

## EDITORIAL



Although it has been clear for some time that a modern service economy requires many competencies and skills which our graduates do not receive at universities, the Bologna

process still faces massive resistance, based on misunderstanding and traditionalist attitudes to tertiary education.

In search for measures to protect us from a similar financial crisis to hit us again, we seem to be satisfied with some additional regulatory measures, some imposed delays in paying out the enormous bonuses to financial managers, and some limitations for the operations of the hedge funds.

Have we forgotten that law is only the minimum of morality? In modern, highly complex business environments, with global operations being conducted with the speed of electronic communication, business ethics and basic fairness are probably even more important than in the past. And yet, in business schools – even in the best, such as Harvard – this is the last subject. How can we then blame the ambitious youngsters who aspire to become millionaires before reaching the age of 40?

In the past, the City was operated by a small number of highly experienced financiers, who knew each other, and operated globally on the basis of trust. Whoever abused this trust was immediately excluded and could never enter the rather closed, privileged circles again. Of course there were rules and laws covering all aspects of business, but the most important rule was basic fairness and professional integrity.

How can we achieve in current conditions higher competitiveness based on knowledge – without sacrificing important values? This will be the central question at the 6th European Regional Economic Forum (EREF-2010) on 7-8 June in Nova Gorica, Slovenia. Check the details and register at [www.eref.eu](http://www.eref.eu)

**Dr Boris Cizelj**  
Chairman, Management Board

## BUSINESS LEAD

### ● Sixth EREF conference to focus on Regional Knowledge Society

Under the title "Competencies and Values for Sustainable, Knowledge-based Competitiveness – A New Agenda for European Regions", this year's European Regional Economic Forum, taking place on 7-8 June in Nova Gorica, will focus on key aspects of developing a knowledge society.

An interactive Forum will allow participants to be engaged in discussions on selected topics within 10 thematic tables, while the recommendations from three preceding preparatory workshops will be presented in the plenary already the first morning – providing the 'fil rouge' for the entire Forum.



Patrick Bouts, Head of Human Capital Development ING Belgium, at EREF 2009

Given today's climate of global economic crisis and the intense interdependence of economies, the need for a highly developed and mobile human resource base – capable of creating knowledge value – has become absolutely critical for Europe.

How will EREF-2010 address these challenges? Have we translated the concept of *knowledge society* into effective policies and productive activity patterns followed by stakeholders? What is the role of regions in these efforts? The Triple Helix partners (universities, industry & government) will openly explore and discuss possible, practical solutions to the problems of future knowledge society, and will be acquainted with selected European and other best practice cases.

There will be plenty of opportunities to take part in the discussions at the Forum, and to influence the recommendations by taking part in preparatory workshops: on 23 April in Graz, Austria, (FDI in Strengthening Regional Knowledge-based Competitiveness), on 11 May in Istanbul (Knowledge Transfer through Communication with Diasporas) and on 27 May in Italy's Gorizia (Developing Competencies and Values for Sustainable Development in European Regions).

As in the past two years a separate meeting of regional and local *Lisbon Coordinators* will take place on 7 June in the afternoon, moderated by Slovenian State Secretary for Development and European Affairs Mrs Andreja Jerina.

Check the programme and register on our new and refreshed website at [www.eref.eu](http://www.eref.eu).

## Business Briefs

### ▶ Pipistrel takes off despite economic and financial crisis



Pipistrel Virus

Ultra-light airplane producer Pipistrel reported a 60% turnover increase in 2009. Company director Ivo Boscarol said that his firm successfully bypassed the crisis by finding clients in new markets that were less affected than Europe or North America, such as South America and Arab countries. Last year, Pipistrel employed 11 new staff members and plans to expand even further. A new factory location has yet to be chosen, but should allow doubling the annual airplane production capacity to 200.

[www.pipistrel.si](http://www.pipistrel.si)

### ▶ Slovenia moves up on the Economic Freedom Index

The 2010 Index of Economic Freedom, released in January, lists Slovenia seven places higher than the year before, ranking at position 61 out of 179 countries compared. The Index, based on a survey carried out by US think tank 'The Heritage Foundation' and the 'Wall Street Journal', names the country's economy 'moderately free'. It enjoys, according to the report, relatively high levels of business freedom, trade freedom, investment freedom, property rights, and freedom from corruption. The survey report concludes that the "transition of the Slovenian economy to greater economic freedom continues, facilitated by structural reforms and an increasingly vibrant private sector".

[www.heritage.org/index/](http://www.heritage.org/index/)

### ▶ Renault produces 'Wind' roadster in Slovenia

French car-maker Renault, announced in February that its Slovenian subsidiary Revoz will produce the new roadster model *Wind*,



Renault

which has been presented at the Geneva Motor Show in March. The decision for the Novo Mesto-based assembly plant was supported by a €14 million government subsidy. Revoz expects a maximum output of 20,000 Winds a year and has already hired 50 new workers for the production lines which were used so far for city car models Clio and Twingo.

[www.revoz.si](http://www.revoz.si)

### ▶ High credit ratings for Slovenia

International ranking agency Fitch Ratings announced this January that Slovenia would preserve its high 'Long Term Credit Ratings' of 'AA'. The stable rating was justified with the country's relatively well-diversified economy and a stable, transparent political system. Recent achievements include euro area membership, which is seen as an asset for Slovenian public finance and country risk evaluation. On its short term foreign currency rating, Fitch confirmed its best quality grade: F1+, which indicates strong capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitments.

[www.fitchratings.com](http://www.fitchratings.com)

### ▶ Elan presents 'world's lightest pair of skis'

Slovenian sports equipment manufacturer Elan presented in February a new ski model that weighs no more than 700 grams, making it the lightest in the world. The *Triglav* uses the waveflex technology, giving the ski an extremely light form that remains stable in curves. Elan is ready for



Elan

serial production and promises skiers a model with better energy efficiency, safety, flexibility and better endurance.

[www.elan.si](http://www.elan.si)

## R&D Briefs

### ▶ Higher Education Quality Agency established

The Slovenian Government set up a new independent agency with the task to boost quality in higher education. Taking over the powers of the Higher Education Council, the agency will be in charge of the regulation of quality in higher education and accreditation of the higher education establishments.

[www.mvzt.gov.si](http://www.mvzt.gov.si)

### ▶ New agreement allows participation in ESA projects



Gregor Golobič and ESA Director Peter Hulsroj

Based on an agreement, signed by Higher Education, Science & Technology Minister Gregor Golobič in January, Slovenia becomes a *participating state* in the European Space Agency (ESA). This allows Slovenian companies, researchers and students to take part in ESA projects. Agency officials called the agreement a "great success" for Slovenia, which managed to demonstrate sufficient R&D potential.

[www.esa.int](http://www.esa.int)

### ▶ Programme highlights importance of knowledge transfer



The *Valor* programme, carried out in 2008 and 2009 by the Slovenian Technology Agency (TIA) in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, raised the consciousness

of researchers in Slovenia regarding the necessity to think about the breakthrough of products onto the market. Intending to encourage the transfer of knowledge from research institutions to new high-tech companies, the projects of the five participating companies focused on the start-up of an organisation for marketing of high-tech products. For the years 2010 and 2011 the programme is again operational, with specially designed support from TIA for mentoring, networking and consultancy for selected start ups.

[www.tia.si](http://www.tia.si)

## SBRA Partners

### ► Award for NLB subsidiary Skladi

NLB Skladi, a company of SBRA-member NLB, received from business research & consulting firm Frost & Sullivan an award for achieved market penetration. Since its establishment in 2004, NLB Skladi realised the highest market share growth on the Slovenian mutual funds market. Further award winning criteria included the firm's marketing approach to never focus on past returns of the funds but to concentrate in its fund promotion rather on raising awareness of both financial advisers and investors instead of aggressive investment policies.

[www.nlbskladi.si](http://www.nlbskladi.si)

### ► Database of biomass potential in final stage



**BIOENERGIS**

Partners of the BioEnerGIS project are currently finalizing the phase of analyzing and mapping the biomass potentially exploitable for energetic purposes and the spatial distribution of energy demand from potential final bioenergy users in the four participating study areas – Lombardy, Wallonia, Slovenia, and North Ireland. By June 2010 a database of biomass potential and heat demand will be finalised.

SBRA is participating in the project BioEnerGIS, supported by the EC under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme. The project intends to provide an instrument helping decision makers to plan, on a regional scale, sustainable exploitation of biomass. A computer-based decision support system (DSS) will be developed to locate the most suitable sites for biomass

plants installation, in terms of energetic, environmental and economic sustainability. The four participating regions serve as case study areas, representing different environmental and economics zones.

[www.bioenergis.eu](http://www.bioenergis.eu)

### ► Koper part of new port alliance

Port operators from Slovenia's Koper and Italy's Trieste, Venice and Ravenna founded this March the *North Adriatic Ports Association* (NAPA). The partners' aim is to secure a stronger position on international markets and to transform the Northern Adriatic into a European logistic platform for trade routes connecting the Far East to Central and Eastern Europe.

[www.luka-kp.si](http://www.luka-kp.si)

### ► Maribor gets ready to become cultural capital 2012



Mayor Franc Kangler and ECOC 2012 manager Vladimir Rukavina

After long, but necessary, negotiations and despite changed economic conditions since the candidacy, funding for Maribor's turn as European Capital of Culture 2012 is secured. ECOC 2012 is a huge historical opportunity for Maribor and its partner cities, but it is also a national project. In early March Minister of Culture Majda Širca and Maribor's mayor Franc Kangler signed a co-financing agreement for the public institute "Maribor 2012 – European Capital of Culture 2012", which will be the operating organization of the largest cultural event in the history of Slovenia. Vladimir Rukavina, who had previously turned Maribor's Lent Festival into a recognized event with more than 600,000 visitors, was appointed manager of ECOC 2012.

[www.maribor2012.info](http://www.maribor2012.info)

### ► Ljubljana University named best in ex Yugoslavia

A global survey of tertiary education institutions conducted by the Spanish

National Research Council (CSIC) placed the University of Ljubljana highest in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. At position 201 among 6,000 universities reviewed in a July 2009 survey, Ljubljana outranked the University of Belgrade (299) and the University of Maribor (667). The top 21 universities in the world are all American. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology tops the list, followed by Harvard, Stanford and Berkley. The best-ranked European university is Cambridge, in 22nd place. Among European universities, the University of Ljubljana took 63rd place. The university was fourth among universities from central and eastern Europe.

[www.csic.es](http://www.csic.es)

### ► Sava presents 3-year strategic guidelines and goals



Janez Bohorič

The 2010-2012 strategy of Sava Group and Sava d.d. represents the implementation of numerous long-term goals: growth in Sava Group assets, a portfolio of globally competitive products and services, highly trained employees and developed efficiency culture, increased return on capital, long-term growth in the value of financial investments and sustainable development of operations. Janez Bohorič, chairman of the Board, emphasised that the future Sava Group portfolio could change and gain in focus, which the Group management will implement through preparation of additional case scenarios and adapting to the economic environment on an ongoing basis.

[www.sava.si](http://www.sava.si)

### ► Krka reports successful 2009 operations

According to a January report, Krka sold in 2009 products worth €850.1 million, which is a 3% increase from 2008. Also sales, totalling €951 million, were worth €1.1 million more than the year before. With over €170 million, the company's net profit will be 6% more than 2008.

[www.krka.biz](http://www.krka.biz)

## SBRA

**Avenue Lloyd George 6**  
**B-1000 Brussels**  
**Tel + 32 2 645 19 10**  
**Fax + 32 2 645 19 17**  
**E-mail: info@sbra.be**

## Founding Members

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**Editor: Dr Boris Cizelj**  
**www.sbra.be**

### ● Slovenia, expected to join OECD in May, gets commended for internationalised innovation

In its bi-yearly *Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard*, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development points out that Slovenia is among three EU countries with the highest proportion of collaborating on innovation with partners elsewhere in Europe. Just like Finland and Luxembourg, Slovenia reaches a level of 13%, while Spain and Turkey on the bottom of the list only achieve 2%.

The report, published at the end of 2009, features information on scientific and technology data to highlight the increasingly international trends in the nature of research. Scientific and technological innovation nowadays requires more complex and interactive processes. This added complexity has led innovators to partner to share costs, find complementary expertise, gain access to different technologies and knowledge quickly, and collaborate as part of innovation networks.

RIBN, the *Research, Innovation and Business Network* for Central and South-Eastern Europe, is just one best-practice example. Linking regional and extra-regional entities, it aims to encourage and facilitate interaction between its members and related bodies at local, regional, national, cross-border and pan-European levels.

[www.ribn.eu](http://www.ribn.eu)



Samuel Zbogar, Slovenian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría

In January, OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría said in a public statement, that he expected Slovenia to join the organisation as early as May 2010. Prime Minister Borut Pahor welcomed this statement by saying that "Slovenia will make a full circle of integration into international institutions." Slovenia is to join the organisation as its 33rd member. It was invited to start negotiations in 2007 along with Estonia, Russia, Chile and Israel.

[www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

### Economic Freedom Index 2010 – Selected countries

Rank	Name	Overall score	Rank	Name	Overall score	Rank	Name	Overall score
1	Hong Kong	89.7	14	Luxembourg	75.4	36	Spain	69.6
2	Singapore	86.1	15	The Netherlands	75	48	Malta	67.2
3	Australia	82.6	16	Estonia	74.7	50	Latvia	66.2
4	New Zealand	82.1	17	Finland	73.8	51	Hungary	66.1
5	Ireland	81.3	21	Sweden	72.4	61	Slovenia	64.7
6	Switzerland	81.1	22	Austria	71.6	62	Portugal	64.4
7	Canada	80.4	23	Germany	71.1	63	France	64.2
8	United States	78	24	Cyprus	70.9	64	Romania	64.2
9	Denmark	77.9	29	Lithuania	70.3	71	Poland	63.2
10	Chile	77.2	30	Belgium	70.1	73	Greece	62.7
			33	Czech Republic	69.8	74	Italy	62.7
11	United Kingdom	76.5	35	Slovakia	69.7	75	Bulgaria	62.3