

## 1. Light Pollution in Slovenia

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Slovenia is the first country to have a comprehensive nation-wide law on light pollution. The introduction of the Decree on Limit Values due to Light Pollution of the Environment on August 30 2007 was motivated by concerns about the effects of the growth of outdoor lighting at rates analogous to those of other European countries. Beyond its inefficient use of energy, light pollution threatens a number of species, poses health and safety risks, and acts as an obstacle to the enjoyment of nocturnal nature and the sky, an important part of people's natural and cultural heritage.

Dark-Sky Slovenia lobbied hard for introduction of this law and remains its advocate. The period of negotiation, but more so that of its implementation, revealed a number of powerful lobbies and other obstacles threatening to weaken or even completely abolish the law. These efforts - should they succeed - would represent a regretful step back in environmental protection, not only in Slovenia but also globally, as more countries may begin to legislate on light pollution. With light travelling up to 300 km in distance, the issue is inherently international and thus requires concerted efforts for its reduction. So the issue here is how to challenge the notion that economic growth necessitates more light and that more light is not necessarily good, introducing the notion of light as a pollutant which should be limited. The dark-sky movement is not advocating for switching the lights off, but calling for more rational and technically advanced solutions in outdoor lighting.

The negotiation process of the legislative act unveiled disagreements over what constitutes 'ecological outdoor lighting', and at the same time provided an opportunity for crystallization of the best technical parameters. The law now justifies the choice of technical requirements and also specifies areas where further improvements are needed. In order to multiply the positive effects of a light pollution law such as the Slovenian one in other countries, a model needs to be designed as a benchmark, drawing a line between a truly effective light pollution law that triggers reduction of light pollution and one that only carries such a label. Dark-sky Slovenia proposes the development of an index that may be used as an internationally accepted standard to reduce light pollution.

*View Dark-sky's PowerPoint on light pollution on the website.*

## 2. Nuclear power in Krško

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About one third of Slovenia's electricity is produced by an existing nuclear power plant in Krško (NPP Krško), Slovenia, which is jointly owned by Slovenia and Croatia. The existing reactor is planned to be in operation until 2023, although there are already debates about prolonging its operation.

In 2006, plans for construction of a second reactor commenced, which would use Pressurized Water Reactor (PWR) technology, and have a capacity of 1000 MW, with annual production of 7.5 - 8.5 TWh. Building is scheduled to begin in 2013, with operation from 2017 at a total official estimated cost of 2 billion €. This figure must be viewed with a great deal of caution

however, especially if one considers the experience of construction of the nuclear reactor currently being built in Olkiluoto, Finland. In this case, after four years of construction and thousands of defects and deficiencies, the reactor's 3 billion € price tag has climbed at least 50 percent. Another factor that makes it difficult to accurately predict the price of the new reactor in Slovenia is the unresolved issue of radioactive waste storage, which must be addressed in order to estimate its cost. Furthermore, although it is claimed that the new nuclear block is urgently needed in order to prevent black-outs in Slovenia in the future, the project developer GEN Energija, plans to sell roughly half of the produced electricity abroad, perhaps to Italy or Austria.

With the unclear costs of construction, unresolved waste storage problems, continuation of exposure to nuclear risks and the prospect of locking the country into dependency on increased energy use, some environmental NGOs see the planned construction of the second block as a highly problematic issue. An objective cost benefit analysis (CBA) should be done in order to be able to compare the nuclear alternative with the alternatives of saving energy and using renewables.

*View the Focus PowerPoint on nuclear power on the website.*

### 3. Transit transport charging and the Eurovignette Directive

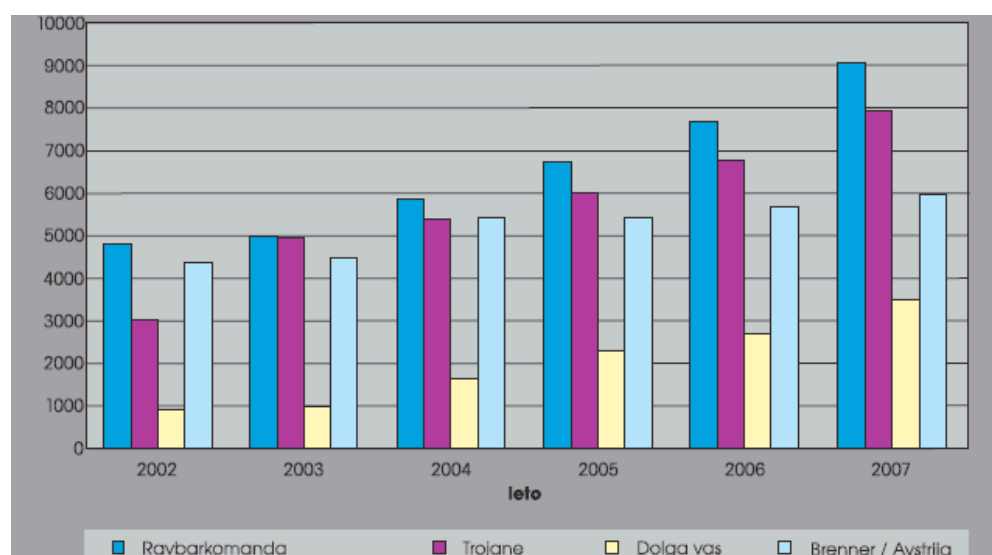
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Joining the EU resulted in a 70 % increase in transit road cargo transport through Slovenia, with a significant increase in the number of trucks crossing daily from Italy and Austria through the Ravbarkomanda and Trojane passes en route to Hungary and further east (Russia, Ukraine etc) via the Slovenian border town of Dolga Vas, or to the south to Croatia and other Balkan states.



The growth in transit cargo transport means that the taxpayers' money that was used to build Slovene roads and highways is has mainly funded the boom in cheap cargo transport, leaving Slovenia with high economic, social and environmental costs. The price of road maintenance for example, is much higher for cargo transport: one cargo vehicle causes about 30 000 times

more damage to a road than a personal car, yet until 2008, the road charge for trucks was just 4 times higher than for cars.

The European Commission's Eurovignette Directive offers a few possibilities for increasing road charges to address the costs of transport without creating an obstacle to the free flow of goods in the EU: it enables charges on regular roads, not only on highways, charges for environmentally sensitive areas (like the Alpine or Karstic regions), charges for environmentally degraded areas (like Ljubljana, due to the increased levels of air pollution) and charges for infrastructure that have over average construction costs (such as tunnels or bridges).

In light of the Slovenian government's ambitious transport plans to upgrade the harbour in Koper, which would cause even more transit transport, Slovenia should seriously estimate what would be the level of road charging that would stimulate trucks to cross the country by rail. Of course the state of the railway infrastructure and the costs of its upgrading and expanding are also a part of this economic debate.

*View the Focus PowerPoint on transit transport charging on the website.*