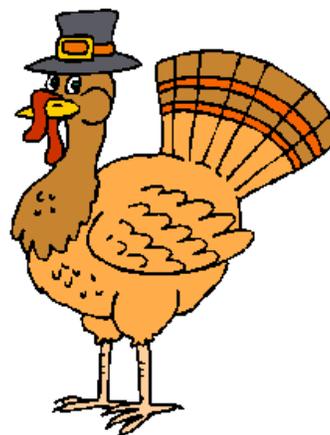
The U.S. and Slovenia further strengthened their bilateral relationship last month by signing formal treaties on extradition and mutual legal assistance, giving both countries' police officers and prosecutors new tools to cooperate in the fight against international crime and terrorism.

Just so you don't think it's all work and no play here, you should know that Embassy staffers also participated in softball tournament and bowling tournaments, rode a steam train near Bohinj, picked grapes at a vineyard near Maribor, and hosted dozens of costumed kids from a nearby kindergarten who came trick-or-treating through our halls for Halloween!

Thank you for taking a moment to look through this newsletter. I hope you will find it informative and useful.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Paul Schultz
Consul



Need to Change Your Passport?

U.S. Embassies no longer amend valid passports. Instead, if you wish to change your name as it appears in the passport, extend the validity of a limited passport, or correct a printing error, you will have to apply for a replacement passport.

If you wish to change the passport data *within one year after issuance of the passport*, you will need to submit a U.S. Passport Re-Application Form (DS 5504), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required (such as proof of the name change), and new passport pictures. There is no charge for this service, and you will usually receive your replacement passport within one week.

If you wish to change the passport data *more than one year after issuance of the passport*, you will need to submit an Application for Passport By Mail (DS-82), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required (such as proof of the name change), and new pictures. The cost is \$67. Of course, if the requested data change is due to a printing error, there will be no charge. You will usually receive your replacement passport within one week.

You can either pick up the required forms here at the Embassy, or you can download them from our website at <http://ljubljana.usembassy.gov/passports.html>.

When you receive your passport, don't forget to sign it! Then fill in the personal notification page in the front.

Consular Section

American Citizens Services

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FAX (+386-1) 200-5535
Email: ACSLjubljana@state.gov

Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 09:00 – 11:30 and
14:00 – 16:00

American Citizen Emergencies

(after hours, weekends, holidays)
Phone (+386-1) 200-5556 or
200-5557

THE CONSULAR SECTION IS CLOSED ON U.S. AND SLOVENIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAYS
<http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>



The Marine Corps Wants You! (To Party!)

The Embassy's Marine Security Guard Detachment is updating its guest list for the social events it hosts throughout the year at the Marine House in Ljubljana center. The Marines periodically host happy hours, barbecues, volleyball games, etc. and would like to invite interested Americans and their families to join them. If you would like to be invited to these events, contact Detachment Commander Gunnery Sergeant Charles Wright at tel 01-200-5623 or email WrightCL@state.gov and provide your name(s) and contact number or email so that you can be added to the invitation list.

Avian Influenza

A number of countries are reporting cases of avian influenza, commonly referred to as “bird flu.” The vast majority of the known human cases have resulted from direct contact with infected poultry, and there is only limited evidence to suggest possible human-to-human transmission.

At this time, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have not issued any travel alerts or advisories for avian flu-infected areas. CDC advises travelers to clean their hands often with soap and water or waterless alcohol-based hand-rubs to help prevent disease transmission. In addition, as a precaution, all foods from poultry, including eggs, should be thoroughly cooked.

A specific vaccine for humans that is effective against avian influenza has not yet been developed. Based upon limited data, the CDC has suggested that the anti-viral medication Oseltamavir (brand name-Tamiflu) may be effective in preventing or treating avian influenza. Tamiflu may not be readily available overseas and the State Department encourages American citizens traveling or living abroad who are interested in obtaining this medication to consult their physicians.

The U.S. Embassy recommends that all Americans traveling to or living in Slovenia consult their physicians to receive a regular flu vaccine. Although this will not protect against avian flu, it can help to facilitate accurate diagnosis (and therefore appropriate treatment) of those who might become ill with a non-vaccine influenza strain such as avian flu. The U.S. Embassy has made this same recommendation to its own staff members.

In Slovenia, there have been no reported cases of avian flu amongst either birds or humans. The Ministry of Health has announced that it will obtain quantities of Tamiflu sufficient to vaccinate one quarter of the country’s population. The Ministry of Agriculture has announced a ban on imports of poultry and eggs from countries with confirmed cases of avian flu, including from Croatia, which confirmed its first case (in a wild swan, none yet in humans) on October 21, 2005. See the websites listed on Page 6 of this newsletter for the latest information on avian flu.

Drawing up a will? You may need more than one.

The interaction between multiple countries’ estate laws can get complicated, so if you own property in both the United States and in Slovenia, you should consider drawing up two separate wills. One document should be prepared according to the legal system of Slovenia, and the other according to the legal system of the United States. Each will and testament should mention the existence of the other. Having two wills should help ensure that your properties are disposed of in accordance with your wishes.

Embassy Spotlight

This is the first in a series of profiles to introduce the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana and demystify the work they do on behalf of the United States and American citizens.



In this issue, we turn the spotlight on the Public Affairs Section, which is responsible for explaining American foreign policy to overseas audiences and promoting U.S. national interests through a wide range of informational, educational, and cultural programming. The Public Affairs Section in Ljubljana has a staff of two Americans and five Slovenes.

The Press Office keeps the Ambassador ahead of the curve in a world of never-ending news cycles by tracking Slovenian media coverage of the U.S. The staff also arranges press conferences, briefings, and interviews, and responds to all media requests.

The Exchanges Office administers U.S. government educational exchange programs. Each year the Fulbright Program brings approximately eight Americans to Slovenia, and sends the same number of Slovenes to academic institutions in the U.S. The International Visitor program has sent nearly 150 Slovene leaders from government, politics, media, education, labor relations, the arts, and business to the U.S. in the past dozen years. The staff also expands exchanges by providing education materials and training, speaking to student audiences about opportunities for study in the U.S., and placing information about exchanges in the Slovene media.

The Information Resource Center (IRC) provides Slovene officials, professionals, and academics with authoritative information about the United States and its government's policies. The IRC also manages our website (www.slovenia.usembassy.gov) and the Embassy Speaker Program, which sends Americans to schools, clubs, and other organizations to speak about nearly any topic related to the United States.

Finally, the Grants Office gives approximately 60 small grants each year to Slovenian cultural and nongovernmental organizations, supporting projects linking our two countries through music, theatre, art, poetry, and film, and supporting the development of Slovenian philanthropic organizations, Roma institutions, and health organizations.

As members of the American community in Slovenia, you can help the Public Affairs Section spread the good word about the United States. Here are a few things you can do:

- Encourage Slovenes to study in America. Education exchange is one of the best ways to strengthen mutual understanding and keep Slovene-American relations strong.
- Volunteer your expertise to a broader audience by participating in the Embassy's Speaker Program. Tell us about your special talents or expertise and we'll see if we can match you with a Slovenian institution that is looking for help.
- Keep us in the loop. The 500+ Americans in Slovenia are doing a lot of great things. Don't hesitate to share your successes with the Public Affairs Section. If we can help in some way, we will.

For more information about the work of the Public Affairs Section, check out the website at www.slovenia.usembassy.gov/public_affairs.html, or contact Public Diplomacy Officer Phil Beekman at BeekmanPM@state.gov or telephone 01-200-5685.

Q and A

When Americans in Slovenia travel back to the United States, they often wonder what they can take back with them. The information below comes from the internet web site of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection at <http://www.cbp.gov>.

Question: What is the total value of goods I can bring with me into the United States without paying any duty or taxes?	Answer: For most U.S. citizens, the answer is US\$800 per person, as long as you are carrying the items with you and they are for your own personal use or intended as gifts. However, if you have already used your US\$800 duty-free personal exemption on a previous trip to the U.S. within the last 30 days, then on your subsequent trips your exemption drops to US\$200.
Question: How much alcohol can I bring with me?	Answer: Each traveler aged 21 and over can bring one liter of alcohol duty-free. You can bring more than one liter, but you will have to pay duty on anything over one liter.
Question: What about cigarettes?	Answer: Each traveler aged 18 and over can bring up to 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars. You can bring more than those quantities, but you will have to pay duty on anything over those limits. Note that some tobacco products, often those purchased in duty-free stores, may be marked "Tax Exempt, for Use Outside the United States," and cannot be brought to the U.S. in any quantity.
Question: Can I bring food with me?	Answer: You cannot bring fresh fruits, vegetables, cheeses, meat, or any meat products, even if dried or canned. You can bring in baked goods, candy, honey, coffee, tea, and condiments.
Question: What about medicine?	Answer: You can bring in only those medications that have been prescribed to you, and only in amounts required for your proposed stay in the U.S. You can only bring in medicines that can be legally prescribed in the U.S. Carry your medications in their original packages and also bring the written prescription. Declare all medications to the Customs Officer upon entry to the United States.

Useful Links:

U.S. Embassy Ljubljana

<http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/>

Register with the Embassy

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>

Travel and Living Abroad

<http://www.state.gov/travel/>

Department of State on Dual Nationality:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1753.html

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)

<http://www.fvap.gov/>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/>

Social Security Administration

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

U.S. Embassy Ljubljana Page on Bird Flu

<http://ljubljana.usembassy.gov/birdflu.html>

U.S. Department of State Bird Flu Fact Sheet

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1181.html

Center for Disease Control Page on Bird Flu

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>

World Health Organization Page on Bird Flu

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

Slovene Veterinary Administration

<http://www.sigov.si/vurs/index.php>

Slovene Ministry of Agriculture

<http://www.mkgp.gov.si/index.php>

Slovene Ministry of Health

<http://www2.gov.si/mz/mz-splet.nsf>



Your U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana.

Vote for Your Favorite Expat!

The Slovenia Times is sponsoring a competition to recognize non-Slovenes who have contributed to the growth of this country. Winners in several categories will be announced early next year. (Shameless plug: one category is diplomatic, and U.S. Ambassador Tom Robertson is a candidate.) Log on and vote at [Hhttp://www.gueststar.orgH](http://www.gueststar.orgH).