



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

**NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR**

**Address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar  
at the reception to celebrate the opening of the 75<sup>th</sup> Frankfurt Book Fair and  
the Guest of Honour country,  
which was held by Lord Mayor of Frankfurt am Main Mike Josef**

Frankfurt am Main, 17 October 2023

Check against delivery.

*Dear Lord Mayor Mike Josef,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Looking from afar, Frankfurt sometimes falls victim to the stereotype of being nothing more than the financial capital of Europe. Of course, as it houses the headquarters of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and the European Central Bank, and virtually all the banks that make a difference in the world are present here. Frankfurt is also important for Slovenia because of its transport links. Frankfurt Airport manages Ljubljana Airport, and Lufthansa is one of the most important airlines to and from Slovenia.*

*But the reality is that Frankfurt is really best known in Slovenia for the Frankfurt Book Fair. In socialist times, before Slovenia's independence, foreign specialist books were a rarity in the Slovenian market. Online editions of course did not exist then, and neither did the Internet. Every year, however, Slovenian publishers would bring books from Frankfurt that they had bought directly at the Fair and organise a sales exhibition called "Frankfurt after Frankfurt".*

*So if you ask someone from my generation for a quick association with the name Frankfurt, it will definitely be "books". And this is certainly a more friendly association than "money". In the eyes of Slovenians, culture and business are concepts that have long been synonymous with Frankfurt.*

*Business cooperation with Germany is of key importance for Slovenia. Many Slovenian companies are involved in production chains leading to Germany. A large number of industrial jobs are linked to partnerships with German companies. Almost two thirds of trade in goods is with just three states: Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia. I believe that there are therefore many opportunities to*

*increase cooperation with companies from Hessen. Given the strong pharmaceutical industry, this should already be possible.*

*Economic socialising and networking can also take place through cultural socialisation. Through the content that is presented and exchanged there, the Frankfurt Book Fair is a business event that is predominantly linked to culture. However, Slovenia's special position as this year's Guest of Honour is a great opportunity to get to know each other in many other areas.*

*I am pleased that many exhibitions and cultural events are taking place in Frankfurt at the moment, which will enable citizens and visitors to Frankfurt to get to know Slovenia better, and even more so that links are being forged between cultural institutions from Slovenia and Frankfurt in the process, which will continue after the Book Fair. The help of the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian Cultural Centre in Berlin was invaluable, for which I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart.*

*In the Archaeological Museum, you can listen to the sounds of the oldest musical instrument in the world, the Neanderthal flute, which was discovered in Slovenia. In two days' time, modern music enthusiasts will be able to attend a spectacular concert by Laibach. Haus am Dom is hosting an exhibition on Alma Karlin, the writer and world traveller who, more than a 100 years ago, set off on a journey around the world at a time when women rarely travelled alone.*

*The Museum of Communication has put on a joint exhibition with the Technical Museum of Slovenia on the development of mobile telephony, where you will also see my husband's video address speaking about his collection of BlackBerry phones. I could go on and on, but I will mention only one more exhibition – and that is because of its multifaceted symbolic meaning.*

*The German Romanticism Museum has put on an exhibition on the author of the poetic message of peace, which became the text of the Slovenian national anthem. The exhibition places the great Slovenian Romantic poet France Prešeren in the context of connections and intertwining in Europe in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A search through history reveals that these connections extended as far as Frankfurt. Prešeren's long-time friend was namely Count Anton Alexander von Auersperg, a poet of Austrian Romanticism who was born in Slovenia. Count Auersperg also represented Ljubljana as a member of the Frankfurt Parliament, which met here, just around the corner, in St Paul's Church. Back in their homeland, he and Prešeren discovered old stories and wrote poems about them – one in Slovenian, the other in German.*

*The connections between us have existed for many years. Throughout Frankfurt, you can now discover Slovenia in a new way, and this should help to create new connections also in tourism and business. I believe that there are still many opportunities that we can take advantage of.*