

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,  
I have the pleasure of welcoming you to Slovenia, the green heart of Europe and a country with a rich heritage in the domain of knowledge.



The kozolec (hayrack) exists exclusively in ethnical territory of Slovenian nation.



river Krka, Otočec

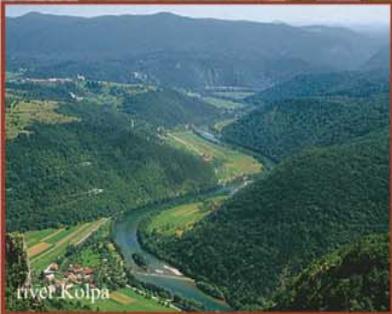


The environment of Slovenia, marked by the particular characteristic of being located at the meeting point of three natural domains, has often been an inspiration to eminent experts.

"EXCEPTIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY"



Proteus  
the only European exclusively  
cave-dwelling chordate



river Kolpa



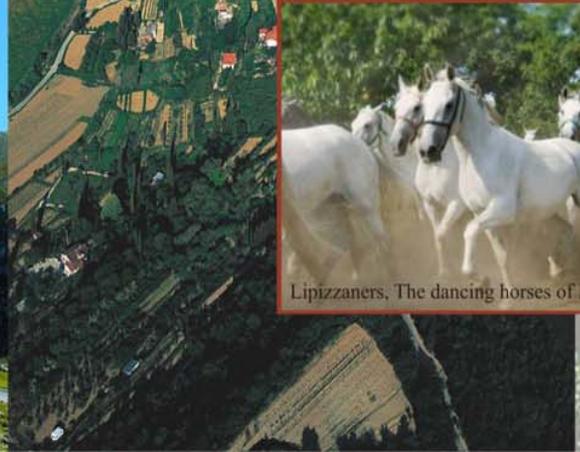
Etruscan Shrew (*Suncus etruscus*)  
the smallest mammal in the world



there is more than 1.000 caves in Slovenia



Ljubljana, castle



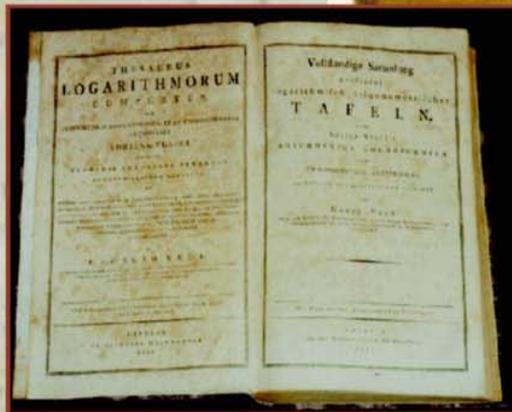
Lipizzaners, The dancing horses of Lipica

The logarithm tables of Jurij Vega, a Slovenian mathematician and physicist born not far from here, have been in use for almost 200 years. Jožef Ressel tested his revolutionary invention, the ship's propeller, in the Krka and Ljubljanica rivers, while Jožef Štefan, another Slovenian scientist, was awarded a special honour in scientific circles in that one of the basic laws of nature on heat radiation was named after him.



Josip Ressel,  
1798-1857

Josip Ressel,  
"Civetta"



Thesaurus logarithmorum  
completus



Baron Jurij Vega,  
1754 - 1802

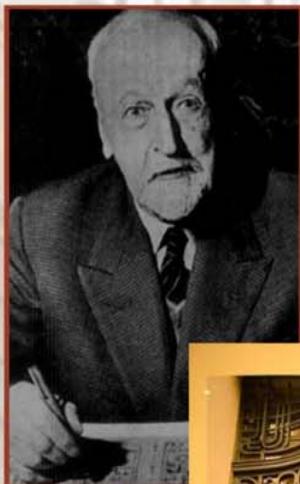
*Vega*  
1754-1802



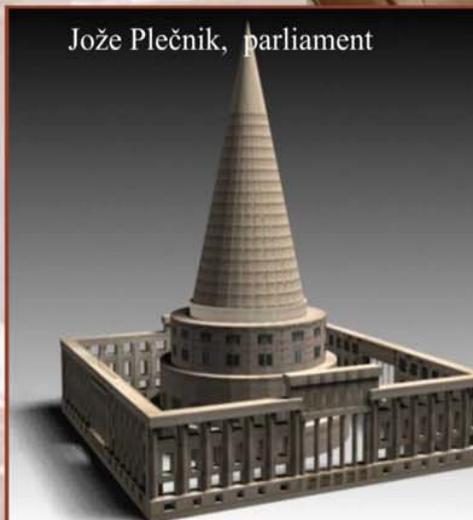
Herman Potočnik (1892-1929),  
rocket engineer and pioneer of  
cosmonautics (astronautics).



It was on our very soil where Edvard Rusjan constructed the first motor aircraft which then flew in this part of Europe. In the field of construction, we can also find names of great renown, from architects Plečnik and Fabiani to Mihael Štrukelj, the first full-time university professor among Slovenian civil engineers, an expert on bridges, who also worked in Finland.



Maks Fabiani,  
1865 - 1962



Jože Plečnik, parliament



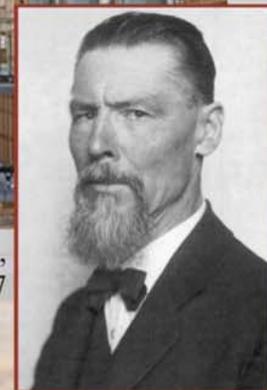
The Triple Bridge in Ljubljana  
(Tromostovje)



Jože Plečnik, NUK



Jože Plečnik,  
1872-1957



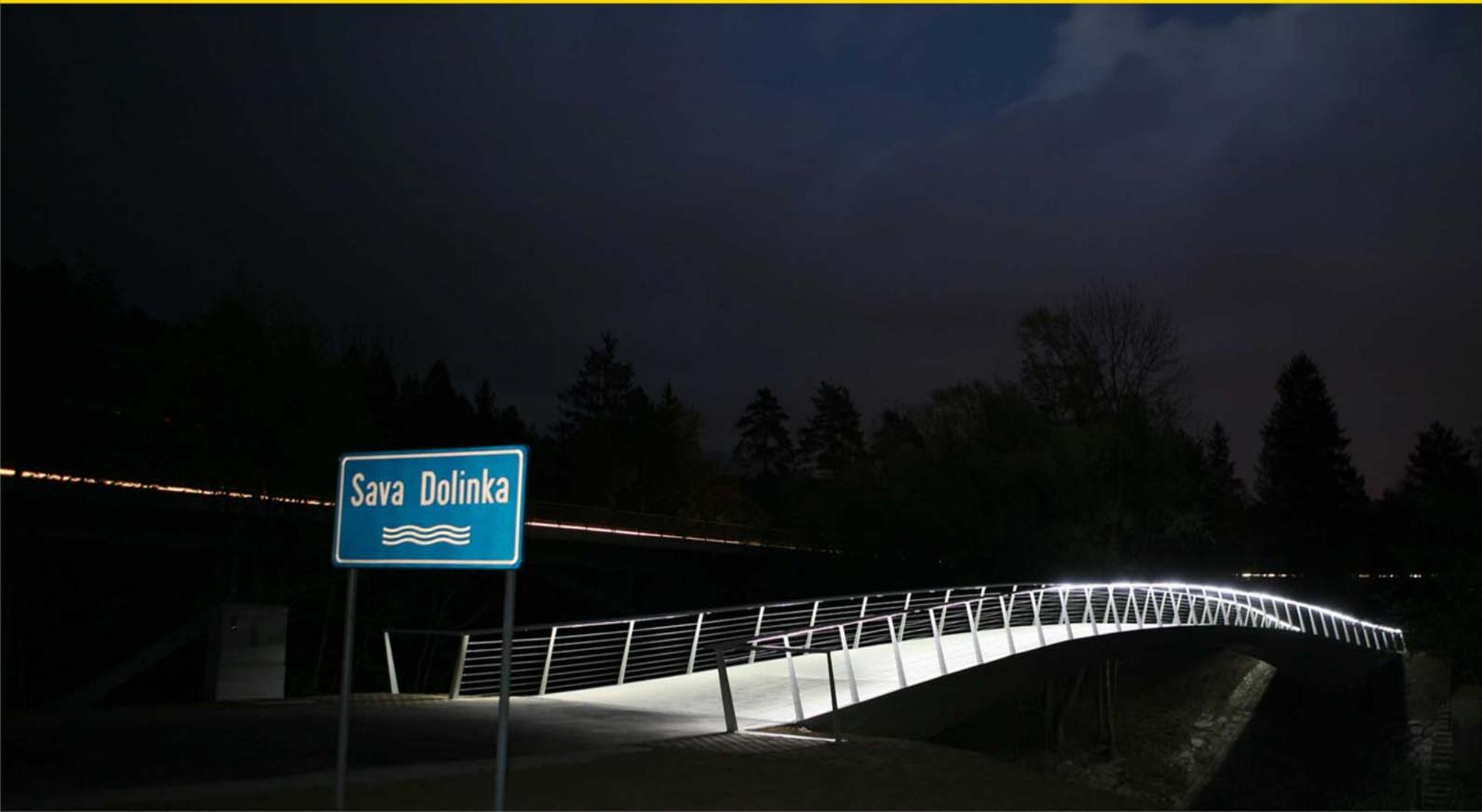
Slovenia, a country with two million people, is therefore very proud of its tradition of knowledge exchange. I feel honoured to be able to address such an eminent assembly of experts from all continents.



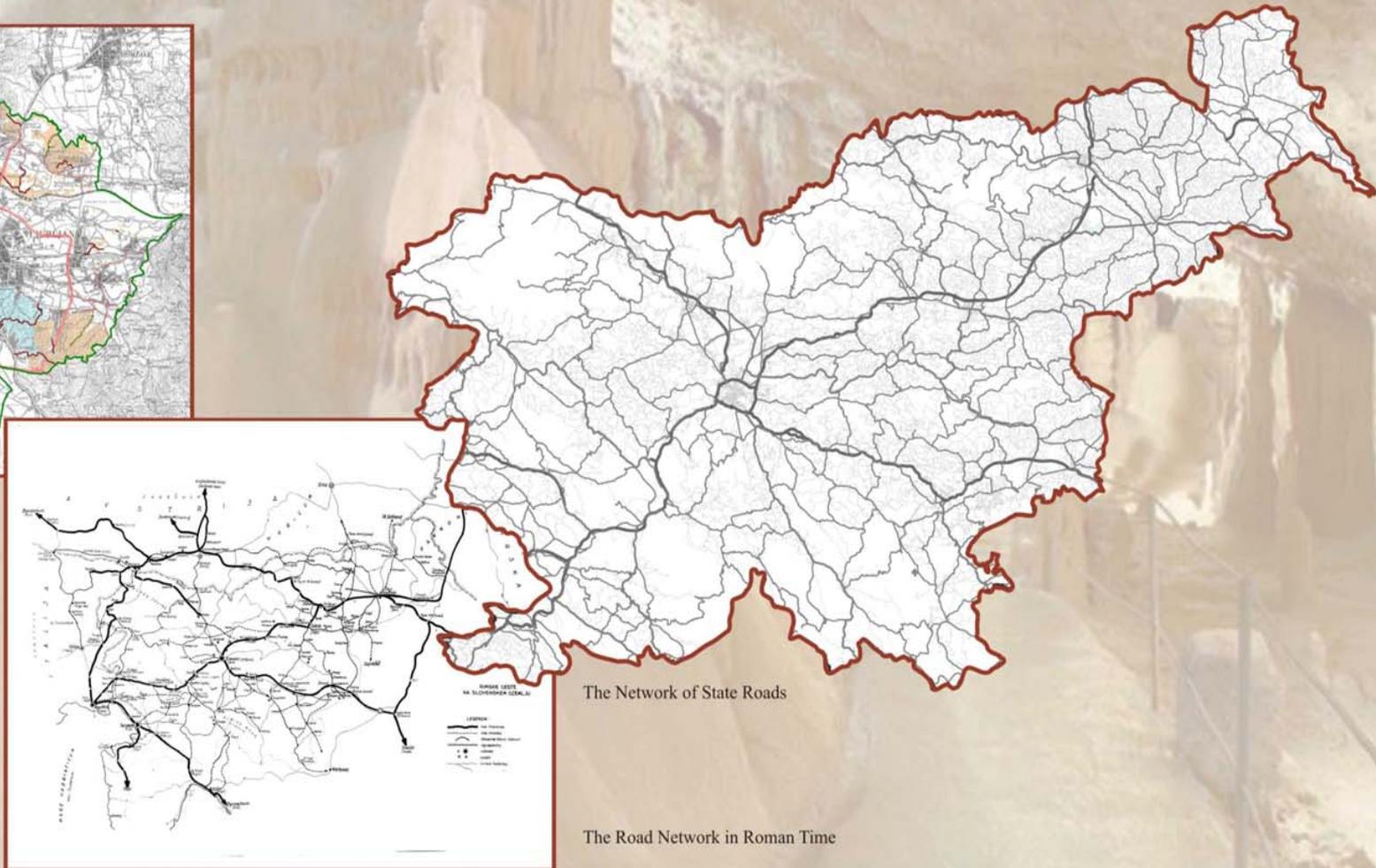
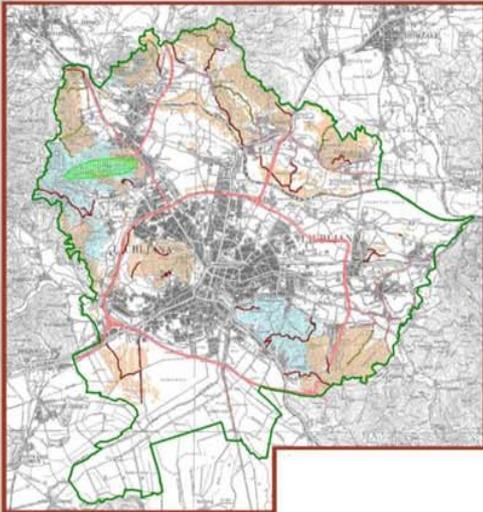
Europe

Slovenia

The local organisers, and the National PIARC Committee along with them, believe that one of the results of this symposium will be a powerful message to the professional public on how important this domain is, both in renovation and in new construction.



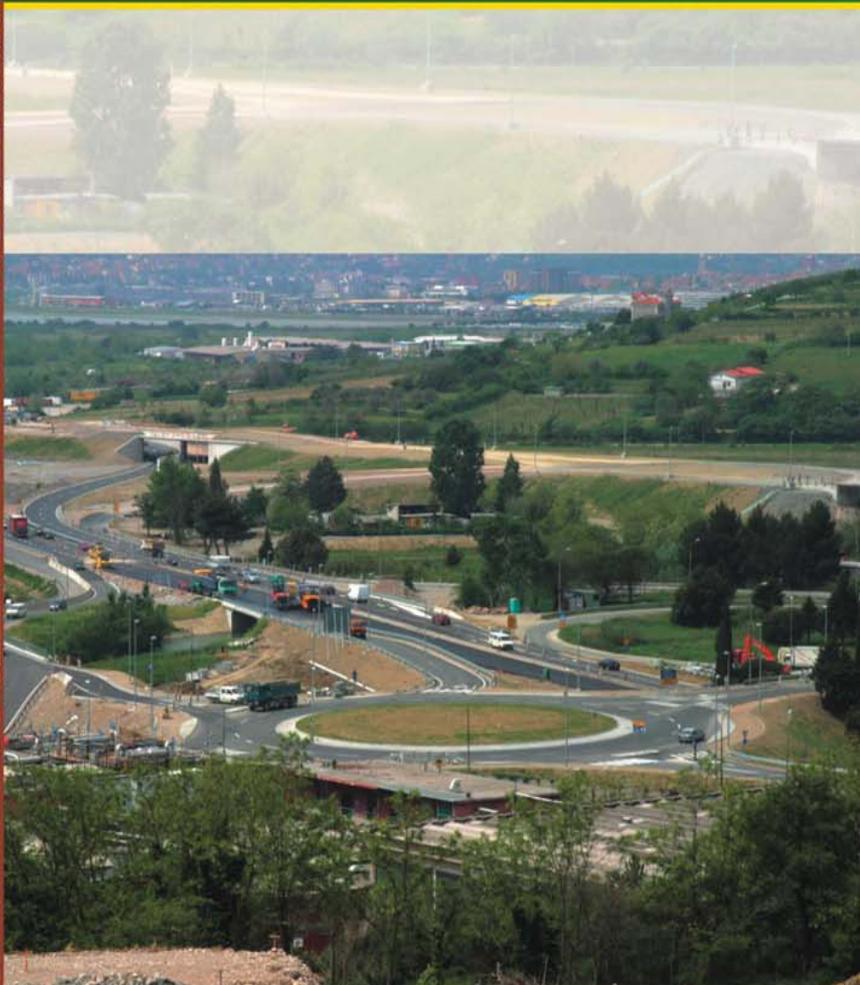
In Slovenia, where the network of state roads amounts to 7,000 km, all managed by the state, and an additional 32,000 km of municipal roads, we have become aware in recent years how important it is to be efficient in the management of an asset such as road infrastructure.



The Network of State Roads

The Road Network in Roman Time

We therefore expect that you, operators and researchers, gathered here today, will be engaging in some scintillating debates on methodologies and technological advances in the pavement surface domain. We hope that both state-level managers of roads, DARS and Direkcija za ceste, will, through this exchange of expert opinions, gain some additional arguments and manoeuvring space needed in our search for a balance between user expectations and the given possibilities.



As I already stated in the invitation, we must keep asking ourselves whether the existing solutions can be improved, upgraded, made more user-friendly and more economical, and whether they can be better managed. The profession should thus be always a step ahead in keeping up with technology and advances while also remaining the driving force of development. Our joint efforts can transform SURF 2008 into an event that will become a milestone with respect to extending the boundaries of expert knowledge by demonstrating that this knowledge has been enriched and put into practice, in other words that a new development cycle has been launched.



The programme of the symposium is daring and ambitious, and the expectations of the organiser great. Nevertheless, let me invite you to savour the lively exchange of opinions, new acquaintances, perhaps even friendships, and take home an experience that is also part of this green heart of Europe.

An aerial photograph of a lush green valley in Slovenia. The valley floor is a vibrant green, with a winding road and several small buildings. The surrounding hills are covered in dense, dark green forests. In the background, majestic mountains rise, some with patches of snow or light-colored rock. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**