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*A Critique of the New Eurocentrism*



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# EUROSIS –

*A Critique of the New Eurocentrism*

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To Elena, for her sparkles.

Ljubljana, Smokvina na Hvaru, Philadelphia,  
summer – autumn, 2004



## I. INTRODUCTION

*Only a few nights separate you from the day Slovenia will become a member of the EU. At least officially, if your mind has not yet adapted to the European way of thinking and functioning. Do you throw paper scraps onto the floor? Phooey. That's not European. Are you shouting at those who hold different opinions? Have you not yet mastered democracy? You speak only Slovene? How are you going to find your way in Europe?*

*Pil*, a magazine for teenagers up to 14-15 years, thematic issue, January 2004, page 7

Never during the one-party era of the uniformity of mind under Yugoslav totalitarianism did I see as many red communist stars as I saw yellow, European stars in the spring of 2004, that is to say, under democracy. To put it differently, or in a manner less cynical than the opening sentence might suggest at first glance, I could not get rid of the impression that it is only one and a half decade after we abandoned the path of socialist revolution, that we have finally managed to put into practice a line from the Internationale that reads *we have been naught, we shall be all*; that we separated from Yugoslavia, a community of *equal nations and nationalities*, only to join anew another community of *equal nations*, the European Union; that only in the present political system of parliamentary democracy have we really experienced perfect *party discipline*, with all important political parties and institutions in Slovenia unanimously supporting Slovenia's accession to the EU; that only after we wrenched ourselves from the Yugoslav federal embrace, have we managed to realize its ideological maxim— *brotherhood and unity*; that it took us only thirteen years of independence to realize anew our *thousand-year-old dream*; that only now can we truly experience the meaning of the concluding lines of the Slovenian anthem, *all men free, no more shall foes, but neighbors be!*; and that after detaching ourselves from the 'West of the European East' we have become the 'East of the European West.' Only now, after living for decades next to the *open border/confine aperto* between Slovenia and Italy, which I sometimes used to cross several times a day, have I learnt that there was a *wall* there separating the two countries and that it was pulled down on the *historical date*, May 1, 2004. And last but not least, only now do I realize how profoundly European was my childhood habit of eating *Eurokrem* produced by Takovo from Gornji Milanovac in Ser-

bia, by all means no less European than my indulgence in *Nutella* or *Kinder Lada*!

The infinitely reproduced mantras of the new Eurocentric meta discourse have caught on and become normalized within all spheres of social life: in politics, in the media, in mass culture, in advertising, in everyday conversations. Prattle about the Europeanism of just about everything – politics, behavior, product quality, creativity, knowledge and so on – has permeated every pore of public discourse. ‘Europe has indeed become a magic formula, a moral concept’ (Puntscher Riekmann, 1997, 64), the ‘alpha and omega’ (Mastnak, 1998, 11).<sup>1</sup> Euro(pe) is a *trend*; it is *fashionable*, it is *hip*, it is *more progressive, better and greater*. Together, we are building a Europe that will have *more soul*, will be based on *greater participation* and *greater mutual exchange*, and will also be more prosperous, said the president of the CISL, the Italian confederation of trade unions.<sup>2</sup> Anything that is of any value is European, and Slovenia has finally become part of it: according to the then foreign minister, by joining the EU, Slovenia has come *one step closer to this European center, European trends, European life, European prosperity, European dynamics and the like*.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, all things *bad, backwards, obsolete*, and all that is *out*, stand for the other side - *the Balkans, the East, socialist past* and so on. By joining the EU, Slovenia *escaped the Balkan curse*, said a journalist in the Spanish daily El Pais; we have witnessed the end of *the era of the longest and the most horrible dictatorship in modern Europe – the communist dictatorship* (the Italian Minister of Regions)<sup>4</sup> and of *the most horrible totalitarianism that wearied the Slovenian nation for almost 50 years*, of which one characteristic trait was *the mentality of slavery* (the former Belgrade Roman-Catholic archbishop of Slovenian descent);<sup>5</sup> *only today has the Second World War really come to its conclusion* (the president of the CISL, the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions).<sup>6</sup> In May

1 Mastnak’s lucid book opens with a categorical assertion: ‘As far as I remember, in these regions we had never before witnessed the uniformity of mind of the proportion recorded during the period of so-called approximation to Europe and integration with the EU.’ (Ibid.).

2 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 41.

3 Ibid., p. 27.

4 Ibid., 1 May, 2004, p. 13. A similar opinion was reported by the Catholic weekly *Družina* (2 May, 2004, p. 19), where it was said that communism *severed Slovenia from it* (Europe, m.v.) and *condemned it to another world*.

5 *Družina*, 25 April, 2004, cover page and p. 8. The residues of this mentality, according to the historian Tamara Greisser-Pečar, *oppose every positive development* (*Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 3).

6 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 41.

2004 Slovenia finally found its place among the *family of western states* (the President of Slovenia).<sup>7</sup>

In this study I look into the content, aspects and the principles of the formation and operation of the new Eurocentrism in Slovenia, which has generated a form of integrating, although inwardly differentiated, hegemonic and dominant meta discourse. While my interest in this ubiquitous and all-inclusive discourse was initially only superficial, over time it grew increasingly absorbing. Admittedly, at first I found it quite amusing, but this quiet pleasure was soon replaced with a growing wonder, sometimes even anger (perhaps discernible now and then from my style of writing), eventually leading to the decision to make an analysis of the visual and textual aspects of this discourse. I focused primarily on the period which I call *eucstasy*, i.e. the spring and early summer of 2004 when this Eurocentric meta discourse reached its peak, with the first climax occurring immediately before and during the accession of the ten countries to the EU, on May 1, 2004, and the second one before the June 2004 elections to the European Parliament. Let me also add that, in planning this study, I have deliberately left out some other critical and more reserved discourses on Slovenia's accession to the EU that developed during this time.

In conducting this study, I was guided by a proposition put forward by the US based German social scientist, Andreas Huyssen (1995, 42), who said that '[a]t a time when simplifications and slogans abound, nothing is more necessary than critical reflection.' The structure of this analysis and, consequently, the chapters in this book (Chapters Two, Three and Four) correspond to the three sets of questions I sought to answer. First, I was interested in the EMERGENCE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF FUNCTIONING of this new Eurocentric meta discourse (Chapter Two, *EUtopia*). How could it happen that one and the same syntagms – which I will illustrate with examples later in the text – were employed by political speakers, religious preachers, entrepreneurs, entertainers, intellectuals and teachers alike? What led state officials, advertisers, educators, nationalists and economists, scholars and cultural workers, public figures and randomly selected respondents, members of the group of the early democratic parties in Slovenia, popularly known as the *Spring parties*, as well as those politicians presumably representing the *forces of Communist continuity*, to resort, synchronously and systematically, to the same syntagms?

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

What was that binding tissue thanks to which all these discourses, so different when viewed from afar, merged into one, non-conflicting, all-embracing and triumphant meta (or mega) discourse?

Second, I delved into the CONTENT of this meta discourse (Chapter 3, *Euldorado*). Which synonyms were used to denote Europe, or rather, which meanings were ascribed to it? Or, in short, albeit somewhat misleadingly: *What does Europe mean?* What are its characteristics (or, what does it mean to be *European*, and what is the most defining characteristic of that *Europe*?). Which word combinations, nouns and adjectives were most frequently used in this connection? Which were those that best expressed its 'essence' and the 'necessity of Slovenia's accession to Europe?' What are its signifiers? What do its symbology and ritualism connote? Furthermore, in which contexts did *Europe*, *European* and related derivations appear on their own, without additional comments, suggesting that these terms were self-explanatory? And last but not least, I sought to answer the question of what Europe is *not* and in what ways the accession to Europe – and with it the entire Eurocentric discourse – was criticized, rejected or sometimes treated with irony.

Third, I was interested in VARIOUS ASPECTS of this new Eurocentrism (the concluding Chapter Four, *Eugoism*), primarily in terms of the new exclusions it brings with it. What has been left outside or ascribed to those parts contrasted with *Europe*? Which are its new peripheries and what kind of *Non-Europe* does it create? Which new dichotomies and hierarchies does it introduce? And finally, what is being neglected, concealed and avoided through this historical construction of 'Euroland.'

The title of the book obviously alludes to neurosis in the psychoanalytical sense of the word, i.e. to a state that 'does not disavow the reality, it only ignores it' (Freud, 1987, 393). When analyzing the collected materials I frequently had an impression that the process of constructing Europe, speaking from the position of Freud's 'fantasy world,'<sup>8</sup> is similar to the

8 Actually 'in neurosis ... there is no lack of attempts to replace a disagreeable reality by one which is more in keeping with the subject's wishes. This is made possible by the existence of a world of phantasy, of a domain which became separated from the real external world at the time of the introduction of the reality principle. This domain has since been kept free from the demands of exigencies of life, like a kind of "reservation"; it is not accessible to the ego, but is only loosely attached to it. It is from this world of phantasy that the neurosis draws the material for its new wishful constructions, and it usually finds that material along the path of regression to a more satisfying real past' (Freud, 1987, 187). English translations in this book are taken from "The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud", London, The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1986.

neurotic's aversion to 'reality, because it is – entirely or in part – unbearable for him.' (ibid., 111). Therefore, neurosis 'disturbs the patient's relation to reality in some way /.../ it serves him as a means of withdrawing from reality and /.../ in its severe forms, it actually signifies a flight from real life' (ibid., 391). As a rule, neurosis 'contents itself with avoiding the piece of reality in question and protecting itself against coming into contact with it.' (ibid., 394). Its 'symptoms are the symbolic expression of a psychical conflict whose origins lie in the subject's childhood history /.../ these symptoms constitute compromises between wish and defence' (Laplanche, Pontalis, 1992, 265). In my opinion, the new Eurocentric meta discourse belongs precisely there, in between, occupying that ambivalent position 'between wish (for *Europe*) and defence (against *Non-Europe*).'

I intentionally left out public debates as well as my own dilemmas concerning the subjects of these debates, i.e. (dis)advantages, grounds/absence of grounds, necessity/non-necessity and (in)conveniences related to Slovenia's accession. I was primarily interested in how this new Eurocentrism has been constructed, presented and then interpreted, and in the (material) aspects it involved. *Eurosis* is not meant to be simply a chronicle of that specific period, or a microanalysis of the events, reasoning and behavior during that time. My intention was also to point out something that could be called – to paraphrase the title of a Slovenian movie from the 1980s – the "Slovenian contribution to Eurocentric madness," i.e. the wider platform constituting the basis of this new, hegemonic meta discourse of the *united Europe*, which has become an established notion over time and has acquired distinctive traits in Slovenia and elsewhere.

Since 'abstract notions always hide a sensible figure,' to use Derrida's words (1990, 8), and since they always take on one or another kind of material form, I collected and analyzed a sizeable heap of materials, including posters, leaflets, brochures, interviews, invitations, speeches, photographs, symbols, prize contests and so on. However, what I really enjoyed was the collecting and studying of bizarre odds and ends, for example, lollipops with an € sign, *Euro* chewing gum, packaging for ear plugs displaying the EU sign, curious six-pointed doughnuts with the EU abbreviation, euro ties, T-shirts and neckerchiefs, *euro* shopping bags, book markers, maps, key rings and umbrellas, car shades and commercial yeast wrappers with *euro* motifs, *European* blue coffee cups

with golden stars and the names of all members states (or white cups with blue stars), postal seals with EU symbols, a *eurocalculator*, *euro* souvenir caps and piggy banks, *euro* motifs on new documents and registration plates, photographs of faces and other parts of the body painted in blue and yellow, not to mention loads of other *eurokitsch* handed out in various advertising campaigns and from street stalls. Most of the analyzed material comes from Slovenia, with only several examples originating from other new member states. As regards stylistic conventions used in this study, the following rules have been applied: excerpts from literature or well-established syntagms are given in quotes, while examples of new Eurocentric discourse, including individual terms or collocations and longer passages, are in italics.

EUROPRODUCTS



## II. EUTOPIA – THE EMERGENCE AND THE OPERATIONAL LOGIC OF THE NEW EUROCENTRISM

*Heavenly blue, European blood*

A slogan in an advertisement for Optimus computers, Poland, spring 2004

*Slovenian-style Balkan meat-patty*

The Slovenian rendition of 'pljeskavica na žaru,' a popular Balkan dish well known by its original name in Slovenia; taken from the menu of a refreshment stall in Kongresni square in Ljubljana set up for the celebrations of Slovenia's accession to the EU

What first catches the eye when surveying this new Eurocentric discourse in Slovenia (and in other EU countries, particularly new members) is the absence of an essential distinction, in terms of either structure or content, between the so-called *left* and *right* political wings, lay and ecclesiastical circles, between political and commercial advertising, or state and party propaganda. Similarly, there was no noticeable difference in the opinion held by institutions, journalists and anonymous individuals, nor in the stances of high officials and randomly selected respondents interviewed by the media. Indeed, precisely this is the secret of the success of this meta discourse. It can be so successful because every individual protagonist has invested something of his/her own in *Europe*; everyone perceives it in his/her own way, and everyone sees it as an opportunity to gain profit of some kind.<sup>9</sup> Everyone, as we shall see later in the text, may project onto *Europe* whatever he/she likes, and obtain in return whatever he/she expects. By 'everyone' I mean literally everyone: politicians, economists and esportantists; volleyball players, unweilers of freemasonry conspiracies and philatelists; religious integrators and confectoners, hack writers and bureaucrats. Some see in it the free market, others a political opportunity, and still others prosperity and social justice; some are convinced that it will protect us from the *anarchist laicism of left liberalism which, in a moderate form, perpetuates the laic totalitarianism of defunct communism*.<sup>10</sup> For some, the European *foundations*, or *roots*,

<sup>9</sup> This was also confirmed by an Italian MEP of Slovenian descent who said that *everyone uses Europe according to their own needs, and in many cases in ways much different from those its fathers envisaged*. (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 32).

<sup>10</sup> A member of the Slovenian Academy, in *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 6.

are *civilizational* and *intellectual* roots; some ascribe to them *historical* or *economic* significance, while others see them as only a *geographical* attribute. Various groups differently imagine the future of Europe, either cultural, economic, political or religious. For some it has become an artistic inspiration and the inspiration for new kinds of mass entertainment. In this respect, the light-headed repetition of slogans such as *We are Europe*, or *Europe is Ours, Too*<sup>11</sup> (the election slogan of the United List of Social Democrats Party, ZLSD), or *Placing Europe In the Right Hands*, or *Europe in the Right Hands* (a heading in the election bulletin of the Slovenian People's Party) or *My Europe* (the title of a *Gospodarski vestnik* publication),<sup>12</sup> actually carries a very accurate message. What is important is that Europe is *in the right hands*, that it is *ours*, or *mine*, regardless of who we are and what we strive to achieve.

Only in this way can *Europe* become a *business opportunity* for a businessmen, a *safe future* for children, a *Christian Europe* for fervent Christians, a *political opportunity* for the ruling parties, and a *channel for the promotion of our own identity, culture and language* for nationalists. In other words, it is everything at once for anyone who cares to give it a thought. This totality-minded, 'umbrella-like' meta discourse addresses all. It is pan-national and state-wide. In fact, it is a kind of 'state-formative' and corporate 'platform of national unity.' Its function is to seek a dynamic balance and links between individual discourses and, in so doing, to create a form of all-inclusive identity. In recent Slovenian history, we have had several opportunities to see the potential of this type of meta discourse to convince and mobilize (e.g. when Slovenia gained independence, when it joined NATO etc.).

A conspicuous sign of this sentiment is the European flag itself: twelve equal-sized stars arranged in a circle whose empty inner area almost "begs" to be filled in and to be given meaning, that is, an individual, specific meaning. This empty area is open to all who want to insert their message, i.e. a political, religious, commercial or cultural signifier. Much like the starry rim on the *European* flag, Europeanism itself is a universal form (and rhetorical phrase) hollow on the inside. It may be appropriated by anyone, at any time and for any purpose. In the words of the Argentine-

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the title of the special edition of the Polish daily *Rzeczpospolita* was *Our Europe*.

<sup>12</sup> This is reportedly *the most comprehensive and the cheapest manual on living and working in the European Union*.



an social scientist, Ernest Laclau (1996, 35), ‘the universal has no necessary body and no necessary content; different groups, instead, compete between themselves to temporarily give to their particularisms a function of universal representation.’ In other words, ‘the place of the universal is an empty one and there is no a priori reason for it not to be filled by *any* content’ (ibid., 60, see also 15, 28, 34, 57, 61, 65, 72, 95).

New Eurocentrism, as a ‘discursive structure is not only a “cognitive” or “contemplative” entity, but an *articulation practice* that establishes and organizes social relations’ (Laclau, Mouffe, 1987, 81). It is undoubtedly true that a ‘United Europe’ is ‘still a project of the social elites rather than populations’ (Debeljak, 2004, 10), and that the political elites of the post-socialist societies ‘advocate EU membership as something that is a priori good’ (Šabič, Brglez, 2002, 67). Undeniably, this is a ‘top-down’ enterprise of new Eurocratic structures. However, the victory of hegemony is total when the interests of some become the interests of all and when ‘the objectives of a particular group are identified with society at large’ (Laclau, 1996, 45). The new hegemonic Eurocentric meta discourse needs to be understood in the Gramscian sense: it does not only involve the coercion on the part of the ruling power, but it also implies the consensus of all. Seemingly, all interests, values, wishes and identities suddenly converge within this discourse. The articulation and justification of this discourse engages everybody - the state apparatus, mass culture, economy, consumers, educational, cultural and religious institutions, societies, intellectuals and the media.

New Eurocentrism thus succeeds in generating a consensus between various centers of power and their discourses. It operates by way of allowing, and even expanding, rather than confronting competitive or opposing interests and meanings, all of which revolve around the hollow center and thus become linked. *Europe* condenses many tensions, struggles and contradictions that accompany the transition of its new members to the new political community, and it thus produces realistic effects manifested in various areas. It creates social ties, represents a ‘good business’ and constructs cultural content, values and goals needed for new times. Or, to put it differently, everyone struggles to impregnate it with their own meaning, and everyone asserts that they know what its sense, purpose and essence, advantages and disadvantages are. Naturally, this takes place inside the

new meta discourse of *Europe* itself, which accommodates all these contradictions as ‘welcome diversity.’ This phenomenon may be observed in its most condensed form when the notion of Europe appears on its own, as pure tautology. As Mastnak writes, (1998, 12) ‘[w]hatever is “European” is good, and whatever is good is “European.” Except that nobody really knows what this Europe actually is.’ However, had the new myth makers remained silent, and had they failed to develop this meta discourse, the hollowness of the concept of Europe could have come to light, and precisely that could have created the risk of conflict.

Therefore, the confusion surrounding the definition of *Europe* and *Europeanism* is neither accidental, nor the result of inconsistency, but rather a product of constitutive openness. Precisely the fact that everyone is free to make a personal interpretation of Europe, and that all may see in it their own past and future, enables it to develop its ideological and total character. To use Laclau’s definition (1979, 161, 173, 176), what is involved here is the elimination of antagonisms and contradictions through their transformation into simple differences. Therefore, ‘class hegemony consists not only in an ability to impose a “conception of the world” upon other classes, but also, and especially, in an ability to articulate different “conceptions of the world” in such a way as to neutralise their potential antagonism’ (ibid., 177). The analysis of Eurocentric meta discourse shows us that (and how) ‘[b]y unity we must not necessarily understand logical consistency – on the contrary, the ideological unity of a discourse is perfectly compatible with a wide margin of logical inconsistency’ (ibid., 102). Therefore, this discourse is not one-sided, exclusive and hermetic, but precisely the opposite; being inherently polysemic, it is capable of mobilizing and including very different elements, positions and groups, and of directing them, thanks to its power, towards its own projects and goals.

To put it differently, if the logic of classic hegemonic meta discourse could be explained by saying that ‘the consensus wipes out divisions by eliminating them,’ the logic of new meta discourse could perhaps be described by saying that ‘the consensus acknowledges old divisions but blunts them.’ It does not unite differences, but unites despite differences; it does not homogenize antagonisms, but reduces them to mere ‘differences;’ it does not eliminate disharmonies, but acknowledges and harmonizes them through vehemence; it neither silences various sounds nor drowns them

out, but uses them to produce ever new tunes. It would be erroneous to seek in it the ‘lowest common denominator’, or the ‘main stream that meanders into smaller ones.’ Rather, as Propp (1982,6) suggests, we should look for ‘a labyrinth of fairy-like diversity that will eventually prove to be a miraculous unity.’ The ideological makeup of the complex, manifold structure of this meta discourse becomes apparent only on the ultimate, meta level on which these particular discourses (for example, nationalist and liberal discourses, entrepreneurial and religious-integralist ones, elite and mass cultural discourses and so on) become integrated, although each particular discourse as such, in isolation, need not necessarily be political or ideological at all.<sup>13</sup>

It seems appropriate at this early stage to draw readers’ attention to the ‘original sin’ of the new Eurocentrism, which consists in its frequent interchangeable use of the terms *European Union* and *Europe*. Under the pretence of simplification, abbreviation or eloquence (*euloquence?*), the two terms are simply equated – the political and economic unit appropriates the geographical and historical name of the entire continent.<sup>14</sup> To illustrate this, let me quote a typical formulation from the speech of the then president of the European Commission delivered one day before the enlargement: ‘The *Europe* that is born today...’.<sup>15</sup> This is evidently a mythopoetic speech in the purest sense of the word. As Barthes would affirm, it depoliticizes its politicality, neutralizes its bias and objectivizes its subjectivity. A political myth always assumes the appearance of a ‘fact’ or ‘reality,’ in this case, a geographical fact.

The existence of *Europe* and *Non-Europe* is hence the result, not the cause, of the division of the old continent into two parts. The very process of *accession* to the EU actually shows how *non-European* countries may be transformed into European ones. ‘Eusurpation’ of the terms *Europe* and *Europeanism*, particularly during the period of *entry*, or the period of *accession* (depending on the position of the speaker, i.e. whether he/she comes from a future or existing member state), divides the European countries that geographically belong to Europe into those that *are European* in the political and economic sense (i.e. members of the EU)<sup>16</sup> and those

<sup>13</sup> See also Laclau, 1979, 99-102, 160.

<sup>14</sup> The Vienna-based professor and researcher Sonja Puntischer Riekmann (1997, 64, 65) stresses that ‘Europe is today a synonym of the European Union, thus concealing that Europe is indeed also a geographical term, although we might find it difficult to define clear borderlines.’ Another example of such a misleading appropriation of a continent’s name is the use of *America* to denote ‘The United States of America.’

<sup>15</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 8.

that are *not European* (this diverse group includes countries such as Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, the majority of the Balkan countries, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia). For the latter group – and until recently for the ten new members – *Europeanism* is a quality that may be acquired (or, better yet, one that *has to be won*, or towards which new members *have to ripen*) even though, geographically, they belong to Europe.

One important aspect of the new Eurocentric meta discourse is that it ties in with the dominant national self-perceptions and self-constructions. In the case of Slovenia, this could be denoted as ‘Euroslovenianism.’ Euroslovenian discourse is constitutively split into two complementary perspectives on Slovenia with regard to *Europe*. The first perspective makes a distinction between one and the other (between the two entities, Slovenia and Europe), while the other pursues a “comeback” approach (*we are returning to where we have always belonged*).

In accordance with the first perspective, over the past years, and especially during the months immediately preceding the enlargement and during the elections to the European Parliament, the two entities, *Europe and Slovenia*, mainly appeared one alongside the other, in various derivations.<sup>17</sup> The former prime minister, for example, stated that *Europe is ours, and we are part of Europe*;<sup>18</sup> the foreign minister similarly declared that *our issues are becoming European issues, and European problems are our problems, and that the issue now is not so much that of Slovenes and Europe, but of Slovenes in Europe*;<sup>19</sup> the president of the state declared that *in terms of European consciousness and culture, Slovenia is on a par with others*,<sup>20</sup> while the mayor of Nova Gorica expressed his *satisfaction that Slovenia is finally becoming a constituent part of Europe*.<sup>21</sup> In the words of the president of the Slovenian

16 Let us add that, officially, overseas territories of the former colonial powers also belong in the EU, e.g. French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique and Guadeloupe (all French), Canary Islands (Spanish) and Madeira and the Azores (Portuguese).

17 This duality was also present in the Statement of Good Intentions, adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia on December 6, 1990 (a bit more than half a year before the declaration of independence) and published in the Uradni list RS 44/90 (*Official Gazette*). The Slovenian state is said to be *based on the best Slovenian and European democratic traditions*, and in announcing the plebiscite we are committed to *adhere to the best traditions of humanism and civilization, and Slovenian and European history*. After all, duality is also incorporated into the Slovenian coat of arms, where the stars (taken from the historical coat of arms of medieval Counts of Celje) are *European yellow*.

18 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5.

19 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 19.

20 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 25.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Pan-European Movement, *those who deny their Slovenian-ness also deny their Europeanism!*<sup>22</sup> The Government Public Relations and Media Office, marking the Day of Europe in 1998, and obviously anxiously anticipating the accession, issued a *passport for the occasion* titled *Slovenia! At Home in Europe*. The cover page showed the *European* circle of stars with the Slovenian coat of arms in the middle.

The slogan of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) in the European elections campaign was *Slovenia Is My Country, Within Europe, Too*, while in the election leaflet, one of the candidates referred to the fundamental values of western civilization *shared by Europe and our home country*. In its promotional brochure, the United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD) appealed *for your vote. It is needed*, claimed the ZLSD, *by both Slovenia and Europe!* Another slogan read: *In Europe, for the Good of Slovenia!* The syntagms used in the joint campaign by the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) and the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DESUS) were as follows: *for European Slovenia* and *for the new victories of Slovenia* (the two parties also asserted that their candidates *know how to fight to achieve a realization of the goals, in Brussels as much as in Ljubljana, in Strasbourg as much as in Maribor, in Luxembourg as much as in Koper*). The Slovenian People's Party (SLS) is entirely devoted to Slovenia, or, in their words, *One hundred percent for Slovenia. Slovenia as part of Europe, with our candidates*. They also invited people to vote *For Slovenian People's Party, Slovenia and Europe!* (one supporter of the party was confident that one of their candidates, the mayor of Celje, would be *as successful in the European Parliament as he is in Celje*, while another supporter explained that the SLS *strives for the equal status of Slovenes within the European Union*). Furthermore, *our eyes were on Europe, and tomorrow, Europe comes to us, and we come to Europe!* (the president of Slovenia).<sup>23</sup> Also, *there will be more of Slovenia in Europe and more of Europe in Slovenia* (from the SLS's bulletin). *If we do not attach the greatest value to Slovenianness – our culture and religion, language and nationality – we will be discarded by Europeanism,*

22 *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji (Slovenes in the European Union)*, Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

23 And also, *we felt that we belonged there, culturally, geographically and historically* (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10).

EURO ELECTIONS

**GLAS ŽENSK**  
v evropski parlament

10

GLAS ŽENSK  
KAMPAJNA

za socialno varnost

Milica Kovačič, Maja Ogrin-Murka, Vinko Gaber, Jaka Kacin, Maja Švec, Milica Jaušovec, Roman Jakšič

Za nove slovenske zmage.

DESUS LDS

DELO

**sobotnapriloga**

Sala Vidmajer

Ezoterično

**SLOVENIJA, moja domovina. Tudi v EVROPI.**

Obkrežna lista SDS pod zaporedno številko 5. To je res odlična lista.

Mi smo evropski socialni demokrati.

SDS

Evropski

**SLS. Odmev**

100% Slovenija

mag. Franc But

13. junija izberite listo št. 13

Evropo v prave roke

Pravzapravi bomo Slovenijo

VEČ SLOVENCE V EVROPI. VEČ EVROPE V SLOVENIJI.

Kdo, če ne SLS?

2.

**N.SI Nova Slovenija**

ZDAJ.

www.nsi.si

EVROPSKE VOLITVE 2004

slovenija je naša

www.sjn.si

Daleč naprej, bližje drug drugemu.

LDS

too.<sup>24</sup> In short, the point at issue here is *the survival of small Slovenia within large Europe*.<sup>25</sup>

In the special holiday edition of *Primorski dnevnik*, one could read that *Slovenia traveled for thirteen years to reach 'Europe'*,<sup>26</sup> which is *truly our home*, in the words of the former prime minister.<sup>27</sup> In the months preceding the enlargement, Center Evropa published a series of educative brochures (*Slovenian economy in the EU*, *Within Europe without frontiers*, *Slovenian agriculture in the EU* and the like), under the common title *Slovenia in the European Union*. In the words of the editor of the Catholic weekly *Družina*, *this year, Europe will first breathe in the Slavic spirit, too*.<sup>28</sup> A title in the May issue of *Knjižna panorama* by DZS, which read *May 1, 2004, Slovenia and Europe hand in hand*, was shown against a background in which the colors of the Slovenian flag and coat of arms depicted at the far left gradually transform, through white, into the European blue and the European symbols on the right. The same color metamorphosis appeared in several places in the *special issue* of *Primorski dnevnik*. A *Quelle* catalogue promoting, not at all surprisingly, reduced prices, featured a similar design in which the *European blue* with yellow stars was in the background, and the *European flag* to the right of the center. On the designated date, said an advertisement by the Bank Austria Creditanstalt, *your company, too, will join the group of European companies*. Obviously, in addition to appealing for the preservation of heritage and tradition, this type of meta discourse strove, above all, to promote *Slovenian identity*, *Slovenianness*, and all things *Slovenian* in all areas – in politics, culture, economy, language and so on (a typical example is a maxim that called

24 *Družina*, 2 May 2004, p. 8.

25 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 2. In Poland, one could find instances of a completely different discourse expressing much more self-confidence than the Slovenian 'Calimero' attitude. For example, a children's competition, one among many events, was entitled *A Strong Poland Within A Strong Europe*. The cover page of the brochure entitled *Yes for Poland* featured a map of Europe and the EU, with the territory of Poland highlighted in national colors, i.e. white and red, while inside the brochure the Polish flag was placed above the European flag. Otherwise, the brochure is replete with the usual agitprop (e.g. basic information on the EU, explanations, accession documents, FAQs, quotations from Monnet, Adenauer, John Paul II, the then and the former Polish president and a renowned Polish film director, the list of the implications of the vote *for* and the vote *against*, and a multitude of addresses at which it was possible to obtain further information).

26 Page 4.

27 *Slovenija – Doma v Evropi (Slovenia At Home In Europe)* – a symbolic passport, Government Public Relations and Media Office, and Government Office for European Affairs, 1998.

28 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, cover page.

for the distinctiveness of Slovenia in Europe, by the Slovenian Women's Voice Party). In short, 'European' Slovenia.<sup>29</sup>

The second perspective supplements the first one – formerly 'two of them' now 'one within the other again!' By joining the EU, a family of cultivated European nations, Slovenia (along with other new member states) has finally become what it supposedly has always been. The paradox of 'returning to a home which we have never left' could be heard from various speaker's podia,<sup>30</sup> so the examples given below are only a small fragment of this 'comeback rhetoric.' One supporter of the SLS party claimed: *We have become members of that group of countries to which we have always belonged by virtue of our culture and historical tradition.* Another one pointed out that *we are now truly part of the family of European nations, and not only on the map.* On the day of the enlargement, Slovenia and the Slovenes became part of *the community of nations and of the region to which we belong by virtue of our history and culture, or in other words, what we have here is a kind of return, of the normalization of life of the Slovenian nation and state in the wider company of European nations.*<sup>31</sup> This is presumably Slovenia's *ultimate return to the Central European cultural circle* (the president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement).<sup>32</sup> Of course, *we, Slovenes, have been part of Europe for a long time* (the former mayor of Nova Gorica and former minister in the Slovenian government).<sup>33</sup> *After many decades, Slovenia politically 'returns' to where it has always belonged in the intellectual and cultural sense of the word. The natural state that has been disrupted for half a century is being restored again.*<sup>34</sup> All in all, *we are returning home.*<sup>35</sup>

The same *eucreations* could be found in other countries as well. For example, the cover page of the influential Polish magazine *Polityka* featured, in addition to a rather

<sup>29</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Compare the statement of the president of *Matica hrvatska* Igor Zidić, who said: *it is a fact that Croatia has always been Europe ... and that the modern history of Croatia is a history of forcing Croatia – wresting it away from Austro-Hungarian Europe and our Europe – into the Serbian Balkans.* (*Hrvatsko slovo*, 9 July, 2004, p. 32). Also, compare the statement of the former president of Hungary, who said that the new accession countries returned where they had already been and where they belonged. (*Goriška*, May 2004, p. 2).

<sup>31</sup> Statements by some foreign organizations (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 11).

<sup>32</sup> *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 28. Also, *Now We Return* (the president of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, in *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 4).



irritating caricature,<sup>36</sup> a title that read *Poland Returns to Europe*.<sup>37</sup> In various publications and speeches one could find syntagms such as *our sweet home*,<sup>38</sup> *long since part of our shared Europe* (the mayor of Kranjska Gora),<sup>39</sup> *now we continue the tradition* (the president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement).<sup>40</sup>

POLES RETURN TU EUROPE



- 36 The caricature is a loose allegory of Polish accession. It shows an exhausted worker towing a handcart of bureaucrats, peasant rebels holding scythes, a smirking bishop surrounded by nuns, some praying figures on their knees, a soldier in an old uniform with a saber in his raised hand, a criminal with a covered face and a gun, all led by a naked blond woman with the Polish banner in her hand. In the background God himself holds his head in his hands.
- 37 Similarly, special editions featuring titles such as *We Are Already In Europe!* presented various public figures (artists, sportsmen, scientists etc.) who have enjoyed success beyond Polish borders (beyond the western Polish border, of course). In Poland, where opposition to accession to the EU was extremely strong, there was a campaign running for several months under the slogan *Yes, I am European*, in which renowned public figures advocated the need to join, or the necessity for joining the EU. The publication *Slovenes in the European Union* (published by the Government Public Relations and Media Office in 2002) was conceptualized in a similar manner, but it was more critical. In it, a diverse group of respondents (including, for example, students, the unemployed and a former prominent politician) were asked for their opinions on EU enlargement.
- 38 For example in *Evropopotnica (Your Companion on the Journey to Europe)*, Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004, p. 31.
- 39 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 12.
- 40 *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji (Slovenes in the European Union)*, Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

After the period of enforced separation, this is a beneficial return to the environment which has shaped Slovenian material and intellectual culture for the past 1000 years (the head of the Office for the Slovenian Language).<sup>41</sup> Not only geographically but also in terms of their culture, their history and their aspirations, the ten new members are decidedly European.<sup>42</sup> Slovenia will finally be united with Europe, from which it had been separated until the beginning of the previous decade, owing to historical circumstances, as had been many other future EU members; or, in other words, these countries have actually belonged to Europe for a long time (the EU ambassador to Slovenia).<sup>43</sup> Presumably, the enlargement of Europe represents simply its restoration and today Europe is seeing the return of that part which for decades remained sacrificed on the altar of equilibrium following the Second World War, a part that paid the full price so that the other part could enjoy freedom and prosperity (the editor of *Primorski dnevnik*).<sup>44</sup> According to the Catholic Cardinal Jean-Luis Tauran, this is the returning of the status of European nation to those peoples who were long excluded from Europe because of totalitarianisms.<sup>45</sup> The site of the enlargement celebration in Nova Gorica/Gorizia, actually a square still without a name, again found itself where it belonged – in the very center of Europe.<sup>46</sup>

The results of the Slovenian Public Opinion (SJM) survey showed that this view was shared by the majority of Slovenes. The percentage of those who agreed with the statement 'Slovenes have for many years contributed an equal part to the development of European culture' remained more or less stable throughout the period of preparations for the accession: more than two thirds of respondents either 'fully agreed' or 'agreed' with this statement (SJM 1997/I = 69.9%, SJM 2001/I = 70.5%, SJM 2002/I = 67.3%); somewhat less than one fifth of respondents 'neither agreed nor disagreed' (SJM 1997/I = 15.9%, SJM 2001/I = 12.1%, SJM 2002/I = 19.6%), while well under one tenth of respondents 'did not agree' or 'did not agree at all' (SJM 1997/I = 5.6%,

41 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 4.

42 Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 Lessons*, European Commission, 2004, p. 11.

43 Evropska unija odgovarja na vaša vprašanja (The European Union Answers Your Questions), The Info Center of the European Commission Delegation in Slovenia, Center Evropa, 2003.

44 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 3.

45 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 2.

46 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5. After all, EU enlargement or not, in the art of cooking there has never been a real frontier separating Austrian and Slovenian Styria. (Dobro jutro, Evropska unija) (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal, Dobro jutro*, April 2004, p. 10).

SJM 2001/1 = 7.6%, SJM 2002/1 = 7%) (Toš et al. 1999, 712, Toš et al. 2004, 248, 365).

The same survey showed that people were more concerned about the future of Slovenian culture within the EU than about its role in the past. Defying the postulates of the dominant meta discourse, the respondents were much more realistic, indeed increasingly so, about the prospects (or absence thereof) for affirming Slovenian culture in the new environment. Accordingly, over the years, the percentage of those who agreed with the statement ‘Mixing of cultures and cultural influences within the EU will enrich Slovenian culture and lead to its recognition in the European cultural space’ decreased from 38.6% in 1997 (SJM 1997/1) to 30.2% in 2001 (SJM 2001/1) and only 27.4% in 2002 (SJM 2002/1). And, conversely, the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement ‘The EU will become dominated by the strong influence of large cultures such as German, French and English, which will, in time, begin to threaten the existence of smaller cultures, including Slovenian’ gradually increased, i.e. from 40.4% in 1997 (SJM 1997/1) to 51.3% in 2001 (SJM 2001/1) and 51.2% in 2002 (SJM 2002/1) (Toš et al. 1999, 725, Toš et al. 2004, 255, 369). The table below (Toš et al. 1999, 720, Toš et al. 2004, 154, 252, 368) shows answers to the question whether Slovenia’s membership in the EU would be beneficial or harmful for Slovenian culture. The closer the day of joining the EU, the smaller was the share of those who were convinced that it would be beneficial, and the larger the share of those who expressed apprehensions.

SJM	1997/1	1999/4	2001/1	2002/1
BENEFICIAL	41.4%	41.7%	37.1%	35.6%
HARMFUL	29.5%	31.9%	39.4%	41.6%
DON'T KNOW	29.0%	26.3%	23.5%	22.8%

In short, what the new Eurocentric meta discourse proclaimed was, literally, rising ‘from the ashes’ (of some Balkan or other eastern country) and ‘climbing to the (European) stars!’ As the American political scientist of Romanian descent, Vladimir Tismaneanu, claims (1998, 142), ‘the “return to Europe” was an important political myth of the revolutions of 1989.’ Dissidents hailed it, hoping ‘for a fast integration into the West’, yet ‘what happened in fact was a slow and often frustrating process in which the European Community showed little hurry to admit the poor

Eastern relations into its midst.' For Puntscher Riekmann (1997, 65), too, 'the Return to Europe' was the 'bizarre formula ... adopted by many Central and East European intellectuals after the demise of the Soviet Empire.' So it is not surprising that 'the main European myth today is the myth of Europe's unity' (ibid. 60).

How, then, is it possible that 'we are becoming part of it now, if 'we have always been part of it'?' How is it possible that we now witness the *ultimate Europeanisation of a small country with a great and troubled history* (Žurnal's editor),<sup>47</sup> if we have always been part of *Europe*? In my opinion, this is a typical case of the strategy of generating difference/sameness – we are simultaneously 'separated' and 'one' – whereby the contradiction is resolved through the 'transition' from one state to the other. Inevitably, the initiation of a group that undergoes transition involves the furnishing of proof that it deserves unification and advancement to a 'higher' status. This contradiction can be explained with the help of 'colonial mimicry' discourse, a theory developed by Homi Bhabha (2003, 109-111) referring to a situation not so different from ours as it may appear at first glance. In this discourse, the colonized natives *are almost the same, but not quite the same* as their colonizers, i.e. the members of the 'ruling,' and hence, naturally, 'higher' culture. Jeffs (2003, 98) concludes that 'precisely the incessant repetition of and emphasis on the Central European and Euro-Atlantic identity of Slovenia reveals that it is a dubious issue; neither the subject who pronounces this nor the addressee are entirely convinced of its truthfulness; the need to confirm it repeatedly points to its ambiguity.' The situation in which the Slovenes (and other newcomers to *Europe*) found themselves within this new Eurocentric meta discourse is one in which we are 'almost European, but not quite European;' or, in other words, 'soon to be Europeanized Non-Europeans, who still have to learn a lot about being European.' Trainees, in one word.

A good illustration of such an attitude is the introductory text by the former Minister of European Affairs entitled *Slovenia Has Graduated*, which appeared in the booklet *Slovenia and the European Union on Negotiations and Their Implications* (Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003). According to the minister, *five years ago Slovenia decided to enroll for a course of European affairs at the European Union University in Brussels; the fundamental subjects were the*

<sup>47</sup> Žurnal, 30 April, 2004, p. 2.

*European legal order, alignment, negotiations, 31 thematic areas (...). True, copying was allowed, but it was ineffective without knowledge and learning.* He then proceeds to describe the difficulties encountered by the ‘student,’ but despite these, the outcome was a *truly thick stack of papers, a genuine piece of graduate work, and a very complex one, too.* Slovenia graduated in European affairs on December 13 last year, obtaining a good average mark and completing the course within the set time limit. The degree, in the form of the accession treaty, will be conferred at a ceremony that will take place on April 16 in Athens. Therefore, what we have here is ‘teacher’ Europe, on the one hand, and diligent ‘student’ Slovenia, on the other, who, without doubt, deserves membership.<sup>48</sup> This opinion is shared by the then foreign minister who stated: *Slovenia deserves this great change.*<sup>49</sup>

Yet, the symbolic insignia of transition from *the Balkans to Europe, from dictatorship to democracy*, date from an even earlier period. The title of the political program presented at the last congress of the Communist League of Slovenia in December 1989, which in 1990 became the election slogan of the Party of Democratic Changes (SDP), the predecessor of the present Social Democrats (SD), was *Europe Now!* No less symptomatic was the name of SDP’s bulletin, i.e. *Evropa*, which was published for two years during the early 1990s. Similarly, until January 15, 1992, that is to say, *the day Europe recognized the independence of Slovenia*, the entrance to Ljubljana University was marked by a statue of the leading Slovenian communist from Tito’s era, Edvard Kardelj, whose name the university bears to date. However, after December 15, it was replaced with a sculpture by France Kralj dating from 1955 and dedicated to Europe (the group includes both protagonists from the Greek myth – the alluring young woman Europa and Zeus in the shape of bull). This *perseus-troika* was also identifiable in the official sign used in the celebrations that marked the tenth anniversary of Slovenia’s independence in June 2001. The motif was a retreating red communist star giving way to the yellow European star.<sup>50</sup> A similar duality was present in the sign chosen for

48 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 11.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

50 Just in passing, the *Delo*’s columnist writing for *Tema Dneva* (Today’s Topic) in a text entitled *From One Star to Many Small Stars*, which appeared on the eve of the enlargement (April 30, 2004), made a meaningful slip: *It was fourteen or fifteen years ago that we cut out from the flag the large yellow star, which many considered too ugly and excessively abused, and that we became so enthusiastic about twelve small stars – ones on a royal blue background.* (emphasis by M.V.; the author intended to allude to the red, communist star).

the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Anti-Fascist Women's Front in Slovenia, in October 2003.

YELLOWING STAR



Slovenian ethnocentrism, which draws primarily on natural and cultural traits and economic achievements (for want of other mainstays, or because of the controversial nature of some historical, ideological and religious factors), takes on different appearances. It is identifiable, say, in the election brochure of the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), where one can find statements such as *let us show Europe and the world that Slovenia is the most beautiful country*. The same brochure also reminds us that *we inherited from our predecessors and from nature one of the most beautiful parts of our planet - Slovenia. Our country*. The Slovenian People's Party (SLS) claims that *we are the nation of poets and that Slovenia is the green pearl of Europe*. On the whole, *Slovenia is my favorite and most beautiful Europe*.<sup>51</sup> The President of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts expressed his pleasure at the fact that *both the world and Europe think that we are the best among all Central European candidates*.<sup>52</sup> In short, *Bravo, Slovenia*.<sup>53</sup> Similarly flattering were the president of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, who affirmed that *in a few years Slovenia will become a little Switzerland in the European Union*,<sup>54</sup> and the mayor of Collio (the Italian part of the Brda region), who claimed that *Slovenia has always (...) been in the center of Europe*.<sup>55</sup>

Ethnocentrism is further upgraded and elevated to Eurocentrism, and 'Slovenianness' to 'EuroSlovenianness.' The former president of the Slovenian Parliament appealed to Slovenes to *become the bright star of Europe*.<sup>56</sup> The EU is, in

51 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 26.

52 *Delo*, 28 April, 2004, p. 5.

53 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 8.

54 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 29.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

56 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, cover page.

fact, unique;<sup>57</sup> it is a project of a democratic and integrated Europe, which, in the opinion of the Slovenian president, is the most advanced project in the history of humanity;<sup>58</sup> on another occasion, while he still held the office of prime minister, he stated that for the first time in history this part of the world is witnessing the emergence of such a bold structure – the economically and politically integrated states of Europe.<sup>59</sup> The prime minister of Ireland and the then President in Office of the European Council, stated that this was a unique endeavor in world history whose driving force was the spirit of tolerance and respect for difference.<sup>60</sup> All problems and difficulties should be addressed in the European spirit, which, of course, is peaceful, based on dialogue and agreement. The Church, too, remembered to point out its own contribution to the dissemination and affirmation of the values thanks to which European culture became world culture.<sup>61</sup> Eurocentrism here appears as the highest form of ethnocentrism and as an ultimate realization of the national potential within the wider community of equal partners.

However, all this talk about the protection of Slovenian culture and the sensitivity of a united Europe, which presumably guarantees respect for the Slovenian language, and all the boasting that Slovene will become one of the 20 official languages of the EU, that it will certainly not be endangered within the EU,<sup>62</sup> that it will be possible to hear Slovene in Brussels and all across Europe (all this coupled with lamentation over its inferior status in the past, within the former Yugoslavia, where it was quite neglected at the national level)<sup>63</sup>

57 A leaflet and a map entitled *Panorama Evropske unije (Panorama of the European Union)*, a European Commission publication, 2003. There is one curious detail here: the publisher of the leaflet explicitly allowed its reproduction (*This publication may be reproduced*, says a line on the back page). I have never seen anything like this in any medium.

58 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10.

59 *Slovenija – Doma v Evropi (Slovenia At Home in Europe)* – a symbolic passport, Government Public Relations and Media Office, and the Government Office for European Affairs, 1998.

60 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 5.

61 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 2.

62 *Slovenija in Evropska unija o pogajanjih in njihovih posledicah (Slovenia and the European Union on Negotiations and Their Implications)*, Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 93. Among other things, we can read that it depends on ourselves how our legal right to use Slovene in European institutions will actually be exercised in practice. See also other publications, for example, *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji (Slovenes in the European Union)*, Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

63 The former foreign minister, in *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 27.

proved to be wide of the mark.<sup>64</sup> The fallacy of these statements became evident at an early stage, when the name European Union was translated as *Evropska unija* rather than *Evropska zveza*, although *zveza* is an adequate Slovene counterpart of the foreign (albeit Slovenized) word *unija*.<sup>65</sup> This by no means indicates linguistic purism on my part. What I actually find annoying is the fact that we were simultaneously hearing heated debates about the bill on the public use of Slovene, which proposed, among other things, that the foreign names of companies should be ‘rendered’ into Slovene (Article 20), because our language was presumably *endangered and critically impoverished in public use*.

In this case it is obvious that a political decision prevailed over linguistic concerns, a fact which has been openly admitted, supported by the logic of power, in the brochure *Slovenia in the European Union?* (page 11). There, one can read that, *If in translating this term we adhered to the SSKJ (The Dictionary of the Standard Slovenian Language), we would have caused terminological confusion*. The same approach was employed when translating the *Economic and Monetary Union* (EMU), which was rendered *Ekonomaska in monetarna unija* (although all three words have their counterparts in Slovene i.e. *Gospodarska in Denarna Zveza*). Yet, a more consistent approach would not have been without precedent. *The International Monetary Fund* (IMF) has always been translated as *Mednarodni denarni sklad*.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the translators gave priority to the preservation of abbreviations (EU, EMU), as was the case with certain abbreviations used across the former Yugoslavia (for example AVNOJ).

Another similar example is the ‘spelling dispute’ that developed in September and October 2004 over the (non)uniform spelling of the common European currency,

64 The former president of the Slovenian Parliament established, in his characteristic style, *that language is not all, but without language, without Slovene, all is nothing*. *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 26.

65 Much less suitable would be other Slovenian counterparts such as *zdrufba, skupnost or združenje* (that roughly translate as association and community). The reasons for the selection of the term *unija* rather than *zveza*, given in the brochure *Slovenia in the European Union? 178 Answers Relating to Slovenia's Accession to the EU* (Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 9), strike me as entirely unconvincing: the term *zveza* is supposedly too general, while *unija* is said to be a *technical term*. The nebulous justification of this decision is as follows: *a political union is the result of unification, that is to say, the process of integrating political institutions and procedures ... 'Evropska zveza' could as well be another type of association of European countries, while the 'Evropska unija' implies the "economic and political union" of specific countries as it took place through the history of the integration of West Europe (i.e. the process of unification)*. (Ibid.). Whatever the justification, since the day Slovenia signed the accession treaty, the established term has been officially in use, *without harm to meaning and without causing any kind of ambiguity*. Therefore, *Evropska unija*.

66 There are more examples of this kind, say, *Soviet Union – Sovjetska zveza*.



euro. The Slovenian spelling (*evro*) is different from that used in the majority of member states (and so is the spelling used in Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, and Hungary).<sup>67</sup> In December 1995, the European Council adopted a resolution stipulating that deviations from the common spelling, euro, were not allowed. This was confirmed in September 2004 by the Dutch finance minister Gerrit Zalm (*Spelling must be the same for all*).<sup>68</sup> Of course, he sees the solution to this problem in a uniform spelling across the member states. *We have not been aware of this problem, but we managed to settle it, which proves that we know how to resolve difficult issues.*<sup>69</sup> The European Council described this as a *technical problem*. Presumably, the uniform spelling of the common currency is necessary because it is stipulated by the treaty establishing the Constitution of Europe.<sup>70</sup> What is allowed, however, are different motifs used on the coins. Each country can choose its own design for the coins, but the name of the currency must be the same everywhere, i.e. cent (and not, for example, *stotin*, which would be the Slovenian translation of cent).<sup>71</sup>

This attitude initially provoked the usual laments on the Slovenian side. The author of an editorial in the *Delo*, for example, seasoned his rhetorical question with the inevitable Yugophobia. (*Could it be that the European Brussels is now turning into the former “Yugo” Belgrade as we knew it in the past, where the public use of Slovene was never duly respected, and where the federal bodies always found a way to squeeze from us, the richest republic, as much money as possible to fill the state treasury?*).<sup>72</sup> We did not have to wait long for the official answer from Slovenia. As could be expected, it was dual: *political linguistic concerns* had supposedly been resolved in a *practical manner*.<sup>73</sup> The finance minister and the governor of the Bank of Slovenia were unanimous that the spelling euro should be used in official communications with European institutions and other member states, as well

67 The case of Greece is special in that their alphabet and script are different, so it was agreed that they could write the name of the currency in the Greek alphabet.

68 STA, 11 September, 2004.

69 *Delo*, 13 September, 2004, cover page.

70 What is ironic is the firm insistence on a minor issue of spelling, which stands in striking contrast to the much weaker determination to harmonize economic policy. On concluding his term in office, the former President of the European Commission publicly admitted in a self-critical manner that, *We have the euro, but we don't have a harmonized economic policy*.

71 After all, this is a good metaphor for *equality within Europe and its respect for diversity*. The expression of national peculiarities is limited to 'small change,' in this case euro coins, while important issues such as bank notes are subject to uniformity.

72 *Delo*, 15 September, 2004, cover page.

73 *Delo*, 13 September, 2004, cover page.

as on coins. At home, however, a different approach will be used. As the Ministry of Finance explained, in everyday life in Slovenia, we shall continue to use our spelling, i.e. *evro*, in accordance with the spelling rules of the Slovenian language.<sup>74</sup> The head of the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the EU explained that we *accepted the spelling of euro with a 'u' because this is the proper name of the currency and is already in use throughout the EU legislation, but we insisted on our right to use our national rules of declension in which suffixes are appended to the root.*

The government's explanation of the compromise (also supported by the Government Office for European Affairs) was that *the term 'euro' was not derived from any European language and is not alterable in any language, but it can be rendered in various scripts; also, it is a neologism, not derived from the term Europe, and the compromise that has been achieved enables speakers of Slovene to decline the noun in accordance with Slovenian grammar rules, taking the root of the word as the basis.*<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it is *euro* in foreign correspondence, and *evro* at home.<sup>76</sup> The analogy with the colonial situation, where diglossia was an established rule, is again more than obvious: the language of the natives could be freely used in informal contexts, in private conversations, and among natives themselves, but in the public sphere the ruling language was that of the colonial masters. This approach was inadvertently confirmed by the Slovenian MEPs in December 2004 when they commented on the use of Slovene in the European Parliament: *I use Slovene whenever possible; and, I speak Slovene whenever I have the opportunity, although these are few.* It seems that it is possible to speak about the *absolutely equal status of Slovene with regard to other European languages*, but only *if not ordered otherwise*, to use the formulation typical of the rhetoric of the former Yugoslav People's Army.

74 Just to remind readers: in the former supra-national community, i.e. Yugoslavia, names on the banknotes were rendered in all the Yugoslav languages (Serbo-Croat, Slovene and Macedonian) and in both scripts (Latin and Cyrillic).

75 POP TV, 12 October, 2004. The SNS party opposed the compromise made by the government, and the Slavic Languages Society of Slovenia demanded that Slovenian spelling should be used in all texts written in Slovene; also, it required that the government achieve an agreement in Brussels that the name of the common currency on banknotes would be rendered in various languages, including Slovene.

76 The POP TV survey conducted on 12 and 13 October, 2004 showed that the majority of respondents supported this compromise: 59% were of the opinion that the 'same name should be used everywhere' (i.e. euro); 20% thought that 'the spelling *evro* should be preserved as well,' while 19% 'did not care.' <[http://24ur.com/bin/polls.php?&page=3&start\\_page=2&act=next](http://24ur.com/bin/polls.php?&page=3&start_page=2&act=next), last accessed on December 7, 2004>.

By way of conclusion, it could be said that Euroslavonian discourse rests on an objectivist and evolutionary (*eu*volutionary) paradigm of development made to the measure of the politically and economically most powerful states. Or, in other words, apparently ‘all roads lead to Europe.’ Slovenia’s membership of the EU is not presented as a ‘subjective possibility’ but as an ‘objective necessity.’ It has not been our ‘choice of the present’ but a ‘historical act,’ not an *intent* but a fact, and not a ‘matter of choice’ but an ‘outburst of immediacy.’ *History has made a step forward*, asserted the president of Slovenia,<sup>77</sup> while an Italian senator of Slovene descent thinks that *history indeed dictated events and people assisted therein*.<sup>78</sup> *Once a part of the less developed Balkan communist state, we have evolved into a modern, developed democratic state that is now joining the community of the most developed and richest countries*,<sup>79</sup> stated the head of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. *Today we experience history*,<sup>80</sup> proclaimed the mayor of Trieste. The SDS brochure referred to *our European mission*. The editor of *Družina*, in an editorial of May 2, expressed his conviction that *Europe, whatever it looks like or will look like, is a necessity if we want to maintain peace and solidarity among nations, if we want progress and prosperity, and if we wish well to us and our successors*; this opinion was shared by the president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement, who stated that *a united Europe is a necessity*,<sup>81</sup> and *Slovenia has nothing to fear within it*.<sup>82</sup>

This type of silent recognition of the existence of two separate entities, Europe and Slovenia in this case, which are again coming together, since, in fact, the two are one, is a typical trait of every political mythology of transition. Deliberate fabrication of dissatisfaction with oneself, of flaws in our history and present, the exposure of our deficits and handicaps, the search for ‘something more’ of which we know little or which we lacked, but which can be given to us by someone else – all this simply ‘compels’ us to make a change, or makes it self-evident that we need a change. On the other hand, the sense that we are in a transition phase gives legitimacy to any kind of strategy the dominant

77 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

79 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 5.

80 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 46.

81 *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji* (Slovenes in the European Union), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

82 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 27.

political power chooses to adopt, so we are expected to accept anything and endure anything in order to achieve the desired goal, i.e. a transition to a ‘higher stage’ and a ‘new condition.’ Just like any other myth, *Europe*, too, functions as a complete structure, as a consecrated community, a new *sacrament*, and a mythical Pantheon, a set of designations which, however, implies an original flaw in those states and regions heading for it. Accordingly, during the accession period, Slovenia (and other candidates) feverishly directed all their efforts towards the correction of these alleged imperfections, a task that could be completed only by becoming a *member* of the new community.

However, it would be erroneous to regard the political and bureaucratic structures of the EU as the main source of this meta discourse. The Slovenian public has been served this myth primarily by Slovenian speakers and through the Slovenian media. The examples analyzed in this study show not only that we were presented in this way elsewhere and by others, but, more alarmingly, that we were so presented by our new domestic apologists of myths (or, rather, the apologists of the mythical New). What they were doing was not simply a copycat imitation of the ‘great ideal’; rather, they were inventing their own constructs, whose most striking characteristic was an incredible masochistic self-pity coupled with almost complete historical amnesia. Such a self-condemning attitude actually suggests a voluntary surrender to this new Eurocentric meta discourse and its obscene game, which may be described as ‘all or nothing.’ The flaws in those nations bound for Europe are actually an asset in the hands of mythmakers; they are their brainchild and their trump card, and this tactic is effective thanks to the historical amnesia of the addressees of this myth. The exclusivity of *Europe* rests on the despondent mentality of *us*, the *late-comers*, and the air of triumph of this *Europe* thrives on the sense of remoteness, backwardness and smallness in those who are about to *join it* (see Velikonja, 2003, 40-42).

### III. EULDORADO – CONTENT OF NEW EUROCENTRISM

*The sky is dotted with shining golden stars  
The most beautiful and dearest among them Slovenia.  
Its bright sisters quietly call on it from the distance:  
Come, come to us tonight, we've been waiting for you a long time!  
Slovenia already has its home among the stars of the century,  
Slovenia will shine in the future!*

*Beauty scattered from Triglav to the coastline,  
Thousands of diligent hands and every one soft as a child's,  
This is our hundred-year-old dream found on our soil,  
We would now like to enjoy it united with others.  
Slovenia among the stars...*

Quintet Dori (a pop-folk quintet), *Slovenia Among the Stars*,  
from the album of the same name, 2002

#### WHAT IS EUROPE AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The most outstanding among the terms frequently used in connection with Europe is *opportunity*. This term is used by the former prime minister in his introductory text to the brochure *The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens*,<sup>83</sup> where he speaks about *our opportunity and historical obligation*. It appeared in a statement by the prime minister of Ireland, the presiding state at the time, who asserted that *the enlargement will bring new opportunities for all members of the Union*.<sup>84</sup> This conviction was also shared by an LDS/DESUS candidate in the European elections (*Europe is an opportunity for all*), and an SDS candidate in whose opinion *the EU offers an opportunity to reinforce our identity even further*. In the SLS party bulletin, their colleague, also an MEP candidate, writes that *in this way we create new opportunities for economic development*. A joint publication of the Association for Technical Culture of Slovenia and the Association of Pensioners' Societies of Slovenia, sponsored by the European Union, was entitled *European Union – An Opportunity for Elder People, Too* (it presented lectures, conferences, round table talks etc.).

In political and economic discourses alike, this *opportunity* generally came with an important explanation that the goal

83 Published by the European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office in 2004.

84 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 5.

(*development, prosperity, success etc.*) could be achieved if we are sufficiently prepared (*Let us show what we know! Also, We are entering a new world, but everything depends on us alone, as the ZLSD candidates claimed in their presentations*). *Nobody will pat us on the head; we are expected to collaborate actively, which involves hard and serious work.*<sup>85</sup> The president of the state also pointed out this fact: *We are not joining a table laid for lunch and awaiting the new guests. Much serious work awaits us. Many challenges /.../; and we should keep in mind that no one will bestow presents on us, as no one has done in the past. Everything depends on us.*<sup>86</sup> Similarly, the Government Public Relations and Media Office warned that *the European Union is by no means a promised land and, in addition to numerous advantages ... its less favorable sides will also transpire over time. However, it should be stressed that our joining the European Union primarily creates possibilities and opportunities, and it entirely depends on us whether or not, and how, we will use them.*<sup>87</sup>

The president of the Slovenian Parliament is convinced that *we will have to rely on our own creativity, knowledge and distinction. The EU offers possibilities and opportunities, but how many of these Slovenia will turn to its advantage depends on Slovenia itself.*<sup>88</sup> The president of the Confederation of Trade Unions 90 (KS 90) stated that *we are entering the harsh European reality /.../ and that we are approaching a time of new opportunities and possibilities.*<sup>89</sup> Or, as one LDS/DESUS candidate in the European parliamentary elections vividly described, *the effect of exposure to the European draught will be as beneficial as that of the Kras burja [a strong wind in the Karst region] that blows from the hills towards the sea, freshening and clearing up the skies.* The draught also figured in a statement by the prime minister who said that Slovenian identity is now *willfully exposed to the European draught.*<sup>90</sup> Obviously, this discourse also involved 'socio-Darwinian' warnings to the effect that the EU *brings a host of opportunities for those who are good, but also competition and difficulties for those who are inept* (the former Minister of European Affairs).<sup>91</sup>

85 Goriška, May, 2004, p. 2.

86 Primorski dnevnik, 1 May, 2004, p. 10, 25.

87 Slovenija v Evropski uniji? 178 odgovorov o vključevanju Slovenije v EU (Slovenia in the European Union? 178 Answers Relating to Slovenia's Accession to the EU), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 33.

88 Delo, 30 April, 2004, p. 2.

89 Primorski dnevnik, 1 May, 2004, p. 41.

90 EU je tu!: Vodič za nove državljane Unije (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

91 Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji (Slovenes in the European Union), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

Another term frequently exploited by new Eurocentrism is *future*. As the Russian-American literary scholar Svetlana Boym says (2001, 221), ‘for marginal Europeans (the immigrants to the continent, those from behind the Iron Curtain, the Europeans without euros), the yearning for Europe was never oriented toward the past but toward the future.’ The Slovenian prime minister assured us that the *European story of Slovenia is a story of the future*, and that *it enables us to participate in the decision making process now and in the shaping of our common future*. He concludes in a sporting spirit: *in the next lap, we will be the winners*.<sup>92</sup> The president of Parliament spoke about *our European future*,<sup>93</sup> the president of the state about *building the Europe of the future*,<sup>94</sup> and the EU ambassador to Slovenia said that it was *necessary to look into the future*.<sup>95</sup> The mayor of Nova Gorica was certain that the *common future will bring benefits to all*.<sup>96</sup> The Pope’s wish is that Europe would grow (*May it grow as a Europe of the Spirit, in continuity with the best of its history, of which holiness is the highest expression*).<sup>97</sup>

Understandably, this ‘futurism’ was also present in the campaign for the European parliamentary elections. In the ZLSD brochure, one could read that *this vision of future Europe corresponds to the interests of Slovenia*; also, *Europe grows! Let us grow with it!* and *Say ‘Yes’ to the values of the European future*. The LDS/DESUS spoke about *confrontations with future challenges*. The notion of the future was also markedly present in the propaganda discourse of the SDS party, which mentioned the *European future of Slovenia*, and urged us to *build a future worthy of the Slovenes*. The SDS candidates called on readers to be ready to confront the *common challenges of the European future* because we are now *equally involved in the shaping of the common European future*.<sup>98</sup> The classic mythological syntagms, *the golden era* and *safe homes*, have also found their place in this discourse. The president of the SDS party, in an election leaflet, mentioned the opportunity to *shape the golden age of the Slovenes*, saying that

92 *EU je tu!*: Vodič za nove državljane Unije (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

93 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 26.

94 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10.

95 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 20.

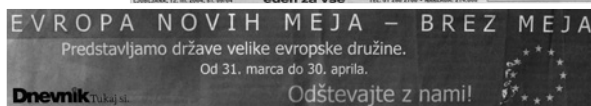
96 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 31.

97 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 4.

98 Explicit references to the *future* were also present in this party’s parliamentary election campaign in October 2000 (see Velikonja, 2001, 82).

membership in NATO and the EU ensures *safe homes and opportunities for faster economic development*.<sup>99</sup>

... 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, EUROPE



Apparently, people eagerly awaited this *future*, counting days to the enlargement. Hence the ‘magical’ words *soon, another few (months, days)* and so on, generally found in all political mythologies of transition, revolution and other great changes. ‘*In a few days, we will ‘be part of Europe,*’” is how one editor addressed readers in the May issue of *Knjižna panorama*; ‘*Join us in the countdown!*’ invited the *Dnevnik* daily. The image on a Polish-made matchbox offered a reminder that it was *five minutes to midnight*. In this picture, the sky is *European blue*, the hands of the clock are *Polish red-and-white*, the stars that stood in place of the digits are *European yellow*, and superimposed on this scene is a *yellow comet with the inscription Europe*. Many media staged the enlargement countdown, among these the *Žurnal* weekly, which in the top right corner of its cover page carried the inscription ... *weeks to go!* superimposed on the European symbol of yellow stars depicted on a blue background; the *Večer* daily featured a caricature of a musician in traditional folk costume with a harmonica and the inscription ... *days to go!* shown under the

<sup>99</sup> *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 27.



European flag; a similar image could be found on page two of the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In Nova Gorica, the municipal building was decorated with a huge clock, blue with a rim of yellow stars, with the inscription ... *days to entry into Europe*, as if declaring a new European, Gorizia/Nova Gorica time. At the celebration in Nova Gorica, the president of the European Commission and the Slovenian prime minister jointly counted down ‘the last seconds to’, and similar scenes could be seen in many towns across the nine new member states.

This mood of impatient waiting and the motif of ‘days remaining to’ were exploited, not at all surprisingly, by various commercial companies for their own purposes. Interspar ran ahead of time by promoting *European prices, lower prices!* with an important additional remark: *Already!* Its leaflets featured a mascot in the shape of the European currency, i.e. a blue € sign with yellow eyes. Weeks before the enlargement day, the Ljubljana based AMS company advertised its water filter vacuum cleaners by exhorting customers with a paraphrase of the title of a Slovene oldie-goldie, *Don't wait on Europe; don't wait till May, and Don't wait till 2004. Buy today at European prices.*

The moment the new members joined the EU, the dimension of the future gave way to present-time adverbials such as *this moment, from now on, and new. Now, it's for real*, was how the representative of E. Leclerc hypermarket opened his speech. *From now on, they will look differently on us*, said the mayor of Koper.<sup>100</sup> *Europe now!* was a title in an Austrian-Slovenian publication.<sup>101</sup> *Now.* was a crisp message by the Nova Slovenija party (N.si), inviting its supporters to cast a vote at the European parliamentary elections; it was pictured against a blue background with stars only vaguely suggested. Almost every speech or presentation made mention of the *new Europe*. Items said to be on its agenda were a *new individuality, new economy, new relations* (an Italian MEP)<sup>102</sup> and more. We are in for *harmony on the new European horizon* (a Trieste artist, creator of a mosaic in Gorizia/Nova Gorica);<sup>103</sup> *Europe, the old lady, is obviously laying down new rules; in fact, we should put it differently and say that it is we, free and equal nations, who are writing these rules* (the former Slovenian prime minister).<sup>104</sup>

100 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May 2004, p. 46.

101 Dobro jutro, Evropska unija (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal*, Dobro jutro), April 2004, p. 4.

102 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 8.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

104 *Ibid.*, 1 May, 2004, p. 12, 13.

EUROCHEAP

Center rabljenih vozil

Nove  
evropske  
cene!

EVROPSKE CENE  
NIŽJE CENE!

ŽE SEDAJ!

SPAR

INTERSPAR

V EVROPO  
TUDI Z VEČ KOT

20%  
NIŽJIMI  
CENAMI

DISKONTI  
&  
Trend

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65.-

By entering the EU, Slovenia presumably became the center of the new community. The title of *Žurnal's* editorial on the eve of the enlargement day read, *The Hub of Europe*, while the headline on the cover page of the *Primorski dnevnik* read, *From now on together in the heart of Europe*. Slovenia is presumably the geographical center of Europe,<sup>105</sup> or rather, it is in the heart of Europe.<sup>106</sup> The former foreign minister was certain that *actually, in certain respects, Slovenia is returning to the center of European life where it had already been in the past, perhaps now even more to the center than it used to be.*<sup>107</sup> Promotional material from E. Leclerc hypermarket stressed: *My heart beats in Slovenia, in the heart of Europe*, while in the concluding section they expressed a wish that *Slovenian manufacturing industry in Europe will grow even stronger!*<sup>108</sup> Since these statements could lead our respected western and northern neighbors to lose their own sense of centrality within Europe, the governor of the Austrian state of Styria (Steiermark) hastened to declare that they lived in the *center of the region of the future*.<sup>109</sup> The Austrian Business Agency employed the slogan *Austria – the Center of Europe*, and it seems that a no less central position within the new Europe is occupied by the Gorizia region;<sup>110</sup> the town of Gorizia itself, after being confined to the margins for decades, as its mayor said, has now become the *center of Europe*.<sup>111</sup> Similarly fortunate is Trieste, which has been transformed from a *border town* into the *capital of the region*, according to its mayor.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, the entire region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia has presumably become the *center of Europe*, according to the president of the European

105 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 8.

106 *Slovenija – Doma v Evropi* (Slovenia At Home in Europe) – a symbolic passport, Government Public Relations and Media Office and Government Office for European Affairs, 1998.

107 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 27.

108 One local official shrewdly concluded that *the Slovenian prime minister is right in the center of Europe* (Anton Rop, *Evrop e*), *although the name does not have the best connotations* (*rop* in Slovene means robbery). <[http://www.rkc.si/aktualno/EU\\_slovesnosti/jepca.html](http://www.rkc.si/aktualno/EU_slovesnosti/jepca.html)>, last accessed on December 16, 2004).

109 Dobro jutro, Evropska unija (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal*, Dobro jutro), April 2004, p. 3.

110 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May 2004, p. 10.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 31. The president of the Gorica region similarly stated that, *with the elimination of the border, we will no longer live on the neglected margin but in the heart of Europe* (*Ibid.*, 33).

112 *Ibid.*, p. 12. For the Pope, the *spiritual capital of Europe* is Santiago de Compostela. The same formulation was used by the European Commission President in his video message to around three hundred pilgrims and forty bishops and priests who gathered in the *spiritual capital of European unity* (*Družina*, 2. May 2004, p. 9). In April 2004, the town hosted the congress entitled *European Union: Hope and Responsibility – The Development of European Unity from a Theological Perspective*.

Commission.<sup>113</sup> Speaking from the tri-border point where Italy, Austria and Slovenia meet, the mayor of Tarvisio realized that *Today we know that the heart of the new Europe beats here.*<sup>114</sup> Naturally, the new European location of Slovenia had to be duly marked at the very core of the country, in Spodnja Slivnica, Slovenia's geometrical center (GEOSS), where one week after the enlargement there was staged a symbolic raising of the European flag and the unveiling of a memorial plaque.

SLOVENIA = THE HEART OF EUROPE



Europe was frequently associated with domestic notions and corporative terms such as *home*, *fatherland*, *family*, and the inevitable *our own*, *brotherhood* etc. In an election brochure from the LDS/DESUS, one could read that we were entering the *common European home*; the SDS spoke about the necessity of *building together our home of harmonious and peaceful coexistence*, and of *preserving Slovenia as a friendly home even inside Europe*; the SLS brochure spoke about *Europe that will become our pleasant home*, and a Slovenian speaker, addressing the public during the visit of the President of the European Commission to Slovenia, spoke about *a new, shared European home.*<sup>115</sup> The prime minister stressed how important it was to be a *sovereign and equal member of the*

113 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 8.

114 In a brochure by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO, 2003), one can find titles such as *A career in the heart of Europe* and *Living and working in the heart of Europe*; naturally, in this case it is Brussels and Luxembourg that are in the heart of Europe.

115 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 3.

*European family*,<sup>116</sup> while the president of Slovenia said that *we wish to be a constructive member of the family of developed countries*.<sup>117</sup> The president of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia announced that Slovenia will become a member of *the large family of EU member states*;<sup>118</sup> the vice-president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement stated that *it is necessary to continue to build our common European home based on Christian values, which must also be our common guide in building the Europe of the future*.<sup>119</sup> The EU was portrayed as *a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity*.<sup>120</sup> The head of the Supreme Court looked forward to *joining the family of European courts and welcoming the European Court of Justice within the family of Slovenian courts*.

The slogan promoted by the Government Public Relations and Media Office was *Slovenia! At Home in Europe*. A series of publications, contact addresses, educational and entertainment programs and talk shows were produced in order to encourage the sense of domestic coziness within the new family. Citizens could get in touch using *Europhone* at 080 2002, or the service called *Europe Direct* at 00 800 6789 1011, or *Euromailbox* at the address Tržaška 21, p.p. 632, 1000 Ljubljana; there was an *Eurobus* with a mobile library and information center touring the country, from which one could get *information about the European Union and our preparations and reasons for accession*; one could buy *europostcards* or write to *evrofon@gov.si* or *e@evropa* (listing events in Slovenia and the EU). Information was available at *europa.eu.int*, *europa.eu.int/futurum/forum*, *europa-convention.eu.int* and *evrosplet* at <http://evropa.gov.si>, and from a multitude of free brochures and compendiums such as *Slovenia in the European Union?*, *Slovenes in the European Union*, *The Integral Program Document 2004 – 2006*, *Your Companion on the Journey to Europe*, *Wandering Around Europe* (a brochure meant to bring European countries closer to the younger generation in an entertaining manner), *Panorama of the European Union*, *The European Union in Brief*, *Center Evropa Brochure*, *The Euro At Our Doorstep*, *Europe With-*

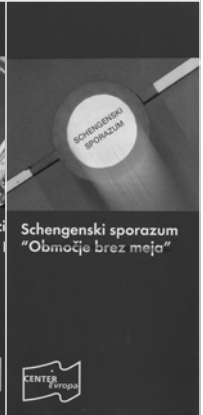
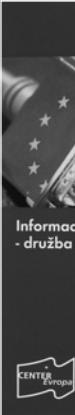
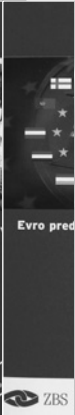
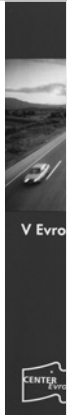
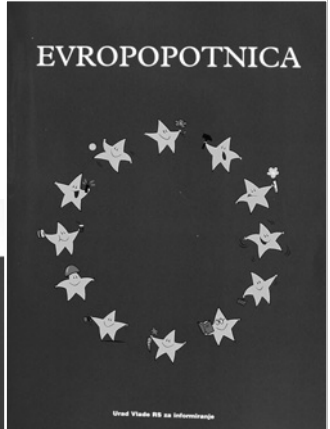
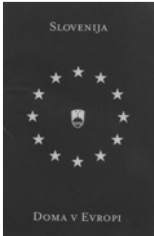
116 *EU je tu! : Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

117 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 25.

118 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

119 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 10.

120 A leaflet and a map entitled *Panorama Evropske unije* (Panorama of the European Union), a European Commission publication, 2003.



out *Frontiers, Slovenia and the European Union: On Negotiations and Their Implications*, and a radio program about the EU entitled *Yellow on Blue*. As early as 2001, the Slovenian Press Agency set up a desk for European Affairs, while the largest national Internet service provider Siol offers relevant information on the page entitled *At home in Europe* (<http://www.siol.net/Novice/EU/default.asp>).

To continue with ‘domestic and family themes,’ in an election campaign brochure, an LDS/DESUS candidate spoke about the *European family*; Slovenia was joining the *25-member European family*, wrote one local newspaper.<sup>121</sup> In the words of the governor of Styria, what we have here is *devotion to our homeland within a shared Europe*,<sup>122</sup> or the *expansion of our shared European home to include Slovenia*.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, Slovenia is becoming *part of the European family*<sup>124</sup> and a *full member of the large European family of nations* (Slovenian Roman Catholic bishops).<sup>125</sup> A series of articles carried by the *Dnevnik* daily in March and April 2004 was entitled *Presenting the States of the Large European Family*. *We are joining the large family of equal European nations*, said the mayor of Nova Gorica,<sup>126</sup> and from now on *we will be ‘theirs’, that is to say, a member of the family* (the general manager of the Slovenian Tourist Association).<sup>127</sup> The EU is *our shared European home*,<sup>128</sup> or just *our shared home*.<sup>129</sup> The EU has *accepted us as one of their own*.<sup>130</sup> An advertisement by the Austrian Shoppingcity Seiersberg addressed Slovenian customers as *part of our family and new family members*. Frequently, in advertisements and various ceremonies, the flags of the EU member states were placed alongside one another with the European flag outstanding among them. On the occasion of the Feast of Assumption in 2004, the Roman Catholic bishop of Koper explained to the congregation that, following accession to the EU, we are *even more ‘brothers and sisters.’*<sup>131</sup>

121 *Goriška*, May 2004, p. 2.

122 *Dobro jutro, Evropska unija* (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal, Dobro jutro*), April 2004, p. 3.

123 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 6.

124 *Dobro jutro, Evropska unija* (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal, Dobro jutro*), April 2004, p. 4.

125 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 3.

126 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5.

127 *Dobro jutro, Evropska unija* (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal, Dobro jutro*), April 2004, p. 4.

128 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 9.

129 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 7.

130 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 22.

131 *Delo*, 17 August, 2004, p. 2.

*Equality* is the next key word: our membership is based on equality, and the same applies to our participation in the decision making process within the EU. The president of Slovenia is convinced that *the smaller nations will sit at the table with the large nations, and it will not be possible to outvote them when it comes to their vital interests.*<sup>132</sup> An integrated Europe was said to be *a region of peace, equality in cooperation, mutual respect for cultural differences and solidarity* (Slovenian bishops of the Roman Catholic Church).<sup>133</sup> In negotiations, Slovenia is *an equal and constructive partner* (the former Minister of European Affairs).<sup>134</sup> However, there was one contradictory detail in all this – the incessant reappearance of various terms that suggested one or another form of adjustment in order to fulfill the EU requirements’ and the formulation *it is necessary to achieve European standards* in one or another area (e.g. *harmonization with the European legal system*).<sup>135</sup> The president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement was quite straightforward: *New Europe is not merely a political or economic notion, but a new outlook on the world. We must adjust to it!*<sup>136</sup> Is this to say that, first, we are ‘all adjustable’ and only then ‘all equal?’

The myth of common origins, despite past divisions and historical trials, and of our common present and common future is one among the fundamental myths in every political mythology. We are entering *the new European world* (according to the election brochure of the SDS); we are joining *Europe that, only a decade ago, was for Slovenes a promised land, a Slovenian ‘america’ [sic] of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*; that *Europe is the world of the future* (both statements are taken from an SLS brochure). The goal was *the realization of the historical idea of a united, integrated, free, pacifist and economically successful Europe*, said the former prime minister.<sup>137</sup> The *integrity of a united Europe, which is presumably constantly in the process of development, a live association of countries,*<sup>138</sup> *a community of peace* (the Austrian chancellor),<sup>139</sup> was expressed through

132 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10.

133 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 3.

134 *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji* (Slovenes in the European Union), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

135 *Slovenija in Evropska unija o pogajanjih in njihovih posledicah* (Slovenia and the European Union on Negotiations and Their Implications), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 26.

136 *Slovenke in Slovenci v Evropski uniji* (Slovenes in the European Union), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2002.

137 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 19.

138 *Slovenija in Evropska unija o pogajanjih in njihovih posledicah* (Slovenia and the European Union on Negotiations and Their Implications), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 4.

139 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 13.



syntagms such as *social ties* and *let us establish links* (the ZLSD election brochure), then *security* (the president of the European Commission assured that *disharmony and uncertainty* in Europe will be replaced by *stability and security*),<sup>140</sup> *community* (a term used by many, among them the EU ambassador to Slovenia),<sup>141</sup> *partnership* (e.g. the Italian president),<sup>142</sup> *solidarity, cooperation, tolerance, harmony, dialogue* (which is *the European approach to problem solving*, according to the high representative of the EU for the Common Foreign and Security Policy in a statement given in September 2004 in Ljubljana), *confronting challenges* (*an exciting but also extremely demanding challenge*, in the words of the EU ambassador to Slovenia),<sup>143</sup> *protection of minorities* etc. The trade unionists were convinced that workers in particular were *the protagonists of European integration*.<sup>144</sup> Those high-profile candidates running in the European elections stressed their friendship with other European politicians, their familiarity with the work of European institutions (frequently supporting these claims with footage showing them in the company of European commissioners or MEP group leaders), and the international links of their parties with similar European parties (particularly those in the European Parliament).

One newspaper headline read *United Within Europe*.<sup>145</sup> The construction company Kerakoll advertised with the slogan *We Build a United Europe*. The president of the Slovenian Pan-European movement established that *today, one cannot live alone; we are largely co-dependent* and also that *to bring together so many differences within one harmonious whole is easy to say but difficult to realize*.<sup>146</sup> One of the European goals is *to create a common European cultural space, but not at the expense of any individual national culture*.<sup>147</sup> Almost every speech or text included the word *together*. For example, the inscription on the huge clock in Nova Gorica that displayed the countdown to the accession to Europe read *Together in Europe*. Finally, the Ljubljana Association for the Protection of Animals, obviously carried away by this

140 *EU je tu!*: Vodič za nove državljane Unije (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

141 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 20.

142 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 3.

143 *Evropska unija odgovarja na vaša vprašanja* (The European Union Answers Your Questions), Info Center of the European Commission Delegation in Slovenia, Center Evropa, 2003.

144 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 41.

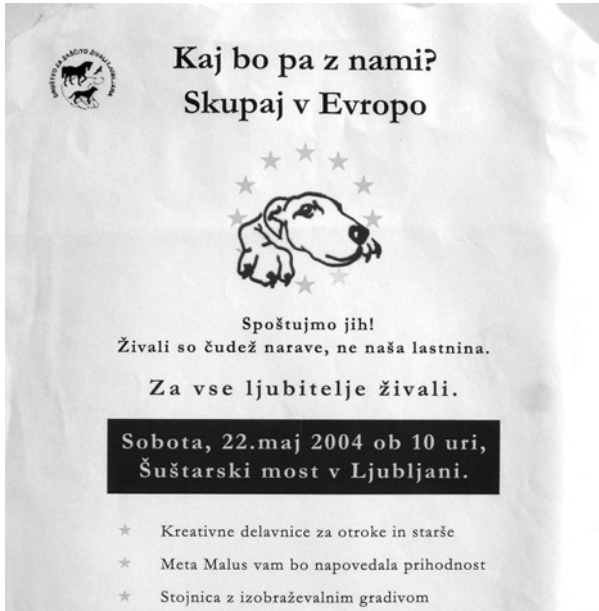
145 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

146 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 17.

147 Leaflet *Kultura v Evropski uniji* (Culture in the European Union), Center Evropa.

togetherness-spirit, invited the public to an event organized in May 2004 with the message: *What will happen to us? Going together to Europe.*

EUROPE FOR ANIMALS



Europe is supposed to *unite differences*, which is a typical integristic maxim. The leaflet and map entitled *Panorama of the European Union* contained the formula *Europeans united in diversity*, while the holiday edition of *Rzeczpospolita* spoke about *unity in difference*. The Day of Europe (which on May 9 concluded *EU Week 2004*) was celebrated under the slogan *United in Diversity*.<sup>148</sup> The essence of Europe is precisely its *diversity and mutual enrichment*, announced the president of the Slovenian Pan-European movement.<sup>149</sup> We could also read that *half a century of European integration has shown that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*.<sup>150</sup>

The new *bonds* connecting Europe were also highlighted by special actions, games and events that *symbolically linked* individual European features. Such was, for example, the *Eu-*

<sup>148</sup> The *European Week* program included film screenings, quiz shows with public figures, a competition in arts and cooked delicacies.

<sup>149</sup> *Mladina*, 28 August, 1999, p. 28.

<sup>150</sup> Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 lessons*, European Commission, 2004, p. 5.

ropean railway (a model train that travels through all European cities) by which the Ljubljana Citypark symbolically marked Slovenia's accession to the EU. DrogerieMarkt launched a sales promotion campaign in which you could save 20% off your purchases and win a trip to European cities! (and the slogan was *Hello, Europe!*). The Hypernova hypermarket organized an event entitled *European cooking* (April 30-May 1), offering a sampling of *European cuisines*,<sup>151</sup> understandably, only member states' cuisines; there were cookies in the shape of the European flag and a children's program; another contest held by the same company was entitled *Grand Entry Into the European Union!!!* Within the framework of the Culture 2000 program, the European Commission allocated 110,000 euro to the Slovenian project entitled 'Europe in Miniature' devoted to cultural heritage. It was prepared by the Volčji Potok Arboretum in cooperation with partners from Italy, Austria and Germany. Exhibition of miniature models of famous European buildings, including flower beds in the colors of European flags, art workshops and a children's program with presentations of European fairy tales and legends were held from April to September 2004.

#### EURO PLANTS



The practice frequently used in these rituals designed to forge brotherly ties, and replete with the unity rhetoric, could be described with the line 'Anyone not running (cycling, whizzing around, spraying, planting etc.) is not a European,' to paraphrase the refrain of the popular football fans'

151 A similar 'culinary stroll' entitled *Iz loncev pridruženih članic* (From the Cooking Pots of New Members) was featured in *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 10, 11.

hymn that runs ‘Anyone not jumping is not a Slovenian.’ The relay-baton was again carried as in socialist times (when it was part of a series of events entitled *The Relay of the Youth*; the baton was carried by thousands of young people across Yugoslavia to be finally handed over, with best wishes, to president Tito at the mass celebration of his birthday on May 25, the official *Day of Youth*), except that this time it was called the *Relay of Peace* (and carried along the border between Italy, Austria and Slovenia), and there was a *race without frontiers* (between Mežica in Slovenia and Wiedendorf in Austria). The media wrote about the ultramarathon runner Radovan Skubic Hilarij, who *chose Europe as the stage for his next running venture* – on April 16 he began a marathon in the *Europark Ruardi* in Zagorje (Slovenia), under the slogan *Hello, Europe!* and concluded it on May 1 in Brussels, thus becoming the first Slovene to *arrive running in Europe*. In Bovec, twenty-five parachutists from all EU states arranged themselves symbolically in the shape of the *European sun*, and a ceremonial raising of all member states’ flags was staged on the ground. At the border point shared with Austria and Italy, firemen and mountain rescuers from the three countries used *jets of colored water to paint the image of the three national flags, which met at a certain point symbolizing the integration of Europe*;<sup>152</sup> they were joined by parachutists who unfurled the flags of the three countries. Participants in the *United Europe Caravan* trekked along a section of the Hungary-Slovenia border. A group of mainly German students of the *European Business Program* in Muenster organized an event called *Cycling for Europe*, whose purpose, among other things, was to celebrate *the enlargement of the European family*. They completed around one thousand kilometers, traveling primarily across the territories of the new EU members (from Ljubljana via Zagreb, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Krakow and Wroclaw, to Prague). People were forming human chains;<sup>153</sup> cyclists, motorcyclists, divers and rowers occupied the Mura river and its banks. The mayors of Radlje in Slovenia and Grossradel in Austria planted a memorial linden tree and a chestnut tree somewhere between the two towns, and an *olive tree of peace* was

152 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May 2004, p. 12.

153 These were not always successful. For example, a *human chain across the Karavanke mountain range*, planned on May 2 at the Jepra border crossing, along with a *Holy Mass in three language and a gathering under the slogan ‘Hello, Neighbor,’* could not be carried out. Although the organizers expected around twenty thousand people who were invited to *participate and be an important link in this unique event!*, only several hundred turned up.

planted in the middle of the roundabout in Rožna dolina near the border with Italy (on this occasion, *dozens of yellow and blue balloons were released into the air*).

## EUORELAY OF YOUTH



The 2004 enlargement is not the last one. New countries that want to become European are now waiting in line. In this situation, Slovenia occupies a new, ‘bridge-building’ position pointed out by the EU ambassador to Slovenia, according to whom *Slovenia has been recognized as a very important bridge between the European Union and the countries of South East Europe, which, so we hope, are future EU members.*<sup>154</sup> The president of Slovenia adopted the protective stance of a Euro-host towards the former Yugoslav nations. In his ceremonial speech he wished those countries *the most successful development, so that they can join us on the road to Europe as soon as possible.*<sup>155</sup> The Italian president, too, was convinced that Slovenia and Italy have *common responsibility within the EU, to encourage stability in the Balkans, which will be based on the rejection of nationalistic tendencies, respect for fellow humans and cultural diversity, and on the willingness to cooperate of those Balkan states that are following the democratic path on their way to the European Union.*<sup>156</sup> The high representative of the European Union for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, speaking in Ljubljana in September 2004, stated that Slovenia, in its relations towards the Balkan states, should feel *a desire for leadership and a willingness to show the way to the EU*, adding that *in this respect*

<sup>154</sup> *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> Another attitude is that of *gate-keeper*, adopted whenever relations become tense, as they did following an incident in the border region of Dragonja in September 2004, which coincided with the pre-election campaign in Slovenia. Slovenian politicians jointly, suddenly and loudly, although only briefly, withdrew their support for Croatia in its accession negotiations with the EU.

<sup>156</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May 2004, p. 10 and 3.

*Slovenia had a responsibility towards other countries that are trying to do as you did.*

In addition to this 'avant-garde' position of Slovenia with regard to Balkan states that are on the way to Europe, another noticeable trait of the Euroslovenian discourse was a shift away from the stigmatization of the Balkans of the past fifteen years, and also a shift away from the threatening images of the Balkans (although, in the opinion of an Italian MEP of Slovenian descent, the assassination of the Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjić in March 2003 convinced Slovenian euroskeptics that the Balkans was *not as far away as they would like it to be*).<sup>157</sup> Slovenian dominant discourse moved towards a more pragmatic image of the Balkans as Slovenia's 'sphere of interest,' particularly interesting for its economy. As Baskar concludes, 'Slovenians have developed a habit of considering the rest of Yugoslavia as "their markets."<sup>158</sup> The president of the Slovenian Pan-European Movement openly admitted this: *I entirely agree that re-directing our attention to these markets is logical and important for the Slovenian economy [...]/ In this respect we have a sort of complex. We say that we've just wrenched ourselves away from the Balkans, that we are fed up with it, that we will by no means return there [...]/ Taking this into account, the attitude towards the Balkans should be changed completely. For us, this is the area in which we can pursue our interests, and in this respect we have a great advantage over others.*<sup>159</sup> The Slovenija je naša party (Slovenia is Ours- SJN) expressed a similar opinion: *Within the EU framework, Slovenia must assume the leading role in South East Europe and organize its diplomatic network in such a way that it will function as a service to the Slovenian economy and its science.*<sup>160</sup>

The opinion survey results below also suggest that balkanophobic arguments, which in the dominant discourse were expressed as the dilemma 'Towards Europe or back to the Balkans,' were received with increasing reservations. The table shows the level of (dis)agreement with the proposition 'If we do not join the EU, we might be driven back to the Balkans' (Toš et al. 1999, 723, Toš et al, 2004, 254, 368).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>158</sup> He then proceeds to say that 'the Slovenian comeback to Bosnian, Croatian and now also Serbian markets has been fast and very ambitious, thereby inviting some criticism in these countries regarding Slovenia's "economic imperialism."

<sup>159</sup> *Mladina*, 28 August, 1999, p. 27.

<sup>160</sup> *Mladina*, 13 September, 2004, p. 31.

SJM	1997/1	2001/1	2002/1
'I FULLY AGREE' AND 'I AGREE'	42.7 %	37.0 %	31.8 %
I NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	17.9 %	16.4 %	19.8 %
'I DON'T AGREE' AND 'DON'T AGREE AT ALL'	28.2 %	36.2 %	37.4 %
DON'T KNOW	11.1 %	10.4 %	11.1 %

Integration *within* and *with Europe* guarantees success in many areas, or at least that is what the statements analyzed here suggest (other key words in this discourse were *prosperity, development, trust, courage, pride, peace, freedom, co-deciding, without frontiers, chances, progress, path, goal* etc.). Most parties seemed certain about Slovenia's success, among them the ZLSD (*Together, we will succeed*, and in its shorter form, *We will succeed!*), the SLS (*What is important is that as a member, it will be economically more successful, that development will be faster /.../*; and furthermore, *YES to greater economic growth, employment and investment in research and development*). The government was confident that membership in the EU would *bring important benefits to the Slovenian economy*.<sup>161</sup> A brochure by Center Evropa reported that *Slovenian economic enterprises assess the imminent membership in the EU mostly as positive and unproblematic*.<sup>162</sup> *We have established links with freedom-loving European nations*, added the then prime minister;<sup>163</sup> *it is a region of peace, security and the rule of law*.<sup>164</sup> In short, *I am confident that this enlargement will be an extraordinary success* (a statement by the prime minister of Ireland, the President in Office of the European Council at the time).<sup>165</sup>

The compatibility of Slovenian and European standards was suggested by the slogan chosen for a DZS sales campaign advertising business forms and computer software products – the brief message was *EUsklajeni (EUcompatible)*. The *Entrepreneur's euro package* by the Bank Austria Creditanstalt allegedly made your business operations *so much easier. Europeanism*, supposedly a cheaper approach to business, brings

161 *Slovenija v Evropski uniji? 178 odgovorov o vključevanju Slovenije v EU* (Slovenia in the European Union? 178 Answers Relating to Slovenia's Accession to the EU), Government Public relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 65.

162 *Slovensko gospodarstvo v EU* (Slovenian Economy in the EU). Similarly, in *Slovenija in Evropska unija o pogajanjih in njihovih posledicah* (Slovenia and the European Union On Negotiations and Their Implications), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 77.

163 *EU je tu!: Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

164 A leaflet and a map entitled *Panorama Evropske unije* (Panorama of the European Union), a European Commission publication, 2003.

165 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 5.

financial gains. A two-page leaflet by the Lesnina furniture manufacturer, in which every product description was accompanied by a small EU flag bearing the inscription *lower price*, featured a message on the cover page that read *Going to Europe with prices lower by more than 20%*; a similar advertising approach was employed by Interspar and a Polish telecommunications company, which *marked the accession of Poland to the EU by lowering the prices of its services by 50%* during the first three *European days*. Mega Center and Elektrocenter advertised their products under a banner featuring yellow stars with the message *In May, go to Europe with new TV sets, digital cameras and camcorders – payable in 15 installments with no interest rates!* Hartlauer also offered *Price reduction up to 50%*, with the inevitable addition of *Welcome to the EU!* IKEA now delivered furniture to Slovenia as well, *in May at a price 50% lower than usual!*

EUCONOMY



Representatives of the Roman-Catholic Church (and many others who opportunistically reproduced their ideas) ‘enriched,’ not unexpectedly, the new Eurocentric vocabulary with qualities such as *spirituality*, *the Christian roots of*



Europe etc. In a pastoral epistle with an illustrative title *The Salt, the Leaven and the Light of the New Europe*, the Slovenian Roman-Catholic bishops assured us that Europe's *fundamental values originated in Christianity*.<sup>166</sup> For the then prime minister, we are heirs to *culture and cultures, heirs to the spiritual tradition, Christian pity and the Enlightenment mind*.<sup>167</sup> The n.si party advocated the thesis that the *Slovenes as a nation have roots in European Christian and Enlightenment culture* (Šabič, Brglez, 2002, 74). Europe is *extensively and profoundly imbued with Christianity*.<sup>168</sup> It is a *Christian continent* (the president of the Pan-European Union),<sup>169</sup> and Christ is the *hope of Europe* (the slogan at the Central European Catholic gathering in Mariazell in Austria, on May 22, 2004). One Slovenian bishop was positive that *'the Europe of economy and of the euro' should become and stay 'the Europe of the Spirit'*.<sup>170</sup> The Pope, too, hailed deeper understanding and cooperation between European nations and states, since this was *the road to their spiritual convergence*;<sup>171</sup> Europe will *breathe again with both lungs*, he said. The Roman-Catholic Church claimed a unique contribution to the building of a *Europe that will be outgoing towards the world*, with this contribution presumably being a *model of essential unity that takes on various forms of expression in culture, and an awareness that we belong to the global community*.<sup>172</sup> The Slovenian bishops accompanied the accession with a pastoral epistle, an extract from which was featured on the cover page of the *Družina* weekly on May 2, 2004:

166 Also: *Historically, Europe cannot be imagined without Christianity ... Europe without Christianity would not be Europe. As some European politicians like to say, Europe needs a soul* (*Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 3). See also Peter Kvaternik, *Pastoralni poudarki in spodbude v Posinodalni apostolski spodbudi papeža Janeza Pavla II. "Ecclesia in Europa"* (Pastoral Emphasis and Stimuli in Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation »Ecclesia in Europa« of Pope John Paul II), *Bogoslovni vestnik*, Vol. 64, 4/2004, Teološka fakulteta, Ljubljana, pp. 649-661.

167 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 13.

168 *Družina*, 2 May 2004, p. 2.

169 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

170 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

171 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 8.

172 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 2, 3.

*The European soul  
Is Christianity itself.  
Our common Christian  
Heritage is thus  
Our obligation  
And our duty,  
To preserve it.*<sup>173</sup>

*Faith, love, and dreams* are the three key words found in the repertoire of every mythmaking discourse. They were also plentiful in Eurocentric discourse, which is an eye-catching detail, given that membership of the EU was simultaneously described with opposite notions repeated countless times, that is, as a *well-considered, sober and willed decision*. Everyone seemed to have had infinite *faith* in whatever awaited us in Europe. So, for example, one LDS/DESUS candidate claimed in an elections brochure: *I believe in our success within Europe*. Even the then prime minister expressed an unusually high level of piety for such a ‘deliberate’ and ‘rational’ decision of the government: *I believe in close cooperation among the EU member states, and I believe that EU membership will further enrich it [Slovenian identity, m.v.] with nobility and patriotism*.<sup>174</sup> White mugs with blue stars and a list of member states (and blue mugs with golden stars) bore the inscription *In Europe We Trust* placed above the same statement in Slovene *Verjamemo v Evropo*. One could also hear talk about the *European trance*.<sup>175</sup> A man interviewed by a local newspaper described his experience of Slovenia’s accession to the EU as an *intimate event, distant, as if sizing up the things that await us*.<sup>176</sup> By definition, one believes in something beyond cognition, and this seems to have been regarded as an extenuating circumstance by the Government Public Relations and Media Office (*Yet, that is how the European Union is. The more you know about it, the more*

173 There is also *This Week’s Prayer* printed on the last page of the same issue of Družina. The title is *Keep an Eye on Europe: Dear Lord, keep an eye on Europe. Preserve the old continent in your firm, father’s hand. Send your Spirit and rearrange the face of the land, this European land. Lord, You are the source of truth. Let the European leaders build new just forms of rule in Europe; let them take care of the people, the families and the community ... You, Lord, are the source of beauty. Help us – the European peoples of the East and the West – grow in mutual trust, so that we become ever more unified in our faith, hope and love. Amen.*

174 *EU je tu! Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

175 *Goriška*, May 2004, p. 8.

176 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

questions you have)<sup>177</sup> and by the then Minister of European Affairs (*There is still no answer to the ongoing question of how much EU membership will cost*).<sup>178</sup> The costs of both processes, that is, Slovenia's accession to the EU and Slovenia's development if the EU did not exist, were, in his words, *incalculable, but undoubtedly advantageous*.

WE TRUST, THEREFORE WE ARE EUROPEANS!



Another 'emotional state' that transpired through this Eurocentric meta discourse was *love*, even 'eurotics.' To use Svetlana Boym's definition (2002, 222), Slovenia demonstrated that 'not euros but Eros dominated the metaphors for the East-West exchange.'<sup>179</sup> This is a typical East European attitude towards the idea of *Europe*. If the western attitude is 'legal and transactional,' the East European is 'emotional' and 'loving.' We were told that *for the time being the European Union and Slovenia are in love*.<sup>180</sup> In *Delo's* caricature entitled *Blue Angel*, a man in Slovenian folk costume is struck by Cupid's yellow star of love rather than by an arrow.<sup>181</sup> The *Žurnal's* cover page headline read *Slovenia fell for Europe; it was love at first sight*,<sup>182</sup> and the accompanying picture showed the *Eurobeauty Antonina* gazing into the camera while lying back in an armchair covered with

177 *Slovenija v Evropski uniji? 178 odgovorov o vključevanju Slovenije v EU* (Slovenia in the European Union? 178 Answers Relating to Slovenia's Accession to Europe), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 5.

178 *Slovenija in Evropska unija o pogajanjih in njihovih posledicah* (Slovenia and the European Union on Negotiations and Their Implications), Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2003, p. 3.

179 Sufficiently illustrative is a caricature depicting a ranked squad of *eurodimensioned* people, to paraphrase Marcuse, who are marching in a stern and dedicated manner beneath a huge banner featuring the sign of the common currency € (Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 lessons*, European Commission, 2004, p. 34).

180 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 16.

181 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, cover page.

182 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004.

the European flag (symbolically indicating *the end of the tiresome journey*).<sup>183</sup> The image inevitably reminds one of the famous painting from 1932 by the Slovenian painter Maksim Gaspari entitled ‘Native Soil’ (also known as ‘Our Beautiful Homeland’), depicting a gigantic ‘Slovenian’ woman lying amidst a typical Slovenian landscape with mountain peaks in the background and churches perched on the hills. The photo in *Žurnal*, therefore, revived the old patriarchal motif of (‘male’) activity and (‘woman’s’) passivity. In other words, new members, including Slovenia, are like a ‘woman’ waiting for her ‘man.’ However, in contrast to the ancient myth about Zeus’s abduction and rape of the charming Phoenician princess Europa, ‘European women’ of today seem to be surrendering voluntarily to some ‘superior force.’

E(U)ROS

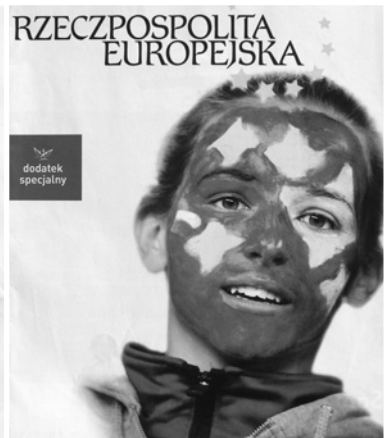


183 The motif of a nubile young woman stretched on her back could be seen in Polish newspapers as well. Seamstresses working for a flag manufacturer posed for the picture lying on the European flag and covered with another one.

Happiness also emanated from the photographs and footage of the celebrations that marked the enlargement, all showing smiling, elated faces. One of the climaxes of this 'affectionate' discourse was the campaign launched by a diverse group of institutions (Slovenian Post, Slovenian Tourist Organization, *Radio and Television Slovenia*, the *Dnevnik* daily and around twenty others) entitled *A Toast to Europe. Send 2 million postcards* (the postage was pre-paid, of course). *Drink a toast to all the peoples of Europe. Send 2 million postcards, and open your hearts to the friends, acquaintances, relatives and business partners with whom, from now on, we build our common future*,<sup>184</sup> was how the organizers described the purpose of the campaign. The postcards were sold in Euro sets of 1 to 8, each containing five cards featuring various Slovenian places of interest, all with a European circle made of stars and a line in English (obviously one of the more equal among equal languages) that read: *Slovenia, member since 2004*.

The new Eurocentric discourse literally inscribed itself in, or rather left an imprint on people's bodies, as has, after all, every discourse of the ruling power. Those most enthusiastic citizens painted, in the manner of true sports fans, various parts of their body (faces, torsos) with euro motifs, symbols and colors.

## EURO BODIES



184 This text, whose saccharine tone would be difficult to match, continues as follows: *Let us tell with our Toast what we think and how we feel. Let the gorgeous sights of our country show who we are and from whence we come.*

Finally, the protagonists of the enlargement and, during the run-up to the European elections, Slovenian political parties as well, frequently had *dreams* about *Europe*. These *dreams* were mentioned by the then prime minister (*EU membership opens horizons about which the generations of our predecessors dreamed*),<sup>185</sup> the foreign minister (*the European dream*),<sup>186</sup> the then president of Slovenia (*our dreams of 1991 today turn into reality; also, our dreams now continue, and European intellectuals dreamed for centuries about an integrated Europe*),<sup>187</sup> the former president of Slovenia (*the realization of our dreams from the mid 1980s about 'Europe now,' here, amongst us*)<sup>188</sup> and the President of the European Commission (*the realization of a long-pursued dream*).<sup>189</sup> Dreams filled the pages of the election brochures, for example, one by the SDS party (*we are turning dreams into reality*), the LDS/DeSUS parties (*we all have equal opportunities to realize our dreams*), the ZLSD party (*Europe was our vision that has now become reality*), and of the May issue of Knjižna panorama by DZS (*in the new, enlarged Europe our dreams will be about our common goals and stories*).<sup>190</sup>

SYMBOLISM AND RITUAL  
ACCOMPANYING THE ACCESSION TO EUROPE

The symbolic image of *Europe* is sufficiently illustrative on its own, even without texts added. In so saying, I do not understand symbols in terms of any popular, essentialist or primordial category, but as dependent on cultural contexts and as changing through history. Or, in the words of Thomas Luckmann (1997, 116) 'symbols are the expression of some other reality in everyday life' and their social role is to (co-)create ordinary reality with the help of that 'other reality' and then to present it.

I will now first take a look at the fashionable *colors* of the spring/summer season 2004, and the 'hottest trends' and combinations. In our cultural environment, blue stands for sublimity, infinity, creative distance, composure, truth and

185 *EU je tu! Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

186 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 19.

187 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 10.

188 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 27.

189 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 8.

190 Even for the mayor of Italian Gorizia, Slovenia's accession to the EU was the *climax* of a dream which he had reportedly been dreaming *all his life*. (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5).

consideration. Therefore, it simultaneously symbolizes artistry and (divine) wisdom (as the color of the sky, or the heavens, or the dwelling of the gods), spirituality and reason<sup>191</sup> (and, in negative connotations, it denotes impracticality and restraint).

Yellow has several contradictory connotations. It is a symbol of divinity, distinction, maturity, nobility, sovereignty (regency) and, as the color of gold or the Sun, it symbolizes the papacy, eternity and purity. It also stands for vivacity, exaggeration, excitement, extroversion, eccentricity and is a symbol of wealth and power. In the negative sense (as the *color of bile*, which is thought to have an unpleasant impact on personality), it symbolizes decay, jealousy, envy, disease, hatred, treachery, lies, evil and shame.<sup>192</sup> In aesthetics, the two colors are complementary: blue is cold, while yellow is extremely warm; the former closes space, while the latter opens it; the softness and depth of blue is relaxing, while yellow is communicative, it radiates sharply, glows, emphasizes and creates tension.<sup>193</sup> A survey in the early 1990s showed that the favorite color among Slovenes was blue, while yellow occupied the seventh place on the list (Kovačev, 1997, 120, 122). The combination of the two is, therefore, contrastive, linking two extremes. The visual material analyzed in this study frequently included a restrained and calming blue background with the outstanding, glowing yellow images in the foreground that appeared as ‘approaching’ the viewer (mainly stars, but also various titles, prices, signatures of MEP candidates in election brochures etc.).

The main *symbols* of the European Union are stars, the circle and the number twelve. In our cultural environment, stars arranged in a circle symbolize the unity of creation that connects various elements, its cumulative power and also aureole (in this case obviously *eureole*). The star, being a symbol of happiness and fulfillment and a source of light, is one of the most frequently exploited symbols used by countries, political parties and the military. It could be placed in

191 It was the color of the Greek god Zeus, the Roman god Jupiter, and the Scandinavian god Odin; it was the color of the Virgin Mary, the medieval nobility and royal dynasties (*blue blood, royal blue, heavenly blue*). See also Kovačev, 1997, 48-56.

192 In Medieval Europe, yellow was the stigmatizing color denoting prostitutes, swindlers, perjurers, outlaws, mothers of illegitimate children, Jews and so on. In Hitler's Germany and in occupied Europe, Jews were forced to wear the yellow Star of David. (see, for example, Kovačev, 1997, 57-66).

193 Quite significantly, the official symbol of the campaign *Slovenia At Home in Europe*, by the Government Public Relations and Media Office, was a tri-color star. The *European* yellow and blue are primary colors, and the *Slovenian*, secondary color is green, resulting from the combination of the two.

the category of ‘expansive symbols’ (see Velikonja, 2003, 36). In the discourse analyzed in this study, stars also appear as celestial bodies, as glittering stars in the blue sky (as, for example, in the postcard issued to mark the Day of Europe, and on the matchbox mentioned earlier in the text). Although it was repeatedly pointed out that the *European stars* in the EU sign did not symbolize the number of EU member states, since there are only twelve stars rather than fifteen or twenty five, the new members were frequently referred to as *new stars*. For example, the series of *educative* television broadcasts was entitled *New Stars of Europe*. Slovenia was referred to as a *new European star*,<sup>194</sup> *ten new stars* could be seen *in the European sky*,<sup>195</sup> while the former president of Slovenia stated that Slovenia, having been a member of the anti-Fascist coalition during the Second World War, *had already adopted the European star during the war*.<sup>196</sup>

The circle belongs in the group of the primary and most consistent geometrical shapes, and as such it symbolizes completeness, homogeneity, unity, stability of the principle of creation and its indivisibility and non-differentiation, eternity, infinity, and cycle (in the negative sense it stands for entanglement, surrender to fate etc., e.g. *vicious circle*). Frequently, it is a synonym for the sky, the heavens, the transcendental, and for the evolutionary and life processes (*life cycle, the wheel of time, the wheel of creation*). In short, it is one of the fundamental symbols present in many different cultural environments.

In the Indo-European mythical tradition, the number twelve is an important, complete, and lucky number. It is one of those numbers that symbolize the universal, divine order (as does the circle itself). As such, it frequently figures in folk imagination as well as in theological and mythical constructs (*twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, twelve knights of King Arthur, twelve gates of Jerusalem* and so on), then in alchemy and time measurement (twelve hours, twelve months). In Christian interpretation, which could also be heard in the context of enlargement, it is a symbol of the Virgin Mary. The unknown *woman* from Revelation (12: 1 *A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of*

194 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 19.

195 *Goriška*, May 2004, p. 2.

196 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 27.



*twelve stars*) was identified with the Virgin Mary, and she is frequently depicted precisely in this manner.<sup>197</sup>

At any rate, the symbolism of the twelve-star circle implies at least two things; first, that this community has neither beginning nor end, that it is a kind of continuity with no inner or outer dimension, one in which there is no first and no last, and in which all are equal and connected into one whole. Second, it implies perfection, completion, unity in time and inner order. It is 'star peace,' not 'star wars.'

The principle underlying the design of the *EU flag*, which always hangs next to that of a member state, is that of contrast. The 'soft-shaped' circle of stars of warm yellow color is pitted against the 'hard' rectangle of the 'cold' blue background.<sup>198</sup> This is a simple, clear, geometrically pure design, and hence effective, memorable, and readable by anyone. The 'warm' stars in the center shown against the 'cold' background are sufficiently expressive without additional text or other (national, cultural, historical or religious) designations. The circle of stars suggests dynamics and 'dance,' while the rectangular background connotes immobility. A comparison with the flags of other countries and international organizations gives interesting results. Of all the world countries, only four use a yellow and blue combination in their flags,<sup>199</sup> while in terms of composition, it is mainly the flags of supranational organizations (e.g. the UN, the Red Cross, NATO etc.), multi-ethnic Switzerland and some other states<sup>200</sup> that are similarly 'technically' simple and symmetrical.

In commercials and in various other contexts, the inner area of the EU sign was frequently exploited for the placement of advertising messages or advertisers' symbols. This practice well illustrates the logic described in the introductory section that everyone can appropriate Europe for personal needs by placing the message of their choice inside its symbol. Such were the inscriptions *low prices*, *Citypark*, *The Ljubljana shopping center*, and *The city of fulfilled wishes*; or *Welcome* by Austrian Airlines, or the symbol of the Virgin Mary,<sup>201</sup> the symbol of the wine producer Vinag, the coat of

197 See, for example, the introductory text in Naša Družina, *Družina's* monthly supplement, May 2004: *Together With Mary, the Woman with twelve stars, enter the European Union with hope, on the first day of May, the month of Mary.*

198 Compare the analysis of 'totem rituals' on which draws the symbolism of the American flag, in Marvin, Ingle, 1999.

199 Sweden, Congo, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

200 Morocco, Somalia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Macedonia and Japan.

201 For example, as part of a yellow inscription on blue, on the stage which was the site of the solemn Mass offered in Brezje, on August 15, 2004.

arms and the title *30 Years of the Maribor Local Trade Chamber* and so on. In its postmark, the Slovenian Post incorporated into the European circle the contours of Slovenia; the Polish Kerakoll placed in it the contours of Poland, and the Ljubljana Association for the Protection of Animals inserted there the image of a dog. On the cover page of the May issue of the Polish Catholic children's magazine *Niedzielny Maly Gość*, European stars form the halo around the head of the Virgin Mary, while the titles of editorials<sup>202</sup> are *I Love Poland* (the Polish flag partly covers the European stars) and *The Wreath Made of Twelve Stars*. Many other things could be seen inside the European circle, for example, a nipple encircled with yellow stars on a blue body.

ENCIRCLED BY EUROPE



The symbolic signifiers and also the instruments of social cohesion of the new European identity are also the European *anthem*, Ode to Joy, the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (the European anthem since 1972 or rather, since 1986, when it actually began to be used), and the *common currency*, the *euro* (€). Finally, it is also possible to interpret as a symbol the attribute *European* used in the names of all important institutions and generally everything that smacks of *European* integration. So we have the *European* Parliament,<sup>203</sup> the *European* Commission, the *European* Council, the *European* Court of Justice, the Council of the *European* Union,<sup>204</sup> Center *Evropa*, the *European* Central Bank, the *European* Economic and Social Committee, the *European* Economic and Monetary Union, the *European* acquis communautaire, the *European* Court of Auditors, the *European* association agreement, *European* conventions, the *European* Investment Bank, *EUROPOL* (*European* Police Office), the *European* Disability Forum, the *European* Regional Development Fund, *EURES* (*European* Job Mobility Portal), the *European* Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), *Eurobarometer*, *Eurocorps*, *EUROSTAT* (Statistical Office of the *European* Communities), *CE* sign (*Communautes Europeennes*), the *European* Information Service (EIS), *Eurotraining* courses, *European* mobility programs, *Eurotransplant*, the *Eurostar* train linking London, Paris and Brussels, the *eurocopter* (a military helicopter), the *Europa donne* initiative, the *European* Human Rights Ombudsman, the *euro area* (the area in which the euro is used as a currency), the *European* budget, the *European* passport, the *euro region*, the *European* Health Insurance Card, the *eEvropa* project (An Information Society for Everybody), the Official Journal of the *European* Communities, the *European* school, the *European* Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, the *European* Social Fund, the *European* Regional Development Fund,

202 P. 2 and 3. The magazine also presented all EU members (understandably, from the Christian point of view). Each country should be protected by its 'national' patroness Mary (in Slovenia, this is the Virgin Mary of Ptujška Gora). In addition, there was an advertisement for a campaign inviting children to collect 31 labels depicting *European Holy Virgins*. A similar text could be found in the special edition of *Družina* (p. 4 and 5). *Patrons of Europe and EU Member States* are described as *Beacons of the Europe of the Spirit*. All-European patrons are St. Benedict, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Catherine of Sienna, Sts. Cyril and Methodius and St. Theresa of the Cross. The list continues with 'national' patrons, so we can learn that the Slovenes are protected by Marija Pomagaj and St. Jožef.

203 This is the *voice of the people*, according to *Panorama of the European Union* (*Panorama Evropske unije*, a European Commission publication, 2003).

204 And this is the voice of the member states (Ibid.).

government offices for *European affairs*, *European houses*, *Euro-info* centers and *European documentation centers*.

This epidemic does not end there. We also have the *European Union Youth Orchestra*, the *European voluntary organization*, *European customs laws*, events entitled *The European of the Year* and *European Heritage Days*, *EYES* – the *European Year of Education through Sport 2004*, the *European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training*, the *European cultural portal*, the *European Science Foundation*, the *European Journalism Center*, the *European fund for professional training*, the student program *Youth for Europe*, the *European Training Institute*, *New Europeans Networks*, the *EuropeAid* program (cultural cooperation with developing countries), the *European Stability Initiative*, the *European Fund for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*, the *European Environmental Agency*, the *European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction*, the *European Judicial Network*, *Eurojust* (a prosecutors' organization), *EURATOM* (*European Atomic Energy Community*), *Eureka*, *Euronetwork*, the *European Medicines Evaluation Agency*, the *European Agency for Safety and Health at Work*, the *European Convention on Transfrontier Television*, the weekly *European Voice*, the monthly *New Europe Review* (published by the International Broadcasting Bureau and The Voice of America), the *European cultural capital*, the *Month of European Culture*, the program entitled *European Magazine*, the *Council of European Bishops' Conferences*, *ERA* (*European Research Area*), the *European Anti-Fraud Office*, *The European Cookery* (a kind of *European cookbook*) and so on. Oh, yes, I almost forgot *EURODOG*, a dog exhibition, and *EUROBATS*, the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of *European Bats*.

Like every political formation, *Europe*, too, has its *Day*, that is, its *birthday*. The *Day of Europe* is celebrated on May 9, the day when in 1950 the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, inspired by the French politician Jean Monnet among others, proposed the integration of the coal and steel industries of Western Europe (known as Schuman Declaration), which is today considered to have been the first step in the postwar *European integration process*. Officially, this day became a holiday in 1985.<sup>205</sup> Quite understandably, the 2004 enlargement celebrations overshadowed the usual birthday party. The April edition of the free paper

205 A special *Schuman Celebration* was staged in Warsaw on May 8, 2004.

in three languages entitled *Ljubljana Calling* announced that Ljubljana would put on a festive appearance to mark the enlargement, and invited readers to a series of events entitled *Slovenia, A New Star of Europe*. There were delicious dishes from old and new member states, dancing and musical shows for *all generations* (particularly stressed) and info points. The Slovenian Post issued a postal stamp for 95 tolar, featuring a map of Europe and the flags of new members inside the European constellation, with the explanation of the motif found on the postmark – *integrated Europe*. Moreover, one could buy a postcard in which the European constellation had superimposed upon it the contours of Slovenia, green against the blue background, with an inscription *Slovenia in the EU*.

#### EUROPE BY POST



Naturally, in every political mythology, every new community has its *founders* or *fathers*. These are *our fathers* – the *founders of Europe*, as they were described by the then President of the European Commission,<sup>206</sup> or *fathers of Europe* (an Italian MEP of Slovenian descent),<sup>207</sup> or *the fathers who sowed the first seeds of European integration*.<sup>208</sup> In the opinion of the undersecretary at the Italian foreign ministry, the enlargement was *the result of the vision of Europe's fathers*.<sup>209</sup> According to the new mythmakers, the group of founding fathers also includes Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill and Alcide de Gasperi. Finally, *the symbol of the integrated Europe* became the image of presidents Mitterand and Kohl, *holding one another by the hand* (an Italian senator of Slovenian descent).<sup>210</sup>

If we were to judge by the newspaper articles, television and radio programs, various other publications and thematic

206 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5.

207 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

208 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

209 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

210 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

issues, we would have to conclude that the ten new countries first appeared on the map of the old continent only in the spring of 2004. Membership in the EU obviously entails *new geographical placement*, in *Europe*. As if these countries had not existed before, the media carried the presentations of new members (unfortunately, many of these were stereotypical), also giving detailed geographical, demographic, economic and other data and information. All this was put into perspective and compared with data for Slovenia (e.g. see the *European Booklet* published as a supplement to the special thematic issue of *Pil* magazine in January 2004). *Radio Slovenia's* Channel Two broadcast a regular weekly program entitled *In the Middle of Europe*, where the 'points of departure' were 'our common points of reference, either shared traits, or similarities, or ironical treatment of these, or shared stereotypical affinities or the like.'<sup>211</sup>

The birth of a new community, always coming after a radical break with the past, exacts a 'birth myth', that is to say, a myth about the foundation that represents a milestone followed not only by a *new era*, but in some cases by *new time measurement* as well. According to various publications and speeches, *Europe*, or *European integration*, began sometime between 1945 and 1950, and, in the words of the undersecretary at the Italian foreign ministry quoted in the *Primorski dnevnik*, it *originated in a brilliant intuition following the Second World War*.<sup>212</sup> *Europe in 12 lessons* featured a typical chronology, including the founding ideas, the first integration, the upgrading of economic integration with political and cultural integration, new enlargements and institutional solutions and so on.<sup>213</sup> The majority of the texts contained the teleological formulas *steps towards* and *key dates*, as well as *from now on*,<sup>214</sup> or *from tomorrow*.<sup>215</sup> On May 1, *Europeans reached a turning point in European history; it is the beginning of a new era of peace and prosperity for all twenty-five states* (the then Irish prime minister and President-in-Office of the European Council).<sup>216</sup>

211 Andrej Stopar, *Kako bo po svoj EU odmevala v programih Radia Slovenija?* (How Will the EU be Echoed in Radio Slovenia's Programs). *Media Watch*, 19/March-April, 2004, p. 29.

212 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 26.

213 Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 Lessons*, a European Commission publication, 2004, pp. 57-62.

214 A typical example of this is the opening sentence of the article entitled 'Slovenia in the Eyes of Foreign Tourists,' which reads: *Until now, the Slovenes have been discovering the world, but from this year the world will be actively discovering Slovenia* (*Delo*, *So-botna priloga*, 21 August 2004, p. 14).

215 E.g. *From Tomorrow the Three-Border Point is No Longer the Three-Border Point* (*Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 7).

216 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 5.

Another important issue was monopoly over the moment of the enlargement, which sparked a small debate between Rome and Luxembourg as to which midnight between April 30 and May 1 was the proper one, i.e. midnight according to Rome time (in 1957, Rome was the site of the signing of the treaty establishing the European Community, the Treaty of Rome) or Luxembourg time (Luxembourg is where the Official Journal of the European Communities is published). Need I mention that both towns belong to the same time zone, i.e. Central European. At any rate, from that moment on, everything began anew, including *new European time* and *our Belgian year*<sup>217</sup> (one newspaper headline read *New, European Era in the Tourism Industry*).<sup>218</sup> Another thing that we had to learn anew was the alphabet, at least judging by the title of the series of sixty short programs that were broadcast as part of the most popular news program *Druga jutranja kronika* on *Radio Slovenia* – the series was called *European Alphabet*.

These constructs and *rituals of entry* reached a culmination point on the eve of enlargement day, on April 30, 2004. Celebrations including dance, theater and musical show, were organized in specially decorated Slovenian cities, in various places across the countryside, at several border crossings and at popular tourist spots; countless other events, marches, bonfires, torch processions, and cannonades took place across the country; there were competitions, brass band parades, musical shows, ceremonial masses etc.<sup>219</sup> The Slovenian and European flags were planted on mountain peaks and placed on top of mountain huts. The gathered masses were addressed by prominent Slovenian politicians (in Ljubljana, the speakers were the then European Commissioner in Slovenia, the mayor of the city and so on). Children, an inevitable decoration at celebrations, also participated (at border crossings, the same number of children from both sides!), not to mention *united* choirs, brass bands etc.<sup>220</sup> The members of the ZLSD Youth Forum disseminated leaflets featuring the symbol of the Liberation Front (a Second World War anti-Fascist organization) and the inscription *Tolerance Lies at The Foundations of the Eu-*

217 *Pil*, January 2004, p. 8.

218 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 5.

219 An impressive list of events in alphabetical order by location is available at <<http://www.uvi.si/slo/koledar/obelezitev-vstopa/slovenija/slovenske-obcine/index.print.html>> (last accessed on 21 August, 2004).

220 Similar scenes could be seen in other accession states. Events were given symptomatic names, for example, *Europe Without Frontiers*, *Neighbors Without Frontiers*, *Together in Europe* etc.

ropean Union. At midnight, the *European* anthem reverberated around the capital Ljubljana, followed by grand fireworks, parties and the raising of the *European* flag.<sup>221</sup> The banks of the Ljubljanica river were decorated with lights, and the streets were buzzing with craftsmen, harmonica players and Slovenian wine producers offering a *drink of good wine*. Shops soon depleted their stocks of *European* flags, which was interpreted as an unambiguous sign that *we accepted it well*. The most impatient citizens hastened to stick the blue-and-yellow *European* labels onto their old registration plates.

On the preceding night, on April 29, the National Assembly held a special session attended by all top politicians, the then and the former deputies, and the diplomatic corps in Slovenia. The speaker was the president of the National Assembly; the Slovenian and European anthems were played, both flags were displayed and the entertainment program included a musical band Pinocchio, the children's orchestra of a Ljubljana musical school and a famous Slovenian singer Oto Pestner.

On the day of the *European integration* itself, ceremonial events were organized along the borders shared with *European neighbors*, where fences and barriers were symbolically removed, European flags raised and the European anthem hummed in unison. At the tri-border point where Austria, Italy and Slovenia meet, a monument dedicated to the enlargement was unveiled. Among the guests were the then prime minister of Slovenia, the Austrian chancellor, the Italian minister of regions (who took the place of the Italian prime minister, reportedly unable to attend for health reasons), and the mayors of Kranjska Gora, Tarvisio and Arnoldstein, the three municipalities located near the border. On the initiative by the *Hello, Neighbor* society, the Slovenian and Austrian municipalities located along the western part of the border organized a joint event with ceremonial speeches and Mass in three languages.

Five Slovenian and four Austrian border municipalities established the symbolic *Country under Mount Peca*. The barrier at the Holmec border crossing at the Slovenia-Austria border was symbolically lifted at midnight to the tune of the European anthem and the raising of the European flag. A similar festive mood prevailed at the Radelj border

221 The capital of the presiding state, Dublin, also staged a celebration. The speeches were delivered by the highest ranking officials from the EU institutions, followed by religious rituals and the solemn raising of the new members' flags.



crossing, where local politicians and Catholic priests were among the guests, and Mass in two languages was followed by a cultural program. The celebration in Gornja Radgona reportedly lasted from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. the next day, that is to say, a *symbolic 25 hours for the 25 members states*, and the first *European* breakfast was sold at the symbolic price of two euros.<sup>222</sup> There was a cultural program in the border town Hodoš at the Slovenia-Hungary border, with performers from both countries and speeches from the mayors of Hodoš and Bajanseny; a maypole was set up and a balloon released into the air. A large celebration with bonfires, fireworks, musical bands, speeches and a torch procession to the border marker took place at the tri-border point where Slovenia, Hungary and Austria meet.

In Tolmin, a town near the border with Italy, enlargement celebrations precipitated the traditional ceremony marking the municipal holiday, which is celebrated one month later (an 'eunthusiastic' local journalist delightedly, but erroneously, reported that *the municipal holiday was shifted to the historical day*).<sup>223</sup> The speakers at the celebration in Tolmin were the mayors of Tolmin, Cividale (Italy) and St. Georgen (Austria). The program included concerts, entertainment, bonfires, the raising of the European flag, singing of the Ode to Joy and fireworks. In Idrija, the main celebration was entitled *Idrija to Europe – Today's Seeds Are the Flowers of Tomorrow*, and the climax was the unfolding of the *16 m EU flag*. The archbishops of Udine and Koper jointly offered Mass, followed by a torch procession to the Matajur mountain peak and a cultural program. In a winery in the Brda region, the juice that came out of the winepress just after midnight was set aside to be used for a *special wine for special occasions*; in other words, we wish you a merry entry *To the EU with a special wine!*<sup>224</sup> In accordance with the Slovenian bishops' resolution, the bells of Roman-Catholic churches in Slovenia rang at midnight, which was an act meant to *stress the Christian roots of Europe*.<sup>225</sup> You could attend a *Holy Mass for the Homeland* in the Ljubljana Cathedral, or join the *European festivities* in front of the Maribor cathedral. And so on, and so on. To cut a long story short, *there were events of one or another kind going on everywhere*.<sup>226</sup>

222 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 7.

223 *Goriška*, May 2004, p. 2.

224 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

225 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 12.

226 *Goriška*, May 2004, p. 2.

*Integration - inspiration!* The enlargement obviously made a strong impact on some artists and entertainers. The painter Zmago Modic immortalized the celebration in Ljubljana by painting it live on a large canvas, later displayed in the Ljubljana town hall. The *anxiously awaited album Mother Europe* (Dallas, 2004) by the legendary Slovenian singer Oto Pestner was finally ready for release precisely on the *enlargement day*. The title song in both Slovene and English includes lyrics such as *In the heart of Europe for centuries on our soil, standing on the hilltop like an upright tree defying eternal winds, all wishing for better days now*. In August, The Painter's Association of Maribor organized an exhibition in Ptuj entitled *Watch Out. This is History*. It presented video footage *dedicated to the expansion of Europe to Slovenia*. A photo exhibition in Trieste was entitled *Europe Here*. In August, the international event 'poetry on posters' held under the slogan *transformations* took place in Ljubljana; it symbolized the *process of reshaping Europe* (Slovenia was represented by Aleš Šteger). In September, the Ljubljana castle hosted a Vilenica poetry festival and the title was *Greetings to Europe*. To mark the occasion, the Trieste based Slovenian poet Marko Kravos wrote a poem entitled *April Revolution*.<sup>227</sup>

*The city revels:*

*No one wants to go to work,  
To factories, offices,  
People drink fresh water,  
Chew sunrays,  
Adorn themselves with cherries,  
And clothe themselves in breeze.  
People lie in the grass  
Smooching  
Or climb the trees  
To silently gaze at the sea.  
Post offices don't know what to do with flowers,  
Telephone lines reverberate with songs,  
Newspapers are printed on young leaves,  
Politicians stop to listen to  
The bees buzzing.*

*This crazily rejuvenated world  
Is a new world, infinitely open  
And revolutionary.*

227 P. 4.

*It's a bit of everyone's life and dreams,  
This world, so marvelous in its spring attire.*

In Nova Gorica, official ceremonies jointly organized by Slovenia and Italy took place under the name *Skupaj v Evropi – Insieme in Europa* (Together in Europe – Insieme in Europa). The program began with an international theater festival entitled *Mej(ni) fest* ((No)Border Fest) that announced *the integration of the two towns* (Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in Slovenia, a town built following the Second World War); there were *European* musical, cultural and sports events, exhibitions, gatherings of trade unions, and round tables.<sup>228</sup> A 28 m tall maypole stood in front of the Nova Gorica town hall; an ingenious local merchant sold T-shirts with the EU abbreviation printed on them, and, in a smaller typeface, *Gorica – Symbol of the New Europe*, in Italian, Slovene, German and Friulian.

The main official celebration (the *main European celebration* according to *Primorski dnevnik*)<sup>229</sup> was held in the square split between Gorizia and Nova Gorica. The invited guests included Slovenian prime minister and the president of the European Commission, the mayors of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, the president of the Slovenian Parliament, the governor of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, and around six hundred high-ranking diplomats and other political and public figures. The event attracted several hundred journalists. The masses, except for one thousand five hundred people from each country who were allowed to enter the highly protected site of the ceremony, were kept at a safe distance, and they could observe the event on big screens. A local newspaper accorded a whole page to the dinner menu for the special

<sup>228</sup> Below are the titles of only those events that included the 'magic' word Euro, and even so the list is very long: *Across the Plateau to Europe* (mountain trekking), *EURO GO U-14* (an international football tournament), *Without Frontiers, The International Volleyball Tournament on the Occasion of Joining the EU*; the round tables: *On Disappearing Alternatives and the European Union*; *The Position of Labor and Capital in the European Union - the Influence of the Enlargement, Adjustment to New Circumstances or Resistance and Change, Consequences of Globalization*; the gathering entitled *Visions of Future Cooperation Between Slovenian and Italian Theaters After Slovenia's Accession to the EU*; the presentation of the international theater project *Learning Europe*; the exhibition and awarding of certificates *Europe in School 2003-2004*; an international learning room and video conference entitled *Young People in the EU*; sports and entertainment games without frontiers for young people entitled *Greetings, Europe*; *The EU Enlargement – Operation and Enhancement of the Cooperation between Esperanto Organizations in Slovenia, Italy, Austria and Hungary*, a seminar; *Water for Europe*, a multimedia show about the underwater world, and so on, and so on.

<sup>229</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 3.

guests (*What did the renowned guests eat?*),<sup>230</sup> while a regional newspaper dedicated to it ‘only’ a quarter page.<sup>231</sup>

The cultural program, featuring performers from both sides of the ‘disappearing border,’ who performed the works of Italian and Slovenian authors (including the poem quoted above), was followed by the unveiling of a floor mosaic by Franko Vecchiet.<sup>232</sup> The mayors of the two towns met each other in the center of the mosaic, joined by the President of the Slovenian Parliament and a crowd of children, which is a practice invariably found in every political ritual. The anthems of both countries were played. The European anthem was played at midnight followed by fireworks. The *European fešta* (a local word for ‘party’) continued into the morning and extended over a few subsequent days.<sup>233</sup> The Slovenian and Italian trade unions jointly organized a large May Day celebration on the same spot. The next morning, *on the morning Slovenia first woke up as a full member of the EU, people were coaxed from their warm beds by the melodious tune played by the Nova Gorica brass band, to which they could listen with interest.*<sup>234</sup>

On this occasion, the mayor of Nova Gorica gave a symbolic present to the President of the European Commission. It was a piece of the *former zidek* (roughly a low-lying wall) that separated Italy and Slovenia (the allusion to souvenir stones from the *Berlin Wall* was obvious).<sup>235</sup> The elated president then entered the following record into the guest book: *I’ve been waiting for many years to see the last wall being pulled down*, and later stated: *I lived to see the last wall collapse.*<sup>236</sup> The wall appeared in several variants in various references to its removal. The mayor of Gorica mentioned above called it a ‘*zidek*’,<sup>237</sup> the president of the CGIL, the Italian trade union, spoke about the *pulling down of the last wall in Gorizia*, the president of the UIL union about the pulling down of *the last remaining symbolic walls*,<sup>238</sup> and the under-

230 *Goriška*, May, 2004, p. 13.

231 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 7.

232 The basis of this mosaic, according to the author, is *black and white granite that symbolizes the firmness of Europe*. (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 55).

233 Ironically, the performer who appeared on the same stage the next day was Goran Bregović, a composer who earned international fame by combining traditional Balkan tunes with rock and pop.

234 *Goriška*, May, 2004, p. 3. Under *one-party system*, on every May Day we were similarly ‘entertained’ by such ‘people-awakening’ practices like marching brass bands.

235 Similarly, several years ago, when the Schengen Agreement was signed, the smiling participants symbolically ‘sawed’ through a border barrier on which were placed stickers with the flags of the signatories.

236 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 6.

237 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

238 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

secretary at the Italian foreign ministry about *the wall that separated us whether or not we wanted it*.<sup>239</sup> One ‘disturbing’ detail that obviously did not bother the makers of the *collapsing wall myth* was that no wall had existed there for the past decades. Any resident of Italian Gorizia or Slovenian Nova Gorica living by this border, which has been called an *open border/confine aperto* for the past thirty years, can tell you that the *wall* pulled down on the enlargement day was a *non-existent wall*. What did exist, however, was a simple wire fence mounted on a low concrete base, the kind of fence separating neighboring gardens.

It should be added that the celebration was countered by protests organized by The Invisibles of the Global Europe, Dost je! (It’s Enough!), the Gorica Youth Initiative, the Erased, The Disobedient and various other anarchist groups from both sides of the border, who drew attention to the dangers of idealizing the image of the EU and to omnipresent xenophobia and exclusivism, while demanding the true opening of borders, equality for all and correction of past injustices.

To return now to the dominant meta discourse, during the period preceding the enlargement, the newspaper headlines turned *European* yellow-and-blue (e.g. in *Žurnal*, where the usual colors for the headline are red and white). The milestone-rhetoric could be heard at every corner. Slovenia’s accession to the EU was *the event not only of the week, but of the month, the year and the decade. Time will show whether it is also the event of the century. It will soon be clear /.../*.<sup>240</sup> The President of the European Commission referred to the enlargement as *a historical moment important for Slovenia and Europe as a whole*.<sup>241</sup> Synonyms for this eupochal enlargement included the following: *the moment of happiness and trust* (the Italian president),<sup>242</sup> *The Big Bang*,<sup>243</sup> *Entry* (with a capital E),<sup>244</sup> *the most beautiful day in my political life* (the then President of the European Commission),<sup>245</sup> *an exceptional historical event* (the SDS leader),<sup>246</sup> *undoubtedly a historical date for Europe*,<sup>247</sup> *a new beginning* (the then director of the Govern-

239 Ibid., p. 26.

240 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 2.

241 *EU je tu! Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

242 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 3.

243 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 2.

244 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 4.

245 Ibid., p. 3.

246 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 27.

247 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 40.

ment Public Relations and Media Office),<sup>248</sup> *a day of happiness*,<sup>249</sup> *a European holiday*,<sup>250</sup> *the integration of Europe*,<sup>251</sup> *a great pleasure*,<sup>252</sup> *the beginning of a new chapter* (the EU ambassador to Slovenia),<sup>253</sup> *a great event for our nation and homeland*,<sup>254</sup> *a historical and political feat* (the then foreign minister of Slovenia),<sup>255</sup> *a truly historical enlargement* (the then minister for European affairs),<sup>256</sup> and *a historical moment*.<sup>257</sup>

The ritual of entry into Europe was symptomatic in itself. The pattern consisted of expressions of welcome on the part of the old members and institutions, which were characterized by the hosts' eager patronization of the 'newcomers' and 'our new guests' in Europe. Let us first take a look at these expressions of welcome. The undersecretary of the Italian foreign ministry, speaking at the ceremony in Gorizia/Nova Gorica, greeted the neighbors with *Welcome to the European Union, Slovenia, welcome Nova Gorica*;<sup>258</sup> a similar formulation was used by the mayor of Tarvisio (*Welcome to Europe, Slovenia*),<sup>259</sup> the mayor of Graz/Gradec (whose town *cordially welcomes our neighbors*), and the inhabitants of Bleiburg/Pliberk, who organized a large concert entitled simply *Welcome!* Municipal and regional officials from old member states symbolically handed *European* flags to their neighbors.

Expressions of welcome also inundated advertising messages. The Belgian financial group KBC, the largest such group operating in Central Europe and dealing in banking, insurance and property management, congratulated readers of the print media from Slovenia to the Baltic Sea with: *Tomorrow Europe will Enlarge. Welcome*. The KBC Group was also *glad to be able to greet you in the new, enlarged European Union* (the motif on the accompanying picture was the raising of the *European* flag). The IRIS Isontina from Gorizia

248 *Slovenija v Evropski uniji? 178 odgovorov o vključevanju Slovenije v EU* (Slovenia in the EU? 178 Answers Relating to Slovenia's Accession to the EU), Government Public Relations and media Office, 2003, p. 5.

249 *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 April – 3 May, 2004, cover page.

250 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5.

251 An advertisement for Vattenfall, *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 April – 3 May, 2004, the back cover page of the special supplement.

252 The special supplement of *Rzeczpospolita Europejska*, 30 April – 3 May, 2004, p. 4.

253 *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 7.

254 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

255 *Żurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 19.

256 *Dobro jutro, Evropska unija* (Good Morning European Union) (*STADTjournal*, *Dobro jutro*), April, 2004, p. 3.

257 *Goriška*, May, 2004, p. 2.

258 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 5. Of course, there were opposing perspectives as well, in which Slovenia welcomed Europe. The mayor of Koper stated: *The door is now open; our home from today is Europe as well. Welcome, Europe* (*ibid.*, 11).

259 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

extended their welcome to *all public service companies entering the European Union*, and the message was embellished with the inevitable euro-decorations (the flapping *European* flag and the list of new members). Similarly, two Slovenian-owned Italian banks situated in border regions inhabited by Slovenian minority, *welcomed Slovenia into the integrated Europe* (along with an extract from Prešeren's poem 'Toast' inserted inside the European circle), and so did the management of Banca FriulAdria.

Several more examples can be cited: *Cordial Welcome to You in the New Europe* (Austrian Shoppingcity Seiersberg), *Congratulations to our clients from Slovenia on their joining the European Union* (supermarket Dimeglio in Sgonico/Zgonik, Italy), *Welcome to the EU* (Quelle sales catalogue), *Welcome, Neighbors. Congratulations to our customers from Slovenia on their joining the European Union* (ilDi discount store in Monrupino/Repentabor, Italy), *Welcome Slovenia!* (this greeting by the Campus 02 high school in Graz was placed above the same inscription in Slovene, *Dobrodošla Slovenija!* printed in a considerably smaller typeface),<sup>260</sup> *Welcome to the EU, Slovenia* (a banner at the trade fair in Graz on April 20, 2004), *Welcome to the EU* (Humanic company), *Welcome to the new EU!* (the Chamber of Commerce of Steiermark, Austria), *Welcome to the European Union* (Bank ВРН), *Welcome, Slovenia* (Austrian Business Agency), *A Toast to the countries of Eastern Europe* (a wine producer from Collia, Italy), and *Welcome, Slovenia!* (the editor of the Slovenian language newspaper Nedelja published in Italy, and Banca di Cividale).<sup>261</sup> Banca Popolare FriulAdria similarly extended its *welcome to Slovenia on its joining the European Union*; IKEA from Sweden greets its new neighbor Slovenia, which is brought to us by this year's May Day, and the students of the Gorizia school for international diplomatic sciences (SID) also welcomed the newcomers in Europe. Finally, the national lottery organization of Slovenia welcomed its own country into Europe. The message promoting the lottery ticket Evropa (Srečka Evropa) read: *Welcome to our shared Europe with the brightest star among the lottery tickets – Srečka Evropa. And, For the new start, an euro award! 100 euro awaits anyone who puts together the word EVROPA!*

<sup>260</sup> And, in Lenin's imperative style (*Learn, Learn and Again Learn!*): *Always Think About Tomorrow! Always Learn for the Future! Always Work for the New Europe* (first in English and then in a half smaller font also in Slovene).

<sup>261</sup> *Družina*, 2 May, 2004, p. 11; *Primorski dnevnik*, 2 May, 2004, p. 44.





ing, *European Union* (the cover page of the Slovenian-Austrian publication, *STADTjournal* and *Dobro jutro*).<sup>262</sup> Obviously, it was not by chance that the President of the European Commission, in his introductory speech opening with *Dear New Citizens of the European Union*, twice mentioned the *joining* of new members,<sup>263</sup> or that the deputy governor of Styria (Austria) spoke of *association* and *accession*.<sup>264</sup> In fact, the terms *association*, *accession* and *joining* were part of the rhetoric used by the old members throughout this time (*Accession Treaty*, *Strategy for Accession to the European Union*, accession negotiations etc.). The accession candidates, for their part, mainly adhered to more friendly and more emancipatory terms, for example, *approximation*, *entry* and *membership* (e.g. Our membership in the European Union).<sup>265</sup> The question at the 2003 referendum in Slovenia was also formulated along these lines (Do you agree that the Republic of Slovenia should become a member of the European Union (EU)?).

The paternal attitude of Europe towards its new members was also manifested through the symbolic depictions of the *accession/entry*. For example, in the cover picture of the brochure *The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens*, the then president of the European Commission, dressed in a classic suit and wearing a tie with a European pattern, awaits, with his hands wide open, the approaching young woman and man clad in traditional Slovenian costumes and carrying the Slovenian flag. They are surrounded by cameramen and by an audience who approvingly observe this event. This stereotypical duality, i.e. the ‘almost Europeans,’ ‘Ruritanians’ in peasant or traditional folk costumes approaching the classically dressed ‘old European’, was present in all ten accession countries. The same type of regression to the folkloristic images of a hundred and fifty years ago was also employed by the Slovenian embassy in Brussels. There, the renowned statue of the ‘Peeing Boy’ dressed in Slovenian folk costume for the occasion, *could be admired one day before the solemn event* by locals and tourists in Brussels.<sup>266</sup> Ninety

262 The advertisement for the *Schuman Celebration* in Warsaw also included the greeting *Hello, Europe*.

263 *EU je tu! Vodič za nove državljane Unije* (The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens), European Commission Delegation in Slovenia and Government Public Relations and Media Office, 2004.

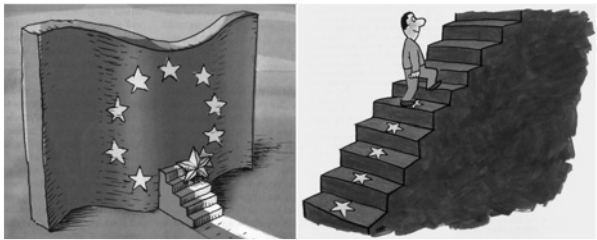
264 *Dobro jutro, Evropska unija* (Good Morning, European Union) (*STADTjournal*, *Dobro jutro*), April 2004, p. 4. The mayor of Spielfeld also spoke about accession. (*ibid.*, p. 23).

265 *Goriška*, May 2004, cover page.

266 *Delo*, 30 April, 2004, p. 3.

thousand households in Brussels received promotional leaflets with information about the ‘happening,’ at which guests were entertained by a folk ensemble and the Chamber Choir of the Ljubljana Academy of Music, while sampling the unavoidable *Slovenian delicacies*. Finally, as in some surrealist grotesque, the event was made all the more memorable by the appearance of the aforementioned ultramarathon runner from Zagorje, who, according to the media, arrived in Brussels at that moment and handed the Slovenian flag to some member of the European Parliament, while the Commissioner for Research had to content himself with the symbol of the municipality of Zagorje.

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA



Another frequent motif was that of the ‘climb.’<sup>267</sup> If, as Archibald Joseph Cronin says, ‘stars look down’ on us, we have no choice but to climb to the stars. That is the task

<sup>267</sup> *Ascent, march to the top, and conquering the heights*, are part of the mythological repertoire of every new mythology, for example national mythologies (*the rise of the nation, the growth of national identity*). In Central Europe, this was symbolically expressed through ascents to various mountain peaks, mainly while competing with mountaineers of the ‘other’ nation (see Šaver’s comparative analysis of the ‘Alpine culture of Slovenianness,’ 2004). Similar elements can be found in theological constructs (*rising to God, to the Truth* etc.)

awaiting the future *European* on the cover page of the brochure *Slovenia in the European Union*,<sup>268</sup> who has to climb the ladder in order to add a new, small yellow star to the circle of the well-established, big yellow ones. A caricature in one Warsaw student newspaper depicts the ‘Polish staircase’ leading to the European starry circle.<sup>269</sup> The publication of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Slovenian journey to the EU was entitled *Ascent Among the European Stars*. A caricature in the brochure *Europe in 12 lessons* (page 7) showed a robot-like man with his hands aligned with his body and his gaze spellbound, climbing the blue stairs and leaving behind him a trail of yellow stars. *New Europeans* are thus presented as new settlers (usually wearing traditional costumes), who have to climb to reach the elite club.

EULDORADO



268 And on p. 35. See also Pascal Fontaine, *Europe in 12 lessons*, European Commission, 2004, p. 24.

269 *Gazeta studencka*, 15 April, 2004, p. 6.

However, *New Europeans* are thankful for this, at least according to the mega-market Decathlon, which reduced its prices for the occasion, stating, *Thank you, Europe*, as did many others. One day after the positive outcome of the referendum in Poland, in June 2003 (note that the outcome was uncertain until the last moment), the headlines of the daily newspapers were overflowing with expressions of gratitude on the part of the European Commission to the people of Poland: *Welcome and Thank You, Poland!* One Polish commentator courteously replied with *Thank You, Brussels*.<sup>270</sup> The cover page of a special supplement of the Polish daily *Rzeczpospolita* featured a truly mythical picture. In it, a family with two children, depicted with their backs to the viewer, stand in front of a classically dressed man with a business suitcase (accompanied by a standoffish woman in a costume and holding a folder) who draws apart a curtain decorated with vaguely suggested white stars, behind which unfolds a landscape with a long road leading through trim grassy flatlands with tall trees; in the blue sky above, clouds are arranged in the shape of Europe. This is supposed to be *Our Europe*.<sup>271</sup> A similar image is found in the brochure *Europe in 12 lessons* (page 3), in which a smiling young woman draws apart a heavy blue curtain dotted with yellow stars, opening the view to the gleaming landscape 'beyond there.' The cover page of the *holiday* edition of the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* featured a similarly illustrative caricature. In it, a proud, upright *European* self-confidently greets a smaller, tense and slightly bowed *newcomer* with *Well, come*. In other words, these images seem to reveal that *Europe* did not come forward to welcome us, but it benevolently waited on *us* and took *us* in, while *we* naively believed that this was an encounter of old friends and equal partners.

The integration with Europe presumably brings relaxation and liberation. This was frequently connoted by balloons floating in the air, as in the balloon contest in Krakow organized under the slogan *European Open Sky*, in which a blue-and-yellow balloon climbed towards the blue-and-yellow European flag. A similar motif could be seen in the advertising campaign by DrogerieMarkt where a blue bal-

270 PAP, 8 June, 2003.

271 The postcard entitled *Generation Yes!* issuing the call to the June 2003 referendum also featured a Europe 'made of clouds.' Therefore, this is a *Heavenly Europe* that may be placed side by side with other *heavenly* communities found in the treasuries of national mythologies (e.g. *Heavenly Serbia*).

loon with yellow stars floated among balloons in the colors of some new members' flags.

EUROPE IS IN THE AIR

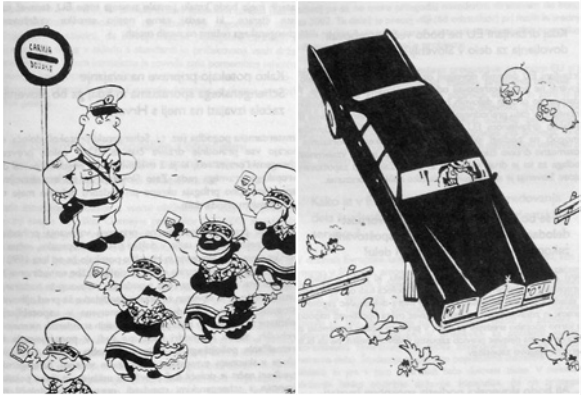


The importance of *membership*, or *accession*, was stressed, or still better, exalted through messages warning that state borders would remain closed should we be left outside *Europe*. Membership in the EU supposedly removes frontiers (which, of course, is not quite true, since border control continues until our full inclusion in the Schengen system), while others, *citizens of non-members*, will find themselves stuck at these frontiers. This logic underlies the caricatures in the brochures *The EU is Here! A Guide for New EU Citizens* and *Slovenia in the European Union?* In the latter the syntagm ‘*intrusion of foreigners*’ appears twice (note the choice of words!).<sup>272</sup> The impassable-border motif is also found in the Polish leaflet for the June 2003 referendum. The front page features, in addition to the message *Vote YES!*, a family procession on their way to the polling station. It consists of a proud and calm father with the Polish flag in his hands and eyes closed, the mother in a similar posture carrying the European flag, and the worried grandfather with his eyes wide open, who is pushed forward by his grandchild. The contrasting scene on the reverse side depicts the ‘closed border,’ with Poles standing in front of the barrier and a police officer inspecting their papers, while they reproach themselves because *this could be an open border*. In another caricature, the border crossing barrier between the EU and Croatia is symbolized by the angry face of a policeman.<sup>273</sup>

<sup>272</sup> P. 39, 90, 91.

<sup>273</sup> *Pil*, January 2004, p. 17.

THE FRONTIERS OF “EUROPE WITHOUT FRONTIERS”



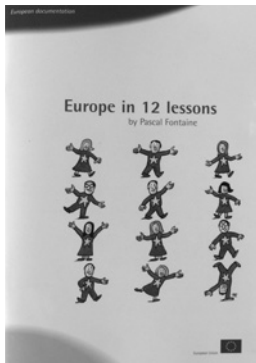
Towards the end of April and in early May, the daily newspapers paid tribute to the *historical events* by publishing *European supplements*,<sup>274</sup> *special editions* (some of them free), and prize crossword puzzles with titles such as *The Capital Cities of New EU Members* and the like, or with a hidden message to be discovered, for example, *new members of the European Union*. The main prize in the SLS paper was a *free excursion including a visit to an SLS representative in the European Parliament*. Various institutions and societies organized seminars and courses on the opportunities

<sup>274</sup> The *Delo* daily proudly pointed out that the special edition was the first edition printed with new equipment, *in color*.

within the EU (e.g. Center Evropa offered a seminar on employment opportunities), and workshops, for example *Vision Slovenia* and *Challenging Identity – The Balkans' Future in the EU*. Representatives of European institutions were invited as guest speakers to schools, economic associations etc. Center Evropa organized round tables and book presentations as part of their regular *European Wednesdays*. Some galleries and museums hosted presentations of the EU or its members (for example, in January and February 2004, the Ljubljana City Museum hosted the exhibition *EU States National Weeks*; another exhibition was entitled *Ljubljana in the Eyes of Europe*).

Newspapers and other publications featured various kinds of 'instant guides to survival' in the EU (titles were *How Does the European Union Operate?*, *Why Should We Enter the EU? All You Ever Wanted to Ask*, and *Guidelines concerning life in the new community after May 1*). Center Evropa and the Delegation of the European Commission in Slovenia published a brochure entitled *The European Union Answers Your Questions* (2003), listing around 25 of the most frequent questions (and corresponding, mainly short answers) about the EU operation (e.g. *Why enlargement? In which areas will Slovenia have to transfer part of its sovereign rights to the European Union? How much does EU membership cost?*, and, inevitably, *Will Slovene have the status of an equal European language within the EU?*).

'SHORT COURSES' ON EUROPE



In order for this Eurocentric meta discourse to be truly effective, the generational aspect had to be observed, too. So, special attention was dedicated to the youngest in the



population. The Government Public Relations and Media Office dedicated to them a special publication entitled *Your Companion on the Journey to Europe* (first published in 2000 and reprinted five times since). The purpose was to make children *familiar with the European Union* and its members, and accordingly, the address was very direct. *For you, the Union is very important. It will influence your life, since it will be you and your friends who will live, go to schools and pursue careers within the EU.*<sup>275</sup> There are a few exercises on every page, a few crossword puzzles, an association game, a labyrinth, a fill-in game, a color game and a series of questions (e.g. *What is a directive? Who proposed the idea for European integration? Can you or any of your school mates play/sing the Ode to Joy? What are the conditions that a candidate state must fulfill to become an EU member? Color the countries that share borders with the EU. What are the advantages of the inner market of the European Union? Circle those countries that are members of both the EU and NATO*). The correct answers were also supplied, plus a glossary of the most important terms. A recurring motif in this lively, attractive, and colorful brochure consisted of ‘cheerful’ European stars. Furthermore, brief presentations of individual European states were printed on the cover pages of notebooks. In the Catholic weekly *Družina*’s monthly supplement,<sup>276</sup> Slovenia’s accession to the EU was presented to the youngest generation in a story entitled *With the Virgin Mary, We are At Home Anywhere*. In the concluding paragraph, a mother explains to her daughter Mojca that in Europe we will work together towards the good of all and we will all live well. The girl asks:

*“As with the Virgin Mary?”*

*“Something like that, yes,” answered the mother pensively, remembering the twelve stars on the flag of the integrated Europe taken from the wreath of stars around Mary’s head. God be with us, thought the mother and stroked Mojca’s head.*

<sup>275</sup> P. 3.

<sup>276</sup> *Naša družina*, May 2004, p. 18.



## THE VIRGIN MARY'S EUROPE



Next in line were elementary school students in the higher grades. A thematic issue of *PiL* that appeared in January 2004 was entitled *European journey*. In this case, too, the persuasion method was interactive. There was a test entitled *Europe, I'm coming* (those already knowledgeable were addressed as follows: *In your thoughts you have long since been in Brussels, so by now you've begun to wonder why we are still waiting to become a member of the European Union*).<sup>277</sup> Content included EU riddles and puzzles, stickers that had to be placed on maps accompanied by instructions about how to search the web for information and questions and answers about the EU (*EU – When, What, How, Why?*);<sup>278</sup> there were various fill-in games, rebuses, and the crossword puzzle *European Crisscross*. There was a labyrinth through which one had to find *the right way for Slovenia to the European Union, a long and exhausting one*. The first stop in this labyrinth was *the wish to become a member*, the next one was *applying for membership*, followed by *accession negotiations and selection of candidates*. The last but one stop was *accession treaty* and the final goal *May 1, 2004, Slovenia joins the EU*.<sup>279</sup> The publication also presented various European projects encouraging cooperation between elementary schools from the EU, in sports, culture, arts, education, and culinary arts (the re-

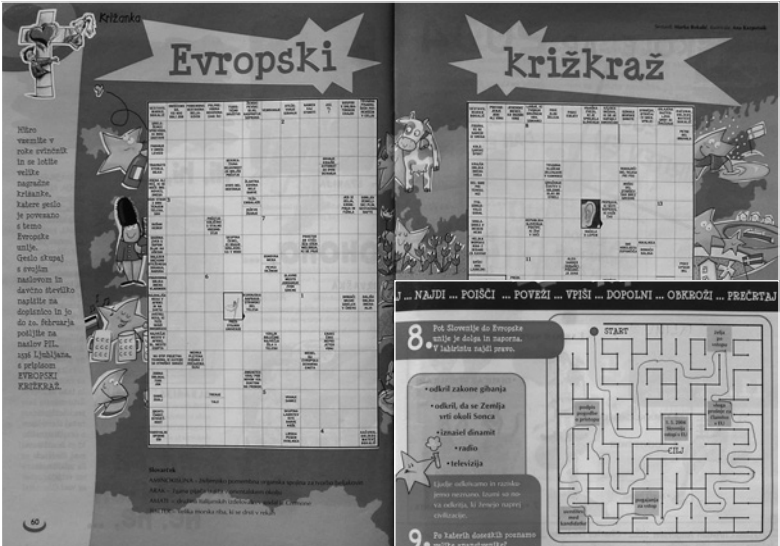
<sup>277</sup> *PiL*, January 2004, p. 7.

<sup>278</sup> Among the questions were: *Shall we still speak Slovene in Slovenia after joining the EU and which other languages will we need? Shall we hold Slovenian or European citizenship after we join the EU? Shall we be Slovenes or Europeans? Shall we still need passports? Which are the EU symbols?* (*PiL*, January 2004, p. 16-19).

<sup>279</sup> *PiL*, January 2004, p. 49.

sult would be a book of recipes for traditional dishes from all countries, including the texts of folk songs).<sup>280</sup>

EURO GAMES



High school and university students were not left out either. The newspaper supplements and broadcasts targeted at this group featured countless presentations of the EU and its new members in particular, explanations of the advantages of membership, surveys and quizzes with titles such as *What will change tomorrow?*, *What do you expect from the accession to the EU?*, and *How much of a European are you?* A similar example was a popular live call-in program on TVS entitled *Jasno in glasno*. The May issue of *Delo*'s free monthly magazine *Maturant&ka*, geared to high school students, published the results of a survey in which the question was *How do you feel as a European?* Of the 45 (!) respondents in total, 53% answered that they felt *the same as before*, 33% said that they were *afraid*, and only 6% were *delighted*. Another survey, among students in Nova Gorica conducted in April 2004, showed that young people were more sober-minded than the protagonists of the public discourse. Only 8% agreed with the proposition *I'm waiting impatiently for Slovenia's accession to the European Union*, compared to 62%

280 Ibid., p. 24.

who did not agree.<sup>281</sup> The student population was the target group of the manual illustratively entitled *Europe – Our Past and Our Future*.<sup>282</sup>

The LDS party employed a similar ‘interactive’ Q&A approach. In April 2004 it published a brochure entitled *Ways to Improve Slovenia in the Next 10 Years*. In this brochure, it invited readers to participate in a form of ‘voluntary’ survey. Some dozen questions consisted of typical clichés about accession, for example, *Do you already know where you will be at midnight before May 1, traditionally Labor Day and the historical day of Slovenia’s accession to the European Union? Or, Which three values first come to mind when Europe is mentioned?* Readers were then supposed to answer the question referring to the previous one, i.e. *And what about Slovenia? Which qualities would you wish to distinguish Slovenia within the EU ten years from now?*

#### ONLY EUROPE

The introductory thesis that the obsessive repetition of *Europe*, *European*, *compatible with Europe*, etc. conceals an essential hollowness, best came through in contexts that offered no explanation as to what these attributes were supposed to mean. In fact, the new Euro-centric discourse frequently failed to explain what *Europe* actually was, what its characteristics and essence were, or why a specific trait, product, person, achievement or whatever singled out was actually considered *European*. In certain shops, selected articles were marked with the EU abbreviation and tag lines such as *European prices*, but nothing else. There was no explanation as to what this actually was supposed to mean. Were these products cheaper? Were these prices comparable to those elsewhere in *Europe*? Were these some kind of all-European articles? Was this some *European* sales campaign or similar? A typical example was Interspar’s advertisements promoting *European prices* with the slogan *Going to Europe Together*. Another such example was an advertisement by the car seller Avtohiša Moste – Center rabljenih vozil, which read *New European Prices!* Petrol stations advertised *eurosuper* and *eurodiesel* fuel, and you could also buy *heating oil and gas of European quality*. Similarly, we could buy sheet paper packets with an € sign, apply for a *Eurokredit* (Eu-

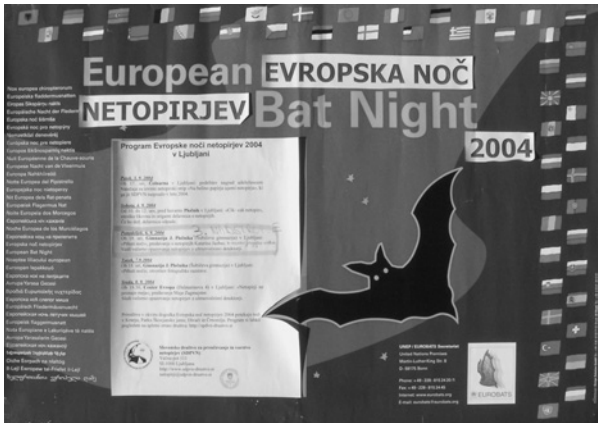
<sup>281</sup> *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 56.

<sup>282</sup> The author is Martina Boden, published by Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 2004.

roloan) with the Nova Ljubljanska banka, or opt for new, European investment-linked life insurance packages Eurostock and Eurosafe by the Generali insurance company. The Grosplje bakery made euro loaves that were presented as your companion on the journey to Europe (your real companion, to be taken along when wandering around beautiful Slovenia or when going to the most distant corners of our shared Europe). Finally, the Pivovarna Union brewery advertised its beer sold in new European bottles as early as the mid 1990s (the feature that distinguished it from the obviously non-European bottle was a longer neck).

The words Europe or European were an unavoidable part of the names of various events. In September 2004, the municipalities of Tržič in Slovenia and Ferlach/Borovlje in Austria organized the second European Dance Without Frontiers at an old border crossing. The international trade fair in Celje in September 2004 featured a presentation entitled Europe and the World. A regular annual event entitled European Bat Night, which includes various educational activities such as photo exhibitions, workshops and lectures, is already in its sixth year (the purpose of this project, supported by Center Evropa among others, is the protection of European bat populations).

THE HOLIDAY OF EUROPEAN BATS



The attribute 'euro' was a must! In advertisements and corporate images, this Europe-inspired sentiment frequently found expression in the form of 'shooting European stars,' for example, on the Slovenian Business Register, on the cover

page of the April issue of the Citypark shopping center's bulletin, in the logo of *Euro Handball 2004* (the European Handball Championship), on the cover page of a CD by the Kvintet Dori entitled 'Slovenia Among the Stars,' as well as on the cover of another pop-folkband Mesečniki and in the logo of Esimit. Four *European* stars traversed the white-and-red silhouette of Poland in the official sign of the advertising campaign *Poland in the European Union* in the years preceding the accession. They are found on Izletnik Celje buses, on the CD-ROM *Centuries of Europe – A Chronology of Our Times*,<sup>283</sup> on page two of the DZS's Knjižna panorama, and in an advertisement for the KIA Motors. In one caricature, a series of stars rise like smoke from the pipe of the SNJ party leader. Stars decorated the cover pages of various books and publications dealing with *European* topics.<sup>284</sup> They could be seen on construction sites where projects were co-financed by the EU (e.g. Frydek-Mistek in the Czech Republic), and on billboards advertising the athletic meeting Aly@Atletika in August 2004. Eight *European* stars were printed on the *Euro Polo* shoe boxes by Pat Calvin and on the poster advertising *European Bat Night* by the Slovenian Association for Bat Research and Conservation. Sometimes they appeared as a few scattered yellow stars, e.g. in the sign for Center Evropa or the *Eurostar* train, in the logo of the Austrian state of Lower Austria, at Petrol outlets selling heating fuel and gas, and in the symbols of the ZLSD party. During the latest European elections, they found their way into the SLS and N.SI logos, and during the latest parliamentary elections in Slovenia to the LDS logo as well, this time in a yellow-greenish color. The full circle of European stars usually appears inside some other symbol, e.g. a blue heart, the symbol of the parliamentary group of the European People's Party and European Democrats.

Blue and yellow were fashionable, trendy colors in the spring of 2004. They appeared on MXI Delovodnik – a document management software package by MXI Planet, in the logo of the Medana Days of Poetry and Wine, 2004, and in a catalogue of LX telegrams by the Slovenian Post. Another frequent motif was that of twelve symbols of whatever type in a circle against a blue background (e.g. in an advertise-

283 The Learning Company, Great Britain, 2000.

284 For example, *Za Evropo Roberta Schumana* (For the Europe of Robert Schuman) published by Mohorjeva družba, Ljubljana-Celje, 2004; *Kulturna politika v Sloveniji* (Cultural Policy in Slovenia), FDV, *Teorija in praksa*, Ljubljana, 1997; *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* published a thematic issue entitled *Evropski mesec kulture* (European Cultural Month), (year. xxv, No. 184; Ljubljana; 1997).

ment by BankAustria Creditanstalt, in advertisements for Verbund - Austrian Power Trading and for Telekom Slovenia in the summer of 2004, in the sign for the Air Theater that took place in Bovec on May 1, the sign for Bank BPH etc.). It is interesting to note that the obsession with starry blue motifs and euro-rhetoric in commercial advertisements was mainly short-lived, so they disappeared almost instantaneously after the *historical event*. The 'hit of the season' was soon replaced by other key words (*summer, vacation*) and motifs (seaside, summer sports etc.).

EUROMANIA



While the *euromania* that pervaded slogans, signs and discount sales in Slovenia quickly passed, *euro* names persist. *Euroton* is the name of a Ljubljana based company selling clothes, textiles and spare parts for cars. Their sign consists of the company's name in blue, with five yellow stars above. *Europa* is the name of a car driving school in Ljubljana. *Euro* is the name of a Slovenian translation agency based in Maribor, established in 1996, which translates into and from 32 European and non-European languages (its sign consists of the company's name in blue, encircled by 10 yellow stars). *Evrooptik* offers reading glasses, *Euro-schlapa* sells shoes, and *European* CD ROM dictionary is an eight-language dictionary. *Evrolas* is a hairdresser in Maribor, *Eurošola* is a private secondary school in Ljubljana, *Euromix* are supposedly the best humidity gauges, *Eurotours* is a travel agent, *Eurorest* is a restaurant, *Eurosan* sells bathroom equipment, and the *Euro* market was where you could buy Slovenian food in Gornja Radgona on the enlargement day. The international mountain trek Via Alpina is described as the *European* Alpine necklace. Among other companies in *European* Slovenia, let me mention *Euro-zoom*, *Euro climbers*, *Evromojster*, *Evro avto*, *Evrotek*, *Eurotime*, *Eurokop*, *Eurowork*, *Eurotrans*, *Eurotaxi*, *Evroplakat*, *Evroinvest*, *Europark* (in Maribor and Zagorje), *Euro tekstil*, *Eurograditelj*, *Euroadria*, *Euronet* while traditional Balkan food burek is on sale at Eurobalkan premises.<sup>285</sup>

#### WHAT EUROPE IS NOT

Obviously, the situation in Slovenia was one in which all important political parties were *For Europe* and the Slovenian media assumed a neutral role (as pointed out by Šabič and Brglez, 2002, 80); one, in which there was a 'lack of critical discourse' or 'balanced information,' and there was no 'real debate,' '...which almost by definition excludes any more significant attempts at critically analyzing the (dis)advantages of being an EU member.' Yet, this obsession with *Europeanism* and *Europe* inevitably provoked opposing reactions as well. In this essay I do not investigate the conservative 'nationalist-defensive' euroskepticism of the type displayed by the Slovenian National Party during the parliamentary elections in 2000, nor the extreme right-wing stance seen in

<sup>285</sup> Another flashback took me to the period of several decades ago and the era of obsession with the affix *Jugo* (of course, derived from *Yugoslavia*): *Jugotehnika*, *Jugoplastika*, *Jugobanka*, *Jugoton*, *Yugo* cars, *Jugolinija*, *Jugofarmacija*, *Jugodent* etc.

Croatia,<sup>286</sup> nor the ‘nationalist-Catholic’ euroskepticism in Poland (e.g. in Lepper’s *Samoobrona* and among conservative Catholic groups, e.g. the notorious Rydzyk’s *Radio Maryja*), nor the ‘insider-exclusive’ skepticism in Austria and Italy.<sup>287</sup> Rather, I am interested in ironical treatments, inversions of this discourse, semiologic guerilla warfare, and inversions of sense through exaggeration. Two typical examples come from the circles of the ‘Balkan subculture’ in Slovenia. The first is a badge that resembles the sticker with the country abbreviation used on vehicles, with the inscription: *I ja BIH u Evropu* inserted into a European ellipse rather than circle (the line is in the Bosnian language, in which *bih* means *would* (like), and it is also the abbreviation for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, *I ja BIH u Evropu* translates as, *I would also like to go to Europe*, but the wordplay is lost in translation). The second badge contains the word EUROČEFUR inside the European circle (čefur is a derogatory term for immigrants in Slovenia from the former Yugoslav republics, particularly Bosnia and Serbia, both those with temporary residence in Slovenia and Slovenian citizens of Serbian/Bosnian descent). The *Mladina* weekly was most persistent in pursuing anti-propaganda. Such an example was a proposal for the Slovenian European anthem accompanied by the comment *Anyone who refuses to nod is not a Slovene*. Or a modified EU sign with an AV! inside the ‘starry circle’ (standing for Ouch!).<sup>288</sup>

The subversive use of euro-symbols could be seen in many (sub)cultural and artistic activities and media. Minerva Cuevas, a visiting artist from Mexico, designed two posters, one featuring a question in Slovene and the other a question in English: *Koliko časa traja vožnja do NATO? How long does it take to get to NATO?* Here, twelve yellow stars set against a blue background are replaced by twelve

286 At some Neo-ustasha gathering in Croatia, Željko Galeković, the leader of the Croatian Veterans Party, stated *It is necessary to say a decisive No to those pushing us to some Euroslavia! We’ve had a hard time getting rid of one star; how shall we manage to get rid of 12 or more*. A controversial writer Zoran Vukman stated, in *Hrvatski list*, that *God was exiled from Brussels, and from the EU!* (quotation from *Feral Tribune*, July 9, 2004, page 8 of the supplement). He became notorious in March 2004 when he stated that *the Masonic EU renounced God*. Furthermore, literary theoretician and Academy member Dubravko Jelčić said that *if the EU is inevitability, then we are lucky to join it as Croatia and not as Yugoslavia*. (In an interview entitled *No one has yet found the courage to tell the truth to the Croatian people*, in *Hrvatsko slovo*, July 9, 2004, page 6).

287 At the celebration in Nova Gorica/Gorizia, the Italian right-wing supporters provocatively carried the European flags with a black ribbon. This counter-demonstration was organized by the National Alliance Party. A few days later, members of this party put up a sign across an overpass in Slovenia with the message: *Europe has its price. Respect for Italians*.

288 *Mladina*, 23 August, 1999, p. 3.



NATO signs (a similar modification was an EU sign encircling a military plane with the NATO sign in the background). A piece of Ljubljana graffiti (meaningfully placed next to the poster advertising the *Evropa* car driving school) read *EU? No, thank you*. The euro sign is incorporated into the name of the CD *€vil Cult* featuring footage of demonstrations and other actions in 2001 and 2002 by anti-globalist, anarchistic and anti-militaristic groups in Slovenia, among these Qarza, May Days and similar organizations. On the banners carried at various protests, the 'starry circle' of the EU was either crossed out or used to encircle various signs and inscriptions (e.g. NO or AU). Irony was expressed through the inversion of colors as well. In an avant-garde designed red-black-and-white poster by an alternative club in Krakow, the European circle was white on a black background. In the invitation to the *United Europe Festival* (or the *Dawn of Europe*), entitled *EURORA* and held in Šempeter pri Gorici, the European stars encircle a colossal socio-realistic statue of a 'Worker and a Collective Farm Girl' (1937) by Vera Ignatijeva Mukhina. Graffiti in Ljubljana read, *A thousand times dead European man* (a line from a poem *Ecstasy of Death* by Srečko Kosovel), to which was added – No EU!

CRITIQUE OF THE NEW EUROCENTRISM



CRITIQUE OF THE NEW EUROCENTRISM



**FAUST** KRAKOWSKA PIWNICA  
ARTYSTYCZNO-MUZYCZNA

"Europa da się lubić"

29 kwietnia 2004  
**WSPOMNIENIA Z  
MINIONEJ EPOKI**

**DJ BREWA** MIX  
POWIEDZIAŁEM... maj 2004

SRODY KARAOKE PO WENKEM PIATEN DJ BREWA ZAPRASZA

FAUST rynek główny 6 / wejście od ulicy ślaskiej / tel. 423 83 00

HIT SPORT CENTER 30.04.2004

**GARLGOX**  
VALENTINO  
LATO & BUSHWACKA!  
SILICONE SOUL  
UMEK  
JAMES BUSHKIN  
MARKO MASTIC  
SHARK | ALEGRIA  
EDDY THE FISH  
VEXTAX

**EURORA**

#### IV. EUGOISM –ASPECTS OF THE NEW EUROCENTRISM

'Yoo-hoo, Europe is here,' everyone was 'chirping' this May when it took Slovenia, a tiny 'chick', under its wide wing where it is nice, warm and safe, but where everything is also so very strict, everything according to directives and resolutions! ... Will you rescue us from our pains and our national traumas: reconciliation, disharmony, political and ideological splits? Or will you make us quarrel even more? Will you be our arbitrator? Will you order us 'to love each other, to finally become good and quarrel no more'? Ah, Europe, you are just the same as the 'former Yuga,' is what we'll say when we realize that the European Union cannot help us!

A supporter of the SLS candidate list at the European election in June 2004, in their bulletin

An interesting detail in this story is that, unlike in some other countries, in Slovenia there was no real need for a campaign to convince the Slovenian public to vote for Europe. Ever since the earliest stages of *approximation*, it was crystal clear that the battle was already won and that no special effort towards this goal was necessary. The table below shows the answers to the question "Would it be beneficial for Slovenia if it became a member of the European Union?" (Toš et al. 1999, 420, 484, 638, 718, 858, Toš et al. 2004, 251, 366, 466, 496).

SJM	IT WOULD BE	IT WOULDN'T BE	I DON'T KNOW,
	BENEFICIAL	BENEFICIAL	NO ANSWER
1994/4 <sup>289</sup>	65.1%	5.7%	5.1%
1995/1	54.8%	20.6%	24.6%
1996/1	57.5%	14.5%	28.0%
1997/1	57.0%	15.2%	27.8%
1998/2	52.4%	22.3%	25.3%
2001/1	49.2%	21.7%	29.1%
2002/1	48.6%	19.5%	31.9%
2003/1	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%
2003/2	73.6%	12.6%	13.8%

The share of those who were in favor of the idea first fell, then rose again, reaching a solid three-quarters in the year of the referendum, while the share of those who were not in favor fell, so in 2003 they accounted for only slightly

<sup>289</sup> Only in this survey, a significant number of respondents (24.1%) answered 'I've never heard of the European Union.'

more than one tenth of the total. Obviously, the outcome of the referendum held on March 23, 2003 was not in the balance. Just to remind you, the voter turnout was 60%; 89% voted for and 10% against accession.<sup>290</sup>

Knowing this, the dominant Eurocentric meta discourse in Slovenia appears even more irritating. Such a discourse would be understandable had the majority of Slovenian citizens been against *Europe* or indifferent towards it. But, given the state of affairs, one could ask whether this 'cheering' for *Europe* was needed at all. Why this 'eurofanatic' pressure, 'uniformity' of mind, sharp discourse and systematic approach, and messages charged with emotions (or *eumotions*)? Why this frantic 'convincing of the already convinced'? Was it really necessary to invest so much energy and resources? The manner in which the convincing was carried out – well illustrated by the described propaganda campaigns, rhetoric, and representations, and the meta discourse of the new Eurocentrism in general – unfortunately leads to the conclusion that every comprehensive political campaign necessarily resorts to populist and primitive elements.

This said, I must stress that I by no means want to argue that all information and data was inadequate or useless. Indeed, some proved very useful, for example, information about EU institutions, EU structure and options for various categories of the population, as well as astute individual assessments and critical considerations and reservations expressed by certain intellectuals. An excellent contribution was *Modra Zbirka – Delajmo Evropo* by \*cf. publisher (the *Blue Collection – Making Europe*), which included translations of works by Umberto Eco, Franco Cardini, Gisela Bock, Jack Goody, Hagen Schulze and other renowned social scientists writing on various Europe-related topics. Let me, therefore, stress again that this study focuses on the dominant meta discourse, while leaving out other discourses. Unfortunately, the meta discourse was seriously lacking in different and broader views.

290 These results could be expected, given the already existing and extensive inclusion of Slovenia in current European affairs and processes, ranging from cultural to economic ones. After all, it has been several years now since two-thirds of Slovenian exports have been going to the EU, and only 15% to the former Yugoslav republics. The results of a survey by POP TV in September and October 2004 also indicate that nothing essential changed after the *historical date*. Asked whether 'living conditions have changed for you after Slovenia's accession to the EU,' 61% of respondents answered 'No,' 28% answered 'Yes, for the worse' and only 9% said 'Yes, for the better.' ([http://24ur.com/naslovnica/interaktivno/ankete/polls\\_p1.php?Nrp=0](http://24ur.com/naslovnica/interaktivno/ankete/polls_p1.php?Nrp=0), last accessed on October 4, 2004).

The material I viewed, read, listened to and finally presented in this book indicates that the ratio between balanced, complex and critical views and the dominant Eurocentric discourse was largely in favor of the latter. The Eurocentric meta discourse assimilated a hodge-podge of things, from sincere and naïve nonsense to deliberate delusions, from clownish exaggerations and cheap demagoguery to elaborate, agitprop-style offensive actions, from instant explanations as to ‘what Europe actually is’<sup>291</sup> to infantile symbolism and rituals of passage. It is almost incredible that so much material could have been prepared so meticulously and in such a short time, and that it could have been disseminated so widely and have elicited such wide support. Many times while analyzing the material I thought to myself: ‘This can’t be true!’ or ‘Is this *The EU for Dummies* or what?’ or ‘This must have been a slip of the tongue.’ I had to re-read certain statements and passages several times to convince myself that someone occupying a responsible position, or someone educated, actually concluded or publicly said ‘something like that’.

In many cases, the *Europe* of this discourse could be relativized by consistently adhering to the specific interpretation of the Eurocentric discourse itself. For example, what about the promised *elimination of frontiers*, given that the citizens of new member states still have to queue at the borders and show identification papers?<sup>292</sup> Or, what about the *free movement of labor*, which is applicable to the newcomers only after the expiration of the *transition period*? Or the *equality of European languages*, albeit not on the banknotes nor in the actual operation of European institutions? What about our *common future*, towards which we will obviously be moving at different speeds? And what about the *common foreign policy* that crumbles whenever confronted with a challenge, as in the case of the war in the former Yugoslavia or the war in Iraq?

It is my strong belief that Slovenia’s accession to the EU and the operation of the Union could be explained in a much more composed, argument-based, and informative manner, which would certainly appeal to many and secure additional support (if the existent support was considered insufficient). The EU should have been subjected to con-

291 A typical example is the title and content of the brochure *Europe in 12 lessons* by Pascal Fontaine (European Commission, 2004), which is a sequel to his previous publication *Europe in 10 points*.

292 One symptomatically convoluted title alluding to this was: The Europe With New Frontiers – Without Frontiers. (*Dnevnik*, 29 March, 2004, cover page)

tinual scrutiny and presented in a critical manner as a pragmatic and changing social construction, as a community of members of various sizes and strengths, all harboring quiet egoisms or loudly pursuing specific tactics; and, as a scene of the confrontation of many interests, historical particularities and hardly compatible visions of the future. Instead, it was glorified as some mythical construction, an ultimate arbitrator or an absolute (*eub*solute) point in historical development. *Europe* should actually be understood as a heterogeneous structure resting on a sea of differences harmonized through negotiations, rather than an imagined unity. It should be interpreted contextually rather than in the essentialistic manner, as a union whose dialectic elements include divisions and antagonisms, as well as the strategies for overcoming and harmonizing these, both outwardly and inwardly, as ‘an ever-changing concept that migrates and shifts its significance’ (Boym, 2001, 225), and as a union with multiple contingent possibilities for development, several possible constructions, legitimacies, values and, ultimately, inclusions, rather than as an inwardly united and impenetrable fortress.

Yet, the ‘*eruption*’ of the new Eurocentrism cannot be simply brushed off as ‘harmless wordiness,’ ‘beginners naivety,’ ‘understandable enthusiasm’ or ‘holiday fever,’ as one may be tempted to do. This was not any kind of irrational or infantile discourse full of ill-chosen comparisons or inaccurate analogies, although it may first appear as such. The responsibility for this discourse should not be diminished by resorting to *cosi fan tutti* explanations, along the lines of: ‘if others carry Europopulism too far, why shouldn’t we!’ On the contrary, this was, in the first place, a well thought out, consistent and integrating hegemonic paradigm that gave rise to ‘enthusiasm,’ ‘naivety’ and ‘spontaneity.’ To the last word, implication or tear of happiness, the discourse analyzed here has been structurally identical to those accompanying all mythological transitions and mythical self-placements of Slovenia during the last century (starting with the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, through socialist Yugoslavia, to the *finally independent state of Slovenia* and ultimately *Europe*). Loyalty to the new community has in the dominant discourse always been expressed in a submissive, apprentice-like manner. Self-pity has been justified through an obsessive proving of the righteousness of the new center, whose whimsical will and caprices were satisfied, in expectation of the praise for

our obedience. In this last case, the feeling of inferiority towards the *West*, *the developed world*, and *Europe* has schizophrenically mixed with the feeling of superiority towards the *Balkans*, *the East* and so on.

The new Eurocentrism thus includes the ‘iron repertoire’ of every political mythology and symbolism, including the Slovenian national peculiarities: *transition from chaos to cosmos*, *the new center of creation*, *golden age*, *founding fathers*, *great trials*, *new measurement of time*, *common vision etc.* The mobilization of all political and social forces to achieve one specific goal, the concerted and systematic propaganda campaigns – the syndrome of mass countdowns, planting of trees, erecting of monuments, deterministic rhetoric, new affixes and mandatory adjectives, mass events, notable figures surrounded by smiling children waving flags, relay batons – all this is *déjà vu*, things already seen, heard and experienced countless times. Every time they were in excess, and every time the hopes that we were seeing the last of it proved futile.

In my view, it is not primarily the unconditional following of the line or the self-evident obedience of its advocates or protagonists that makes the adoption of this type of meta discourse in Slovenia problematic. As can be concluded from the last two paragraphs, this is nothing really new, although caution and reservations should be in place, if only because we have already had the experience of multi-national political communities (Austria, Austria-Hungary and the two Yugoslavias), each characterized by its own measure and type of authoritarianism. Despite this, two other details worry me more than that. First, what kinds of new divisions and exclusions may emerge as a consequence of a *Europe* constructed in this way? Second, what is being overlooked inside *Europe* itself? What is disappearing, and what in its glittering structure is being uncritically ignored? Which are those ‘dead stars,’ ‘non-illuminated planets’ and ‘black holes’ in this new *European constellation*?

Accordingly, the first set of questions is as follows. Who is the new ‘Other’ in that *Europe*? Who will be members of the ‘Not-Yet-Europe,’ ‘Not-Europe,’ ‘Sub-Europe’ or ‘Never-Europe’ groups? How will Europe’s new anteroom filled with ‘Europe-thirsty’ aspirants look? Who is next in line waiting to join the *process of accession to Europe at any price* (or *below price*)? How much of Europe vanishes every time a *New Europe* consisting of an elite club is constituted on its soil? How will the process of further antagonis-

tic dichotomization look? How firm will *Europe's* new borders be, given that *Europe* has 'always been obsessed with its borders, internal and external' (Boym, 2001, 226). In short, against whom will this renovated, differentiated unity be now directed?<sup>293</sup> 'The myth of Europe is a bright narrative of values like freedom, democracy, welfare, solidarity, modern technology and, above all, of high culture' (Punt-scher Riekmann, 1997, 65), while its positivity is created through antagonistic negation of all else.<sup>294</sup> Let me point out that I take every identity as relational, as a discursive relationship, as something unstable and fractured. *Europe* (much like other entities discussed here, e.g. *Slovenia, the Balkans, the West*) is continually redefined, and as such it generates differences separating it from those surrounding it. As a universal and totalizing form, it will last as long as its addressees continue to obsessively furnish the sense it actually lacks and until they generate differences between *Europe* and its surroundings.

In a bipolar construction and perception of reality, the second identity is 'a negative opposite of the first:' 'the relation of every element in a system of equivalences towards the elements in another system can only be the relation of opposition.' (Laclau, Mouffe, 1987, 111).<sup>295</sup> In other words, the category of contradiction 'corresponds to the formula "A – non-A": the reality of both members is exhausted by their mutual relationship' (ibid. 104). Only the confrontation of the one with the other enables the former to come to life through denial - one cannot survive without the other. The result of this exclusivist strategy is that communication or reconciliation between the two is impossible. Only a binary pair may exist: *Europe* and *Non-Europe*.<sup>296</sup> Or, to put

293 New unification invariably elicits new divisions. In March 1946, in the same famous speech delivered in Fulton, Winston Churchill stated that 'the safety of the world requires a new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast, and simultaneously announced a new iron curtain stretching from Szczecin to Trieste.

294 For example, the homogenization of Europe was carried out 'par negationem: not so much by defining what Europe is, but by defining the border and, through this, identifying that which Europe is not' (Debeljak, 2004, 29).

295 In other words, 'antagonism and exclusion are constitutive of all identity' (Laclau, 1996, 52), or, 'it is the contradictory sides themselves that require the presence and, at the same time, the exclusion of each other: each is both the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of the other' (Ibid., 8).

296 From the wealth of stupidities of this meta discourse (which also abounded in extraordinary stylistic achievements and spelling mistakes), I chose an example from the June (election) issue of the SLS's bulletin entitled *European Echo*. It is written in a phony humorous style, imitating European directives and resolutions. 'Ouch, that's precisely what we feared: European discipline. We have indeed harmonized ourselves marvelously ... but it is so difficult to be consistent and correct when you "grew up in the Balkans." But being European is just a dream, that is, European in spirit and not only in financial matters, now, when the "nostalgic juga" again reverberates with these 'golden,' 'business' melodies so dear to us.



it differently, these are literally two poles inside one continent, but their relation is hierarchical: difference generates divisions into better and worse, higher and lower, correct and incorrect, important and unimportant. So, Said's conclusion about the indefinite appearance of the Orient in the eyes of the West is also applicable to Eurocentric meta discourse, or rather, to the *non-European* part of the European continent. 'Every one of them kept intact the separateness of the Orient, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability' (Said, 1979, 206). Furthermore, the '[t]hesis of Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West' (ibid. 206) is now transposed back to Europe, or rather, that part of Europe that is not yet *Europe*.

This meta discourse actually restores the European colonial situation by now applying it to (Eastern) Europe itself. Colonialism always presented itself as an *altruistic mission which aimed to cultivate and civilize, to Europeanize, enlighten and rescue from barbarism*. Eastern Europe now appears as the Orient once did, as 'a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption. The Orient existed as a place isolated from the mainstream of European progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce' (Ibid. 206). This is a recurrence of the typical colonial situation of the *Europeanization* of Non-Europeans, in which the crucial moment is the 'magical' contact with *Europe*. Yet, we should blame not only the arrogant colonizers for this situation, but also, or above all, the servile colonized nations who *follow blindly like sheep* the discourse of new masters. Just to remind you, in 1999 the French foreign minister Hubert Vedrin spoke about the *Europeanization of the Balkans* (Drace-Francis, 1999, 127); the same expression was used by his Slovenian counterpart when referring to neighboring Croatia; in September 1995, the former Croatian president stated that Croatia accepted the task of *Europeanizing* the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina; after all, a Slovenian newspaper editor also spoke about the *final Europeanization of Slovenia*.<sup>297</sup> The main controversial points in the process of 'euniversalization' or 'euvangelization' of new (and future) EU members are, first, that that their previous existence in Europe is wiped out, so that the new *Euro-elites* can place them back into *Europe*; that imagined walls are erected so that they can be pulled down; and second, that everybody and everything belonging to 'before' or 'beyond' is belittled, so that the su-

297 *Žurnal*, 30 April, 2004, p. 2.

periority of the present and the inevitability of the future can be highlighted.

Furthermore, the new hegemonic Eurocentric discourse ignores the complex history of the old continent, its suppressed episodes and less favorable sides, and the history of the divisions and exclusions inside Europe itself. To avoid this, the protagonists resort to incessant repetition of one and the same progressistic Eurocentric paradigm, drawing on the 'historical continuity' of antiquity-Christendom-Renaissance-Enlightenment-bourgeois revolution-capitalism, an evolution which is teleologically oriented towards the newly *integrated Europe*.<sup>298</sup>

These one-sided projections and problematic periodizations employed by the new Eurocentrism can be rejected on three levels at least. First, all the stage-based charts of European history are nonsensical and useless, since all were written *a posteriori* and post festum, all are linear, and all drawn from the viewpoint of the European center. According to these interpretations, it may appear that 'only Europe represents any kind of real historical entity, with a common culture derived from Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian roots, and a common sense of its own identity as against the rest of the world.' So, seemingly, 'the idea of Europe is a continuation of Hellenismos, Latinitas, and Christiandom' (Lewis, 1975, 100) but not also of other and earlier cultural sources or neighboring influences.

Furthermore, this one-sided reduction of European history cannot be defended by pretending that genocide, war, persecution, exploitation etc. were simply deviations, aberrations, *faux pas* in European history (in these explanations, all such phenomena were simply individual instances of 'degeneration' within Europe). Similarly, the one-way *development* of Europe cannot be justified through less inaccurate, although still partial, 'sobering explanations' that aim to remove the luster from European history, along the lines of 'both are European' or 'both originated in Europe,' for example, 'Fascism is no less European than the Renaissance,' 'ghettos for the Jews, the Roma, immigrants and other marginalized people are as much European as modern

298 Compare the chronology of Slovenian history, which begins around 620, continues with *Brižinski spomeniki*, touches upon Trubar, Illyrian Provinces, Prešeren and the United Slovenia program, finally concentrating on the 20th century, which brought the establishment of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, resistance and victory over Fascism, plebiscite and the proclamation of independence, international recognition, signing and verification of the EU accession treaty and the beginning of negotiations (Slovenia At Home in Europe – a symbolic passport, Government Public Relations and Media Office and Government Office for European Affairs, 1998).

glass palaces and the Notre Dame,' 'inquisition and gulags are European no less than the Enlightenment,' 'political, religious and colonial totalitarianisms are the invention of Europe the same as industrial revolution' (according to this interpretation, all 'bad things' in Europe simply 'came to life,' as did 'good' things).

EUROPE WITHOUT ...



It is necessary to make a step forward, touch raw nerves, and point out that which is being marginalized and deliberately consigned to oblivion. Every European integration, without exception, involved new exclusions; every *new Europe* was formed through the rejection of a *new Non-Europe*;<sup>299</sup> hostility towards everything *non-European* and, con-

299 Viewed from this perspective, two additions to the jumbo posters of the ZLSD party during the European elections (slogan: In Europe for the Good of Slovenia) are symptomatic. One reads: Without BIH! (*Without Bosnia-Herzegovina*), and the other *Without Bosnians!* It should be added that Non-Europeans are frequently depicted by the Slovenian media in incredibly rude terms. For example, according to a journalist writing for the main daily newspaper, *fleshy Russians crawl around Portorož accompanied by their decorated mistresses* (*Delo*, Sobotna priloga, 21 August, 2004, p. 14). See also the analysis in Velikonja, 2002.

sequently, the subordination of all things *non-European* are part of constructing Europeanism (the attributes of which are, presumably, *peace, friendship and cooperation*,<sup>300</sup> and its advantages *the use of knowledge, intellect and creativity*).<sup>301</sup> At the very core of the process of formation of European nation-states are ethnic, cultural and religious cleansing, often violent national homogenization, assimilations, and forced migrations, habitually suppressed in usual interpretations (the wealth of Europe, including its *diversity, difference and multiculturality*,<sup>302</sup> emerged only after Europe was divided nationally, religiously, politically and culturally through several hundred years of cleansing and assimilation); the *discovery*, colonization and enslavement of the non-European world was quietly incorporated into the foundations of European 'liberating' projects such as the Renaissance, Humanism and later the Enlightenment; the systematic impoverishment of the third world increases as the wealth of Europe, and the world center in general, grows; the real truth behind the grand narratives such as *we have to cultivate the wealth of our diversity, since Europe is a community of minorities*,<sup>303</sup> is an all-inclusive unification and standardization in all areas according to European standards; the truth behind assertions such as *Europe is proud of its long tradition of welcoming foreigners and its humanitarian willingness to offer asylum to refugees*<sup>304</sup> is that xenophobia, intolerance towards different minorities, exclusivism and economic egoism in that same *Europe* are again on the rise and that its Schengen borders are closed borders.

In my opinion, by (n)eurotically resorting to the constructions of *Europe* in the manner of the Freudian 'fantasy world' mentioned in the introduction, the new Eurocentrism attempts to avoid addressing the essential dilemmas and questions of which all of us, those already in *Europe* and those *on their way to it*, should be aware and which all should seek to resolve. For example, to what extent is manifold diversity an advantage (or disadvantage) for the United 'Pains'

300 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May, 2004, p. 25.

301 *Mobilnost v Evropi znanja* (Mobility Within the Europe of Knowledge), Center Evropa, 2003.

302 *Ibid.*, 2003.

303 Or *Europe that has to be the place of exchange, cultural confrontation and respect for differences*, in the words of the President of the European Commission (*Primorski dnevnik*, 1 May 2004, p. 8, 9).

304 Or, 'rich heritage of values that includes a belief in human rights, social solidarity, free enterprise, a fair sharing of the fruits of economic growth, the right to a protected environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a harmonious yoking of tradition and progress' (Pascal Fontaine; *Europe in 12 lessons*; European Commission, 2004, p. 6, 47).

of Europe, to put it sarcastically? How much diversity and unification (*eunification*) can Europe tolerate? How unjust is the *new Schengen wall*, erected after *the fall of the Berlin wall*, and what new *wall* will come next? To what extent are EU citizens actually *Europeans* (as well)? Do they actually care at all, given the low voter turnout for the latest European parliamentary elections, particularly in some new member states? How many speeds can *Europe* realistically afford, and whose gear remains in neutral and whose in reverse? Should we really speak about *Europe*? Or would it be more appropriate to use the plural form and speak about *Europes* or the *Europe of Europes*? Or, to use Kissinger's famous question from the 1970s, still current thirty years later: *When I want to speak to Europe, whom do I call?* Is Europe integrating for internal reasons, or does it have to 'return to itself' in order to regain its role within the international community, as Puntcher Riekmann (1997, 63) proposed? If the latter is true, what stance should it adopt when confronted with international crises such as war in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Near and the Middle East, or with really essential problems such as world poverty, migration and environmental pollution? Or, has 'this sovereign self of Europe' (Young, 1993, 17) already been deconstructed - irrevocably?

## V. EUREKA – LITERATURE

*run with me baby, let your hair down  
through every station, through every town  
run with me baby, let's make a stand  
from peepshow to disco, from Spain to Camber Sands*

*europe is our playground. London is our town,  
so run with me baby now*  
*Suede, Europe is Our Playground, album Trash, 1996*

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