



# Consular Newsletter

December 2007

United States Embassy  
Ljubljana, Slovenia

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## Consul's Note

The weather has turned chilly, and some parts of the country have already seen the first snowfall. People have put away their rollerblades and waxed up their skis – it's winter in Slovenia!

In July, the Embassy celebrated Independence Day with a formal reception at Križanke for Slovene officials, after which we were delighted to see many of you at the informal barbecue party at the Marine House!

In August, we bade a fond farewell to Ambassador Tom Robertson, who completed his three-year assignment and returned to Washington to be one of the directors of the State Department's training academy for U.S. diplomats.

Since then, Deputy Chief of Mission Maryruth Coleman has served as the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Like you, in September we watched in horror the news reports of the terrible flooding in Železniki and the surrounding towns. Ms. Coleman visited the area shortly thereafter, and persuaded Washington to donate US\$50,000 for relief efforts there.

In October, we opened the Embassy doors and welcomed in hundreds of school children for Halloween trick-or-treating and a haunted house. While the American kids knew just what to do, the Slovene kids were not so sure – but they sure liked the candy!

In November, Ms. Coleman was joined by President-elect Danilo Türk for a traditional Thanksgiving Day feast. President-elect Türk was in New York on September 11, 2001, as Slovenia's Ambassador to the United Nations, and he feels a close connection to the U.S. as a result of that shared experience.

We were involved in a number of charity events, including former Ambassador Robertson's "Walk Across Slovenia" to raise funds for landmine clearance in the Balkans, the Europa Donna breast cancer walk, the presentation of a ventilator to the Children's Surgical Ward in Ljubljana, and the aforementioned relief funds for victims at Železniki.

During Slovenia's upcoming Presidency of the European Union, we expect likely visits from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Attorney General Michael Mukasey, and possibly even President George Bush. We do not have any dates yet for these visits, but we expect that they will all be quick business trips, probably with no events scheduled for the American community in Slovenia. If that changes, of course we will let you know.

Happy Holidays!

Paul Schultz  
Consul



## Register **NOW** to Vote Absentee in 2008



Even though it seems too early, the time to register to vote in the November 2008 elections is NOW!

Many states have moved up their primary election dates in the hopes of having more influence over who the final candidates for president will be. More than half of the states will hold primary elections by March 11, with the earliest – New Hampshire – set for January 8.

And since your registration and ballot request should reach the state's election officials 30 days before the election, if you want to vote in the primaries the time to register is NOW!

To register and request a ballot, please see the web site <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpca.html>, read all the instructions, and click at the bottom of that page to fill out the form online and print it out. Don't sign the form yet, because first...

...you need to figure out if your state requires that someone else witness your signature. Please see the web site <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag.html#ch3> and click the name of your state. Look for the section describing your status overseas (civilian or military), and then the sub-section under that entitled Notary/Witness Requirements. If it says you need a witness, then get someone to watch you sign. If you don't need one, then just sign away.

Next, put it in an envelope and address it. To find the address in your state to which to send it, please see the web site <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag.html#ch3>, click the name of your state, and scroll to the end of that state's section, where it lists addresses for the city and county voting authorities. Put €0.65 worth (for priority mail) of Slovene stamps on the envelope and mail it via the nearest Pošta Slovenija mailbox. Some states will also let you send in your ballot request by fax or email – please see the web site [http://www.fvap.gov/ivas/fvap\\_state\\_menu.html](http://www.fvap.gov/ivas/fvap_state_menu.html) and click on your state.

Once you've sent in the registration by mail or fax or email, then wait for the state to send you your ballot. When the ballot arrives, follow the instructions printed on it and mail it back.

If you don't have internet access or a working printer, then call or come see us in the Consular Section. We've got all the forms and addresses and everything right here.

## Other News

### *Slovenia to join Schengen Zone*

Slovenia's land border controls with Italy, Austria, and Hungary will disappear on December 21 when Slovenia formally joins the Schengen Zone, an area named for the town in Luxembourg where the first agreement to open borders was signed in 1985.

The current Schengen Zone countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

On December 21, the zone will expand to also include the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

To become a member, a country must harmonize its immigration and asylum laws with the other members and strengthen its external border controls.

As required, new entry lanes for Schengen and non-Schengen travelers will appear at land border crossings and at international airports. The U.S. is not a member of the Schengen Zone, so American passport holders should use the lanes for non-Schengen travelers.

Slovenia's border with Croatia will become the outer southeastern boundary of the entire Schengen Zone. Once a traveler of any nationality crosses from Croatia into Slovenia, he or she will face no further overland document checks until reaching London. Slovenia recognizes that this is a big responsibility, and they have worked hard to pass many inspections to be ready for this to occur.

### *What about the new Ambassador?*

At this time, we just don't know.

Since Ambassador Tom Robertson left Slovenia on August 20, Deputy Chief of Mission Maryruth Coleman has served as Chargé d'Affaires.

In July, the White House nominated Vincent Obsitnik, a businessman from Virginia, to be the next Ambassador to Slovenia. But in September that plan changed, and Mr. Obsitnik will now go to Slovakia instead. Mr. Obsitnik is of Slovak origin and already speaks the language there, so that makes sense.

Washington understands the importance of having a fully-accredited American Ambassador in Slovenia during the EU Presidency, and we remain hopeful that – if the nomination and confirmation processes go smoothly – we might have a new Ambassador here in January 2008.

### Consular Section

#### **American Citizens Services**

Prešernova 31  
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Phone 386-1-200-5595  
Fax 386-1-200-5535  
Email: [ACSLjubljana@state.gov](mailto:ACSLjubljana@state.gov)

#### **Office Hours**

Mon.-Fri. 09:00 – 11:30 and 13:00 – 15:00  
Please make an appointment through our web site:  
<http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/appointments.html>

#### **After Hours Emergencies**

Call 386-1-200-5500 and press zero

We are closed on U.S. and Slovene national holidays:  
<http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

## Driving in Slovenia

### Upon arrival

American visitors and tourists may drive in Slovenia if they have a valid U.S. driver's license and a valid international driving permit. Visitors should obtain the international driving permit before leaving the United States from the nearest office of the American Automobile Association.

You may continue to drive in Slovenia in this manner for a maximum of one year. After that, you must obtain a Slovene driver's license.

### As a resident of Slovenia

Once you have lived in Slovenia with a temporary residence permit for six months, you may apply to exchange your U.S. driver's license for a Slovene license.

You must surrender your U.S. license to the Slovene authorities (contact the Consular Section afterwards, because in many cases we can help you get your U.S. license back), and you must pass the Slovene practical driving test and present a medical certificate.

If you want to cut some time off the process, bring your U.S. license to the Embassy beforehand, and we can prepare a letter to the Slovene authorities describing what kinds of vehicles your U.S. license authorizes you to drive.

### Renewing your U.S. license

Unfortunately, that is handled by each state, and we cannot do it at the Embassy.



## 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 Lemarcus Staley at tel 01-200-5623 or email [StaleyL@state.gov](mailto:StaleyL@state.gov) and provide your name and contact number or email so that you can be added to the invitation list.

## Make an appointment to come see us!

We still keep our general office hours, Monday – Friday from 0900-1130 and 1300-1500, and we'll be happy to help you on a walk-in basis.

But, barring emergencies, we will first provide services to those customers who have a scheduled appointment with the Consular Section.

To make an appointment, please use our new online appointment calendar at <http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/appointments.html>.

Thanks!

## Missing Person



**Have you seen this man?**

**Matt Mullaney is 26 years old and from Massachusetts. He was last seen on February 1, 2003, in Florence, Italy.**

**There is an international missing persons notice out, and his parents contacted the Embassy hoping that someone here might have seen him.**



**If you know anything, please contact Matt's mother Terri Mullaney at [T2Kel@aol.com](mailto:T2Kel@aol.com). Thank you.**

## Useful Links:

<p><b>U.S. Embassy Ljubljana</b> <a href="http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/">http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/</a></p> <p><b>Register with the Embassy</b> <a href="https://travelregistration.state.gov/librs/">https://travelregistration.state.gov/librs/</a></p> <p><b>Federal Voting Assistance Program</b> <a href="http://www.fvap.gov/">http://www.fvap.gov/</a></p> <p><b>Democrats Abroad</b> <a href="http://www.democratsabroad.org/">http://www.democratsabroad.org/</a></p> <p><b>Republicans Abroad</b> <a href="http://www.republicansabroad.com/">http://www.republicansabroad.com/</a></p> <p><b>Association of Americans Resident Overseas</b> <a href="http://www.aaro.org">http://www.aaro.org</a></p> <p><b>Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas</b> <a href="http://www.fawco.org">http://www.fawco.org</a></p>	<p><b>American Citizens Abroad</b> <a href="http://aca.ch/">http://aca.ch/</a></p> <p><b>Expatriate Exchange</b> <a href="http://www.expatriateexchange.com">http://www.expatriateexchange.com</a></p> <p><b>Overseas Vote Foundation</b> <a href="http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/">http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/</a></p> <p><b>Chart of all U.S. States' 2008 Primary Election Dates</b> <a href="http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/appendix_i.pdf/">http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/appendix_i.pdf/</a></p> <p><b>Web Portal for Upravna Enotas (in Slovene only)</b> <a href="http://upravneenote.gov.si/">http://upravneenote.gov.si/</a></p> <p><b>Slovene Government Page on Driver's Licenses</b> <a href="http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/en/zivljenjskeSituacijeStran.euprava?dogodek.id=12656">http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/en/zivljenjskeSituacijeStran.euprava?dogodek.id=12656</a></p> <p><b>To find a driving school in Slovenia</b> <a href="http://www.gzs.si/katalogi/zacetna_stran_kataloga.asp?kat=031&amp;jezik=slo">http://www.gzs.si/katalogi/zacetna_stran_kataloga.asp?kat=031&amp;jezik=slo</a></p>
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