



## Consul's Note

The cafes have spilled out onto the sidewalks, more tourists are strolling the streets, and every weekend there are festivals and events to enjoy – it must be summertime in Slovenia!

Just like you, here at the Embassy we watched anxiously in January, waiting for the rollout of the euro, and were pleased at how smoothly everything went.

In February, the American Corner in Koper hosted an event featuring African-American poetry and history, and Ambassador Tom Robertson kicked off a series of events in which the Embassy distributed basketballs to educational youth centers throughout Slovenia; the balls were donated by Rašo Nesterovič, the Slovene star of the Toronto Raptors of the National Basketball Association.

Also this spring, we had official visits from Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dr. Ronald Sega, the Undersecretary of the U.S. Air Force – and a Slovene-American! The Slovene Armed Forces put on the spit and polish and impressed their American visitors.

We were involved in a number of charity events, including the Biking for Life fundraiser for the Children's Surgical Ward, the Night of 1000 Dinners fundraiser for land mine clearance efforts, and the Europa Donna "Living with Cancer" event in Otočec.

Ambassador Robertson and Deputy Chief of Mission Maryruth Coleman crossed the country, making stops in Maribor, Radeče, Koper, Ivančna Gorica, Novo Mesto, Celje, Ig, Nova Gorica, Grosuplje, Cerklje, and Bled. They met with local leaders and business professionals and gave talks to school groups.

Slovenia recently was the subject of a regular inspection by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding the Visa Waiver Program, and we were pleased that the Government of Slovenia passed with flying colors. Our Slovene friends will continue to enjoy visa-free travel privileges to the USA.

Finally, we will bid a fond farewell to Ambassador Robertson late this summer when he departs for his next assignment in Washington. We have not yet received word about who the next U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia will be, so it is likely that Maryruth Coleman will serve as Chargé d'Affaires until the new Ambassador arrives.

Cheers from the Embassy,

Paul Schultz  
Consul

# Passport News

## **New E-Passports Are Here!**

In April, we received our first “e-passport” at the Embassy, so when you next apply for a passport here, it will have this symbol on the cover:



The e-passport has a tiny microchip in the back cover that contains your biometric data (name, date of birth, passport number, and an electronic photo). This makes for faster verification of your information by border security authorities.

The new passport design is, as one Slovene border police official said, “simply beautiful.” Each page contains a different scene of Americana, such as the Liberty Bell, Mount Rushmore, and a Mississippi River steamboat.

You do not have to apply for an e-passport until your old one expires. Your old passport will remain valid for travel until its printed expiration date.

## **Passport Services By Mail**

We have expanded your ability to renew your expiring U.S. passport or add extra visa pages by mail, to save you a trip to the Embassy!

For full information about this service, please see our new Embassy web site at [http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/applying\\_by\\_mail.html](http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/applying_by_mail.html).

## **Changes in the Law**

As of January 23 this year, all American citizens entering the U.S. by air are required to show a U.S. passport for entry, closing a security loophole that had allowed travelers entering from Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean to show only a birth certificate and ID.

Unfortunately, that meant many more people required passports, and the skyrocketing demand has overwhelmed our production facilities and caused significant delays for U.S.-based passport applicants. (Passports for overseas Americans are produced at a separate dedicated facility, and we have experienced no delays thus far.)

Therefore, on June 8, President Bush suspended this new requirement to show a U.S. passport until October 1, in order to prevent interruption of Americans’ summer travel plans and to give the State Department a chance to reduce the backlog.

However, the next part of the law commences in summer 2008, when Americans entering the U.S. by land or sea will be required to present a passport for entry, closing the last remaining passport security loophole.

The U.S. Congress is currently holding hearings to determine if the 2008 deadline should be extended.

The State Department expects to issue 18 million passports in 2007, up from 12 million in 2006.

## Tax News for Americans Overseas

Several changes in U.S. tax law last year could have a big impact on some Americans living abroad. If you have tax questions, please call the IRS in Paris at telephone 00-33-1-4312-2555 or send an email to [irs.paris@irs.gov](mailto:irs.paris@irs.gov).

### **The Good News**

One change was to increase the amount of foreign-earned income that Americans can exempt from U.S. taxes from US\$80,000 to US\$82,400.

### **The Not-So-Good News**

Unfortunately, the amount you earn that is over the exemption limit will be taxed as though the income were earned in the U.S., meaning a higher tax rate in most cases.

Also, while Americans working overseas will still be able to deduct some housing expenses, there is now a cap of US\$11,536 on the deductible amount. Housing expenses over that amount are no longer deductible from your taxes.

Additionally, income earned from investments will now be taxed at a higher rate – up to 20% higher, in some cases.

And income from foreign retirement accounts will now be subject to U.S. tax.

These changes were made retroactively to the beginning of 2006.



## **4<sup>th</sup> of July Party at Marine House!**

The Embassy's Marine Security Guard Detachment will host a pot-luck barbecue with volleyball, basketball, and a kiddie pool. If you bring food, then admission is free, otherwise admission is €4 for anyone age 10 and up (under 10 free).

The event is open to all Americans and "friends of America," and will be on Wednesday, July 4, from 12:00 to 5:00pm, at the Marine House in Ljubljana.

Please RSVP by June 28  
to Community Liaison Officer  
Ms. Vedrana Mandić  
at telephone 01-200-5532  
or email [MandicV@state.gov](mailto:MandicV@state.gov).

**Happy Independence Day!**

## **Consular Section**

### **American Citizen 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 call or email for an appointment

### **After Hours Emergencies**

Phone (+386-1) 200-5500 and press 0

THE CONSULAR SECTION IS CLOSED ON U.S.  
AND SLOVENIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAYS



## Americans Abroad Caucus in Washington



In February, the House of Representatives formed the first bipartisan Americans Abroad Caucus to address the concerns of the four to six million U.S. citizens living outside the United States. The caucus has now grown to nine members.

A caucus is an informal group that brings together lawmakers who want to combine their political muscle to take action on a given issue. While caucuses do not receive additional funding, staff, or office space, the Americans Abroad Caucus can provide a forum for overseas Americans to make their voices heard in Washington.

At this time, there is no similar caucus in the Senate. You can find full contact information for your U.S. Representatives and Senators by consulting the web sites <http://www.senate.gov> and <http://www.house.gov> and typing in the zip code of your most recent place of residence in the U.S.

### Caucus Members

Name	Fax Number
Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)	001-202-225-4709
Joe Wilson (R-SC)	001-202-225-2455
Alcee Hastings (D-FL)	001-202-225-1171
Steve Cohen (D-TN)	001-202-225-5663
John Boozman (R-AZ)	001-202-225-5713
Donna Christensen (D-VI)	001-202-225-5517
Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)	001-202-225-3317
Chris Van Holland (D-MD)	001-202-225-0375
Frank Wolf (R-VA)	001-202-225-0437

## The Consular Section's New Web Site

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

We are proud to present the Consular Section's new web site. We received training in web design and management, and spent several months creating a completely new site with lots of clear and helpful information about our services, downloadable forms, and helpful tips for Americans living and traveling in Slovenia. Please take a moment to explore the site, and let us know what you think!



## A Special Note from Ambassador Robertson

My Fellow Americans in Slovenia,

I am writing to ask your help in raising money for the International Trust for Demining (ITF). As Ambassador, I have been fortunate to see many amazing places throughout the country. Some of the most extraordinary ones have been during my journey along the European Walking Route E6, which crosses all of Slovenia from the Northeast to the Southwest. Beginning in 2005 on the Austrian-Slovenian border (Radlpass) above Radlje ob Dravi, I have now covered three quarters of the trail, seen many wonders, and met Slovenes from every walk of life.

As I walked, I realized how fortunate Slovenia is to have such unblemished natural beauty. Two years ago I had the opportunity to visit Sarajevo and see some of the demining work going on even within the city's borders. The famous ski slopes from the 1984 Winter Olympics still have not been cleared of all mines, and there are many walking trails in Bosnia that remain unsafe. Throughout the Balkans there are many other unfortunate places where the land has been ravaged by the wars of the 1990's. I therefore decided that I would use my walk across Slovenia to support the International Trust Fund for Demining. The ITF is a non-profit Slovenian organization dedicated to the eradication of landmines in South Eastern Europe. With the continuing support of donors, the fund hopes to clear South Eastern Europe of mines by 2010.

Please take a moment to visit the Embassy's web site at <http://slovenia.usembassy.gov>, where you can follow my progress along the E6 trail, and find information on how to donate to the ITF. I truly hope that you will join me in supporting this worthy organization. Together we can help clear the remaining mines so that people not fear their next step in the beautiful lands of South Eastern Europe.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Robertson', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Thomas B. Robertson  
Ambassador

## Visa Waiver Program Update

Many of our Slovene friends have questions about their ability to travel to the United States under the terms of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The VWP requires that participating travelers carry certain kinds of passports, and the requirements are different depending upon when the passport was issued.

Slovenia met all of the required dates, and therefore ALL versions of the Slovene passport that are currently in use are valid for VWP travel, even those older passports that do not contain the biometric chip (the new “e-passport”).

VWP travelers may spend up to 90 days in the U.S. for tourism or business, after which they must depart. They cannot conduct paid work, extend their stay beyond 90 days, or change to any other visa status.

For complete information, please see our new web site at [http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/visa\\_waiver\\_program.html](http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/visa_waiver_program.html).

## Useful Links:

<p>U.S. Embassy Ljubljana <a href="http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/">http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/</a></p> <p>Register with the Embassy <a href="https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/">https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/</a></p> <p>Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) <a href="http://www.fvap.gov/">http://www.fvap.gov/</a></p> <p>U.S. Department of Homeland Security <a href="http://www.dhs.gov/">http://www.dhs.gov/</a></p> <p>Social Security Administration <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/">http://www.ssa.gov/</a></p> <p>List of Slovene Diplomatic Missions Abroad <a href="http://www.mzz.gov.si/index.php?id=502&amp;L=2">http://www.mzz.gov.si/index.php?id=502&amp;L=2</a></p> <p>Slovene Ministry of Interior <a href="http://www.mnz.gov.si/en/">http://www.mnz.gov.si/en/</a></p>	<p>U.S. Visa Waiver Program <a href="http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html">http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html</a></p> <p>The Euro in Slovenia <a href="http://www.euro.si/en/">http://www.euro.si/en/</a></p> <p>New U.S. Passport Design <a href="http://travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2501.html">http://travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2501.html</a></p> <p>U.S. E-Passports <a href="http://travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2498.html">http://travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2498.html</a></p> <p>Tax Information for Americans Overseas <a href="http://www.irs.gov/faqs/faq13.html">http://www.irs.gov/faqs/faq13.html</a></p> <p>U.S.-Slovenia Bilateral Income Tax Treaty <a href="http://www.irs.gov/businesses/international/article/0,,id=169574,00.html">http://www.irs.gov/businesses/international/article/0,,id=169574,00.html</a></p> <p>International Trust Fund for Demining <a href="http://www.itf-fund.si/">http://www.itf-fund.si/</a></p>
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