



Canadian Slovenian
Chamber of Commerce

Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce Update 2023 Reflection

2023: A year of Collaboration and Connections

Burlington, Ontario
January 12, 2024

We want to start the Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce update with a big thanks for the support and cooperation received from our Board of Directors, or associates and our members. We also want to especially spotlight the support and collaboration from the Slovenian Embassy in Ottawa, Bateman MacKay LLP, Moya Financial Credit Union and funding support from Spirit Slovenia and the Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad.

The CSCC is a place of connections and it is our directors and members who provided valuable contacts for the Slovenian companies and professionals who connected with us this past year. As we often say, "a warm introduction is invaluable when maneuvering through a landscape of unfamiliar twists and turns". We also provided many meaningful opportunities to connect with each other throughout the year. The common threads in all we do are engagement with the Slovenian business community and support for our common Slovenian heritage.

So, let's take a look at a few of the highlights from this past year which are posted on our canslo.com website and videos on the Youtube canslo channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPGqyCcIRwUaspNJPTzVbmg>

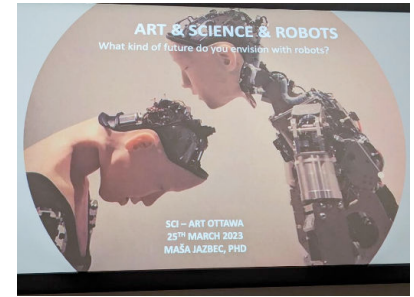
FEBRUARY:

- Federation of International Skiing (FIS) Nordic Junior Ski Jumping event was held January 27 to February 5 in Whistler, BC.** Our CSCC secretary/treasurer and Honorary Slovenian Consul for B.C. Margaret Rudolf presided over much of the event, where she ensured that Slovenia was well represented. Alpina and Elan sponsored the Slovenia kiosk that was prominently included in the FIS marketplace. In addition, Ambassador Andrej G. Rode sponsored a VIP tent which provided Slovenian wine, food and lots of information on doing business and tourism in Slovenia. He was also invited to present winning medals on FIS champions. We were pleased to report that the Slovenian teams had a good showing with gold, silver and bronze medals in the mixed junior, women's and men's events!
- On February 3rd, the CSCC, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Ottawa, the EU Chamber of Commerce in Canada West, and the Slovenian Consulate in Vancouver, organized an event promoting **Slovenian Tourism in Vancouver**. The event, opened by Slovenia's Ambassador Andrej G. Rode, featured presentation and lecture by Slovenian Trade Commissioner and CSCC Board member Simon Pribac. It garnered significant attention from leading tour operators, tourism journalists, and other businesses keen on exploring more about Slovenia and resulted in developing further connections between CSCC members and stakeholders in BC and Slovenia.
- On February 23rd, the Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce held their first in-person event since the pandemic – **Member Appreciation Night and Slovenian wine Tasting Evening** with an introduction to Slovenian wines that are available to buy through the LCBO and to formally introduce Moya Financial Credit Union's CEO, Andrew Rovansek. It was a chance for members from the Slovenian business community to mingle and finally see each other face to face in person.



MARCH:

- On March 25-26th, Simon Pribac, spearheaded the largest art and science event in Ottawa to the date "SCI_ART". This collaborative initiative involved the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, and SAW Gallery. The event showcased Slovenian academics and notable figures in the intersection of art and science, including Valerie Wolf Gang, Dr. Matija Strlič, Dr. Maša Jazbec, Aleksandra Bajde, and Borut Jerman. The symposium garnered substantial attention, drawing in over 600 visitors, and fostered partnerships with various Slovenian organizations such as the University of Ljubljana, VTIS (Association of Slovenians Educated Abroad), RUK network, Katapult Robotika among others. Alongside Mr. Pribac, the CSCC was also represented at the event by BOD member Jason Gorel.
- On March 30th, Sonya Rosenwirth was invited by **SGBN (Slovenian Global Business Network) Slovenian Businesswomen Around the Globe** as a guest speaker. It was a pleasure to take part in their first virtual meeting of 2023 and be interviewed by their host Mateja Perovšek. They created the series to showcase Slovenian women in business and it was an honour to share some personal and Chamber insights.



APRIL:

- VSKO - Slovenians in Canada - National Forum** – We were pleased to be invited to have this opportunity to connect with Slovenian clubs and organizations across Canada.
- CSHS - Life in The Camps Luncheon and Presentation.** We were pleased to attend the **Canadian Slovenian Historical Society's** showing of this poignant documentary about the post-war journey from Slovenia and connect in person with the Slovenian community. To learn more: <https://www.slovenianhistorical.ca>
- CSCC Virtual Event: CSCC Business Insights "2023 Canadian Tax & Estate Strategies for Businesses with Mr. Tim Cestnick"**, Co-Founder & CEO of Our Family Office Inc., one of Canada's leading wealth advisory firms to affluent families. Tim's national speaking profile is confirmed by his position as a personal finance columnist for the Globe & Mail's Report on Business, Canada's national business newspaper. He appears regularly on Canadian National news programs and is the preferred financial consultant for all the best-known money programs in the country. *See the full video on the canslo Youtube channel!*



MAY:

- URAD VLADE RS ZA SLOVENCE V ZAMEJSTVU IN PO SVETU** – "Spletno srečanje s slovensko skupnostjo v ZDA in Kanadi – Povezava". This was a virtual meeting between URAD sponsored Slovenian organizations in Canada and the USA where we shared events that are planned and being undertaken to support and promote Slovenian best interests.
- CSCC Meet & Greet: Professor Dr. Marin Berovic**, international wine expert providing articles, lectures, and jurying on national wine expert panels for over 30 years. Dr. Berkovic came to the CSCC Showroom at Bateman Mackay to talk about the Slovenian wine industry and the Slovenian wine route. The informal gathering was a boardroom table meeting where he answered one-on-one questions after his formal presentation.
- Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce** hosted the 19th **Annual Business Excellence Awards Gala** on Friday, May 12, 2023 at the Burlington Convention Centre. Mr. John Doma and his wife, Margaret, Jason Gorel, Sonya Rosenwirth and her husband Wayne and Andrew Rovansek from Moya Financial Credit Union joined in the festivities and represented Slovenia at the event, where other central European countries also attended to show support for each other's efforts to support and collaborate with Europe.
- CSCC Virtual Event: CSCC Business Insights "TRAVEL ESCAPES with ARS Longa Travel Tours and the Slovenian Spas Association"**. This Zoom event featured **Damjan Sova, COO of Ars Longa**, tour operators that offer unique, culturally gratifying escapes throughout the globe and **Mr. Iztok Altbauer**, managing director of the Slovenian Spas

Association for an up-to-date look at today's Slovenian wellness retreats. *See the full video on the canslo Youtube channel!*

- CSCC in collaboration with the Slovenian Embassy in Ottawa, FGOI (Furniture Go International), the Czech Embassy in Toronto, Romanian Embassy from Montreal and the Slovenian Wood Cluster presented the **European Furniture & Designers Networking Event in Toronto**. Bill Kocjancic, CSCC Vice President was a speaker at the event and was instrumental in helping to bring some key participants to the event. Delegations from Europe connected with Canadian counterparts in a well-choreographed event at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre in Toronto. Simon Pribac was the MC and Joe Mihevc, professor at York University and former Toronto Councillor provided current Toronto urban development insight. It was a pleasure to co-host this well attended event of designers, manufacturers and developers. We are pleased that the Slovenian Wood Cluster may be visiting again and we will certainly extend the invitation to the event our members again. *Full video on the canslo Youtube channel!*

JUNE/JULY:

This was by far our busiest months, with summer in full swing for outdoor gatherings. It was a great opportunity to connect with our Slovenian community and we appreciate the collaborations and help we received along the way to make events a success for all.

- We were happy to promote long-time golf tournaments in our community with Slovenski Park leading the way on June 3rd with their 25th annual tournament and the Slovenian Open celebrating their 42nd annual tournament on June 24th. We appreciate the valuable input received from both organizers for our **1st Annual CSCC Golf Tournament**, held on June 28th at the Oakville Executive Golf Course. The day featured a 9-hole tourney, great prizes and fabulous dinner. We wanted to make sure that there was plenty of time to meet and network. To add some Slovenian flare, we treated our guests to Florence Meats' appetizers. Hole sponsorships and prizes were generously donated from our CSCC members for the event. Thanks to Boris Ulcar, CSCC Director who kindly acted as our official photographer for the event. The winning foursome earned the first mention on the CSCC Golf Classic trophy, congrats to Joe Skof, John, Alex and Stefan Doma! We look forward to seeing everyone tee-off again at our 2nd Annual Tournament in 2024! More details and photos from the event are on our website.



- In addition to participating with outdoor activities, we joined in to Zoom meetings where we continued dialogues with valuable associates across the globe.
 - **June 7** - EUCCAN hosted a virtual CETA (EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) webinar to discuss the power of partnerships, advancing the circular economy in Canada, and reducing plastic waste in Canada.
 - **June 22** – SGBN (Slovenian Global Business Network) SLOVENIAN BUSINESSWOMEN AROUND THE GLOBE series hosted two very inspiring female entrepreneurs from Slovenia with work experience abroad: mag. Marta Kos, the President of ONA VE and Lidija Drobež, the Founder of Galleria l'arte di seta.
- We celebrated some of the many Slovenian Independence Day events with our community. A video of some of the events can be seen at the following link: https://youtu.be/kQ0FHgSyoL0?si=3tX8BzdB43ZdLg_1
 - **Friday June 23** – the VSKO organized the Slovenian flag-raising at Toronto City Hall. VSKO President, Mrs. Vera Margutsch hosted the festivity with speeches from H.E. Ambassador Andrej Rode, Honorary General Slovenian Consul John Doma, Canadian-Slovenian Representative Marjan Kolaric, and Counsellor Joe Mihevc.

- **Saturday, June 24** – Bled Hall's Celebration also celebrated their 34th anniversary. Honoured guests included H.E. Ambassador Andrej Rode and Honorary General Slovenian Consul John Doma.
- **Sunday July 2nd** – Slovenian Summer Camp hosted a lively event that celebrated Slovenia and Canada Day with a full showcase of dance groups and choir. Honoured guests included H.E. Ambassador Andrej Rode and Honorary General Slovenian Consul John Doma who awarded community members with well-deserved achievement certificates.
- **June 30th** – we were invited to be one of the speakers at the launch of VTIS in Canada, held at the Baka Gallery Café in Toronto. The goal of VTIS is to bring together highly educated Slovenians from around the world. Speakers at the event were H.E. Andrej Rode, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia in Canada, Simon Pribac, Head of the VTIS Canada Local Council, Anamarija Novak, Member of the VTIS Canada Local Council, Sonya Rosenwirth, Executive Director of the CSCC and Joe Mihevc, Professor at York University.
- **July 15th** – we were at **Pecenkafest** at the Slovenski Park who brought the community together for some friendly competition and lots of laughs. Golden Keys performed at the 9th annual event for the well-fed crowd well into the night. This was a very well-organized event that will be extra special in 2024 as they celebrate their 10th anniversary.
- **July 22 and 23** – we were pleased to help promote Crane Creations and HCA Black Box Theatre for their presentation of the **Maribor Puppet Theatre's production of Pinocchio**. Both theatres are run by Slovenian entrepreneurs and the CSCC reminds everyone to check their shows and support our Slovenian community businesses.

AUGUST:

- **August 3 to 6th** – Slovenia suffered its worst flooding disaster with swollen rivers causing landslides and cave-ins that resulted in massive destruction to buildings and infrastructure. Reports recorded 400 buildings destroyed, 8,000 people evacuated, 1,500,000 people affected, 6 fatalities, 30km of roads damaged, 70 bridges destroyed or severely damaged, and 750 hectares of land flooded. The Canadian Slovenian community was called to action and the CSCC assisted by helping to collect funds quickly through e-transfers from across Canada. In all, over **\$167,000** was collected and then donated through the OLMM church in Toronto to Caritas and Slovenian flood relief charity agencies.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER:

- September was "back to school" for CSCC Executive Director Sonya Rosenwirth as planning and preparations were carried out for the upcoming delegation of Slovenian School Centres that were coming on October 8th. Meetings and site visits to Ontario Colleges and local attractions meant a very busy month to ensure that all the necessary details were covered for everything from travel, accommodations, meeting agendas, and attraction bookings.
- **September 27**- Our CSCC president, John Doma and treasurer, Margaret Rudolf who are (of course) Canadian consuls represented our Canadian Slovenian community at the annual Slovenian Consular Meeting in Nova Gorica, Slovenia.
- **September 28** – John Doma was hosted by Roto Group President Nuša Pavlinjek and her team to tour their impressive facility in Murska Sobota.
- John Doma attended the Koper Chamber of Commerce event and discussed Carego Tek Inc. moving to open their European office in Slovenia. John has been a key supporter of their project with Luka Koper and discussions are on-going.
- **October 4** – we participated in the Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad Meeting for the Slovenian community in the USA and Canada on Zoom to meet Ombudsman Mr. Peter Svetina and get tips for easier and more transparent preparation of reports for the calendar year 2023 (reports must be submitted by the recipient of funds no later than January 31, 2024).

- **October 7 – 14th** – the CSCC hosted “Challenger” with 27 delegates from Slovenian Consortium of School Centres for a whirlwind of meetings with top colleges in Ontario, a visit to the Slovenian Sports Camp for their closing banquet and tours of Toronto and Niagara. The Consortium consisted of Slovenian School Centres from Nova Gorica, Kranj, Velenje, Celje, Ptuj, Ljubljana and Business Solution d.o.o. Thanks to our College and MIP hosts who made this an impactful conference: Conestoga College – Doon Campus, Kitchener, Niagara College – Niagara-on-the-Lake, Mohawk College – Hamilton, McMaster Innovation Park – Hamilton, and Sheridan College – Trafalgar Campus, Oakville. A highlight of the opening reception was having the Argentinian Mendoski Slovenian Oktet provide a surprise mini-concert. The delegation returned to Slovenia with a great impression of Canadian colleges and of our Slovenian community. We appreciated the support for the event from our CSCC board, John Doma, Bill Kocjancic, Simon Pribac, Jason Gorel and Boris Ulcar.



- **On October 21**, Margaret hosted Ambassador Rode and his wife Monika in BC where an award was presented to the Vancouver Slovenian Society on the occasion of their 65th year of productive existence.
- **October 14 – 30th** – in a combination of vacation and CSCC business, visits were made to Spirit Slovenia, URAD for Slovenians Abroad, Nuša Pavlinjek and her team at Roto Group in Murska Sobota, Gašper Čarman from eVino, Marko Jare from the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce, Anze Skodlar from Skozar Legal & Venture, Challenger contacts from Nova Gorica, Celje and Velenje, Prevent & Deloza president Bostjan Marolt, Branko at Hotel Belmur and valued member and CSCC friend Randy and Darja Dresar with their lovely family in Maribor. We will certainly plan to have a meeting in Slovenia soon and are honoured to have many contacts and venues to collaborate with on such an event.

Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce 2023 Statistics:

CSCC Business Events	10
Business Articles Published in Slovenia	31
Canadian Business Opportunities Published in Slovenia	30
Slovenian companies provided with business content/consultations (max. 5 hrs)	71
Canadian companies provided with business content/consultations (max. 5 hrs)	29
In-depth consultations (40 hrs +)	4
CSCC Members (Companies, Professional, Entrepreneurs)	69
CSCC Associates (Not-for-Profit, Community Organizations, Students, Government Associations)	26
CSCC Board of Directors	10
CSCC Administration (Executive Director)	1

Our associations have enabled us to connect with valuable contacts that support bilateral commerce between Canada and Slovenia as well as collaborate to build the Slovenian Business network.

John Doma, as treasurer on the European Union Chamber of Commerce has ensured that Slovenia is viewed as an integral part of the union and has gained recognition for Canadian-Slovenians and the Chamber.

Dr. Margaret Rudolf, CSCC Treasurer, Honorary Slovenian Consul in BC has provided us with the ability to better connect across Canada, with the Vancouver Slovenian Society and with her associates in government and commerce. It is wonderful to have a stronger connection with Vilko Macek and Darja Zlindra from the Vancouver Slovenian Society, who along with the other highly motivated Slovenians in the BC Slovenian community have worked diligently to preserve and uplift the Slovenian heritage. Margaret has elevated the status of Slovenia by participating at numerous highly attended events in Canada, Slovenia and Italy and even managed to have the Museum of Anthropology at UBC exhibit a Slovenian Kurent. We are fortunate to channel her passion for Slovenia and appreciate her many collaborations with us.

Our association with the very driven and world-connected Dr. Štefan Bogdan Barenboim Šalej and the Slovenian Global Business Network has opened doors to many global Slovenian contacts and we appreciate the support and encouragement received throughout our newfound friendship. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Salej and his wife H.E. Débora Vainer Barenboim in Argentina and his passion for the Slovenia is inspirational.

We collaborated with MIC in Nova Gorica and from this we have new academic associations across Slovenia through the Slovenian School Center Consortium. The Challenger project was a glimpse into the many synergies and possibilities that Slovenian and Canadian schools can build together for their international initiatives. This visit from the 27-member delegation introduced our Ontario colleges to Slovenia and its immense potential, something that they probably never considered before.

We are thankful to our director, Mr. Tim Cestnick, co-founder of Our Family Office, who generously provides us with his weekly Canadian business column from the Globe & Mail. We were also happy when he joined us on Business Insights to speak about Canadian Tax & Estate Strategies for Businesses immediately after the Canadian federal budget was revealed.

In addition to the many loyal members that we have had for many years, we welcomed new members to the Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce. This year, the following members have joined us and we encourage you to learn more about them by visiting our canslo.com directory.

<u>Member Name</u>	<u>Business Sector</u>	<u>Country</u>
AL ars longa d.o.o.	Tourism, Travel	Slovenia
Croatia Unpacked	Wine Distributors	Canada
Crosslink Technology Inc.	Custom Cast Parts, Epoxies, Urethanes	Canada
Emilian Jewellery Ltd.	Retail Jewellery	Canada
eWool	Heated Apparel	Canada
Florence Meats	Delicatessen, Meat shop, Slovenian store, South African Specialties	Canada
HomeLife Cimerman R.E. Ltd. Brokerage	Real Estate	Canada
IZOP-K D.O.O.	Defense and Hunting, demilitarization and recycling, Firearms, production, storage and handling	Slovenia
ROTO Slovenija	Custom roto-molder, Plastic products	Slovenia
Slewmaster Inc.	Manufacturing	Canada
Sryde Digital Marketing	Website Creation / Digital Marketing	Canada
Virtutek-X Precisionwear	Made-To-Measure Fashion	Canada

Take some time to discover your own association and connections by referring to the canslo directory or by contacting us via email or phone. <https://www.canslo.com/directory/>

Thank You!

On behalf of the Canadian Slovenian Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Executive Director:

John Doma, Bill Kocjancic, Margaret Rudolf, Simon Pribac, Justin Zigante, Boris Ulcar, Tim Cestnick, Jason Gorel, Richard Vitrih, Katya Marc, Sonya Rosenwirth

Thank you for connecting with us and each other!



As we look ahead to 2024, we plan for a year of creating more opportunities to support and promote our Slovenian heritage and strengthen our links to the Slovenian community across Canada, Slovenia and globally.

Please join us as we continue the dialogue, and strive to find positive ways to connect.

Let's make 2024 a great year for everyone!



Connecting Slovenian Business between Canada and Slovenia Since 1990
Povezovanje slovenskega gospodarstva med Kanadi in Sloveniji od leta 1990

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