

ARTICLES

GEOGRAPHY IN SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

Geography in Slovenia

This article discusses the current situation of geography as a discipline in Slovenia. Geography flourished after Slovenia became independent in 1991. The number of geographic publications rose sharply, seminal geographic and cartographic works about Slovenia were published, and up until the onset of the economic crisis there was also an increase in the number of geography researchers, who dealt with an increasingly broad selection of topics. Modern methods, especially connected to geographic information systems, were established. Digital cartography completely replaced traditional methods. After Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004, there was a marked increase in international cooperation by Slovenian geographers, in particular in the widest variety of European and other international projects. The focus of national and international projects has shifted from pure research to applied and targeted research.

KEY WORDS

geography, cartography, science, geographer, project, research, Slovenia

IZVLEČEK

Geografija v Sloveniji

Prispevek govori o današnjem stanju geografije kot znanosti v Sloveniji. Po osamosvojitvi države leta 1991 se je geografija razcvetela. Močno se je povečalo število geografskih publikacij, izšla so temeljna geografska in kartografska dela o Sloveniji, do začetka gospodarske krize je naraščalo tudi število geografov znanstvenikov, ki se ukvarjajo z vse širšim naborom vsebin. Uveljavile so se sodobne metode, predvsem geografski infomacijski sistemi. Digitalna kartografija je povsem spodrinila klasično. Po vstopu Slovenije v Evropsko unijo leta 2004 se je izrazito povečalo mednarodno sodelovanje slovenskih geografov, predvsem v najrazličnejših evropskih in drugih mednarodnih projektih. Težišče nacionalnih in mednarodnih projektov se je s temeljnih raziskav premaknilo k uporabnim in ciljnim raziskavam.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

geografija, kartografija, znanost, geograf, projekt, raziskava, Slovenija

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1 Historical milestones

Until the independence of Slovenia in 1991, Slovenian geography was connected with the development of geography in the Habsburg Monarchy and in Yugoslavia; that is, the states that for long centuries had included most of the territory that comprises Slovenia today.

The following are a few of the geographical and cartographic milestones in the past few centuries. These were described in detail up to 1920 by Bohinc (1925) and to the beginning of the 1970s by Ilešič (1979); the period from 1945 to 1990 was described by Vrišer (2007) and Klemenčič (2010), and briefer overviews were written by Kranjec (1964), Vrišer and Šifer (1978), Gosar (1993a; 1993b; 1994), Perko (2000), Fridl (1998; 2007), and Fridl and Mihevc (2001):

- Žiga Herberstein or Siegmund (Sigismund) Freiherr von Herberstein (1486–1566) was a Carniolan diplomat most noted for his extensive writing on the geography, history, and customs of Russia. His work *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii* (Notes on Muscovite Affairs), published in 1549, became the main source of knowledge about Russia in Europe.
- In 1689, Janez Vajkard Valvasor or Johann Weichard Freiherr von Valvasor (1641–1693) comprehensively described and cartographically presented Slovenian territory between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, its natural characteristics, the life of its people, and its administrative divisions in the fifteen volumes of *Die Ehre deß Hertzogthums Crain* (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola; Slovene *Slava Vojvodine Kranjske*). For his description of certain karst processes, the author was awarded membership in the Royal Society in London.
- In 1853, the first map was published that presented Slovenian territory using exclusively Slovenian place names. It was made by Peter Kozler (1824–1879) and published during a period of political turbulence. Immediately after its publication, this map titled *Zemljovid Slovenska dežela in pokrajini* (A Map of the Slovenian Land and Provinces) was confiscated and only appeared publicly in 1861.
- In 1860 the school geographer and cartographer Blaž Kocen (Blasius Kozenn, 1821–1871) published a school atlas that was later reprinted several dozen times in various languages, and which is still being published under his name in updated editions today (Bratec Mrvar et al. 2011).
- Between 1869 and 1877, a series of map sheets were published that comprised the first atlas of the world in Slovenian. It was prepared by Matej Cigale (1819–1889) and later called *Atlant* (Urbanc et al. 2006).
- In 1919, a university was founded in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana and geography was introduced. With the founding of the geography department, a base for geographical research was established (Ilešič 1950, 1969; Plut 1989).
- In 1922, the Geographical Society was founded, which later grew into the Association of Slovenian Geographers.
- In 1925, the association began publishing the journal *Geografski vestnik* (Geographical Bulletin).
- In 1935, Anton Melik (1890–1966), who is considered Slovenia's greatest geographer, prepared a book titled *Slovenija* (Slovenia), the first general geographical monograph on the country. Four regional volumes followed: *Slovenski alpski svet* (Slovenia's Alpine World, 1954), *Štajerska s Prekmurjem in Mežiška dolina* (Styria with Prekmurje and the Mežica Valley, 1957), *Posavska Slovenija* (The Lower Sava Region of Slovenia, 1959), and *Slovensko Primorje* (The Slovenian Littoral, 1960).
- In 1946, the geographical institute (since 1976 the Anton Melik Geographical Institute) was established by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In 2002 the Institute for Geography (established in 1962) and the Geographical Museum of Slovenia (established in 1946) were joined to the institute.

Figure 1: Janez Vajkard Valvasor: Map of Lake Cerknica, supplement to chapter 46 of volume four of The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola. Valvasor was the first to professionally describe and present the »functioning« of an intermittent karst lake. He attempted to explain the periodic appearance and disappearance of the lake with a system of underground currents, catchment basins, and mechanical siphons. He submitted his research findings to the Royal Society in London in 1687 and became a member. ►



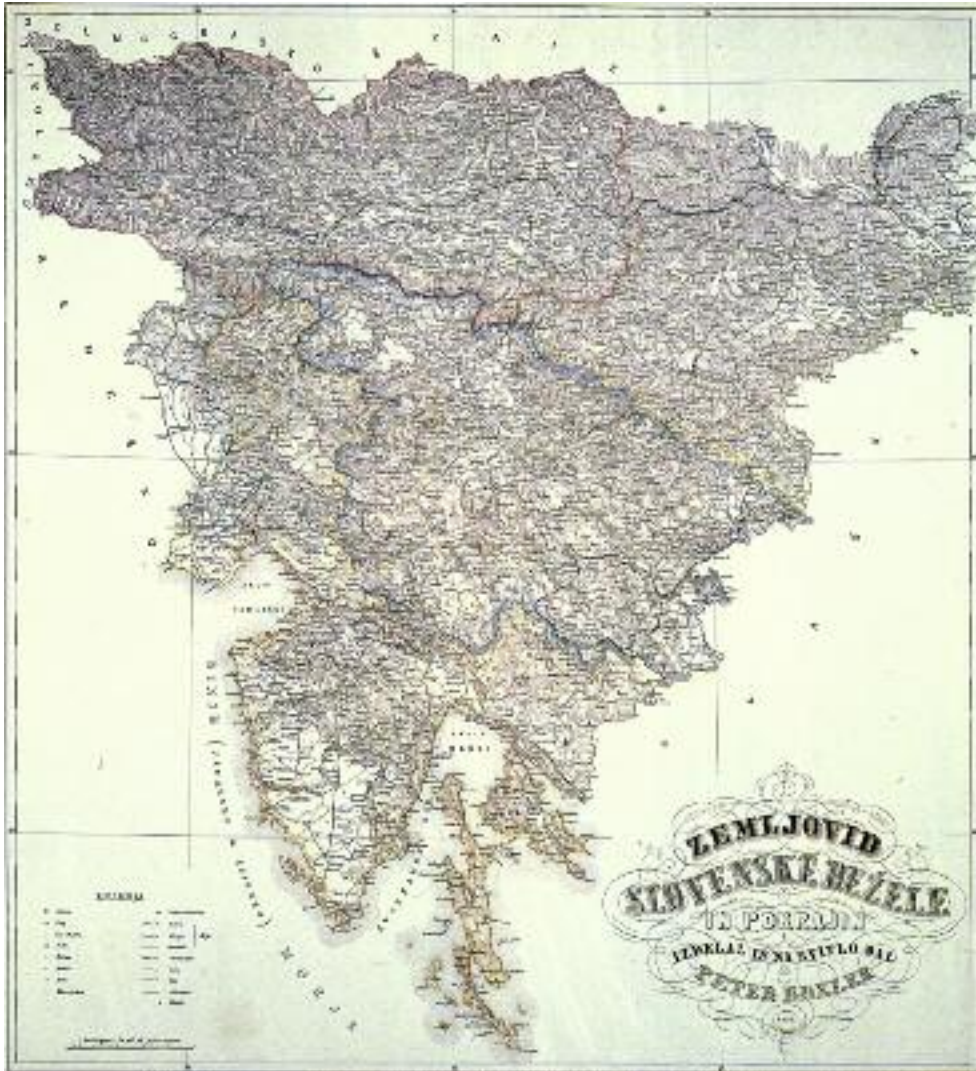


Figure 2: Kozler's 1853 map *Zemljevid Slovenske dežele in pokrajin* (A Map of the Slovenian Land and Provinces) marked the borders of Slovenian ethnic territory for the first time.

- In 1946 systematic study of the Triglav Glacier began; this is the oldest ongoing geographical and research project in Slovenia.
- Between 1968 and 1980 four extensive volumes of *Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* (Lexicon of Places in Slovenia), edited by Roman Savnik (1902–1987), were published.
- In 1972, the first modern Slovenian general geographical atlas, *Veliki atlas sveta* (Great Atlas of the World), was published.
- In 1986, the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia was established. Now the commission operates at the geographical institute and is an active member of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.



Figure 3: The three-year project *Regional Geography of Slovenia*, in which all geographical institutions participated, culminated in the volume *Slovenija: Landscapes and People*.

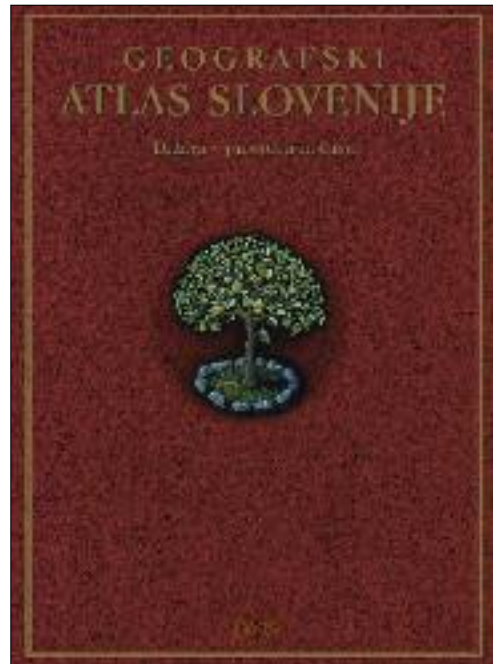


Figure 4: The three-year project *Geographical Atlas of Slovenia* involved nearly 200 geographers and experts from other disciplines, cartographers, photographers, and others.

- In 1992, at the 27th IGU Congress in Washington, the Association of Slovenian Geographers was accepted as full member into the International Geographical Union.
- In 1998, three extensive seminal geography books on Slovenia were published: the general volume *Geografija Slovenije* (Geography of Slovenia), the regional volume *Slovenija – pokrajine in ljudje* (Slovenia: Landscapes and People), and *Geografski atlas Slovenije* (Geographical Atlas of Slovenia), the first national atlas of the country.
- In 2005 the first Slovenian *Geografski terminološki slovar* (Geographical Terminology Dictionary) was published.
- In 2006, the *Popisni atlas Slovenije* (Census Atlas of Slovenia), the first atlas of its kind in Slovenia, was published.
- In 2008, the book *Slovenija in Focus* was published in English in honor of the European Union presidency of Slovenia.

2 Current organization

Contemporary Slovenian geography has three major institutional forms: the national association, the research institutes, and the university departments (Gosar 1994).

In Slovenia the majority of geographical studies take place at the geographical and karst studies institute and at the geography departments at the universities in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Koper.

The **Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** (hereinafter: the geographical institute; Natek and Perko 1999) employs



UNKNOWN AUTHOR, GEOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE ARCHIVE



MIHA PAVŠEK, GEOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE ARCHIVE

Figure 5: The Triglav Glacier (above in September 1957, below in September 2007) has nearly disappeared. Systematic study of the glacier began in 1946. This is the oldest geographical project and the oldest ongoing long-term research project in Slovenia.

thirty-six researchers and three technical aides. The **Karst Research Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** (hereinafter: the karst studies institute; Slabe 1997) has fourteen researchers and five technical aides. Both institutes are entirely financed through national and international projects. Approximately half of the budget of the geographical institute is represented by European public funds, one third by national public funds, and one-fifth by commercial projects. The budget of the karst studies institute remains predominantly national public funds.

The salaries of most of the full-time researchers and lecturers at all three university geography departments are covered by the state. In principal, half of the funding is to be earmarked for teaching and half for research. Departmental employees can receive an additional one-fifth of funding through national and international projects.

The **Geography Department at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts** (hereinafter: the Ljubljana department; Resnik Planinc and Kušar 2010) employs twenty-one researchers and eight research aides, the **Geography Department at the University of Maribor's Faculty of Arts** (hereinafter: the Maribor department) has nine researchers, and the **Geography Department at the University of Primorska's Faculty of Humanities** in Koper, or the Geographical Studies Institute at the University of Primorska's Scientific and Research Centre (hereinafter: the Koper department; Brečko Grubar and Gosar 2011) has eight researchers. Researchers that are simultaneously employed at more than one geographical institute are counted for the institute where their employment share is largest.

At both institutes and all three departments there are therefore just over 100 employees altogether, the majority of whom are geographers. Geographers represent about one-half of one percent of all active Slovenian researchers.

There are considerably more (about ten times as many) geography teachers. Nearly 800 teachers teach geography at Slovenian primary schools, and nearly 300 in secondary schools (both vocational and college-prep), making somewhat over 1,000 teachers altogether.

National public financing of Slovenian geographical studies mostly takes place through the Slovenian Research Agency. The agency classifies the sciences into six groups:

- Natural science and mathematics (9 research areas);
- Technology (12 research areas);
- Medicine (22 research areas);
- Biotechnology (6 research areas);
- Social sciences (13 research areas);
- Humanities (12 research areas).

These groups of sciences are headed by research councils, and individual areas (which geography also belongs to) by national coordinators, who are simultaneously members of the research councils.

Geography, which also includes karst studies, is traditionally part of the humanities in Slovenia. All of the research areas within the humanities are: history, archaeology, anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, cultural studies, literary studies, musicology, art history, philosophy, theology, and geography.

In 2012 the agency financed five geographical research programs and seven geographical research projects. The research programs are more pure-research oriented; they last from three to six years and are connected to individual geographical institutions. The projects involve more applied research; they last from two to three years, and since 2011 they have connected at least two institutions, of which one must be geographical. The agency invites applications for research projects once a year in general.

The titles of the research programs underway in geography (alphabetized by Slovenian name) are:

- *Geografija Slovenije* Geography of Slovenia (geographical institute);
- *Območja kulturnega stika v integracijskih procesih* Areas of cultural contact in integration processes (Koper department);
- *Raziskovanje krasi* Karst research (karst studies institute);

- *Slovenska identiteta in kulturna zavest v jezikovno in etnično stičnih prostorih v preteklosti in sedanjosti* Slovenian identity and cultural conscious in linguistic and ethnic contact areas in the past and present (Maribor department);
- *Trajnostni regionalni razvoj Slovenije* Sustainable regional development of Slovenia (Ljubljana department).

In terms of their content and the researchers involved, the two programs of the geographical institute and the Ljubljana department are distinctly geographical, whereas the other three are more interdisciplinary.

The titles of the research projects underway in geography, alphabetized by Slovenian name (with the head institution), are:

- *Določanje naravnih pokrajinskih tipov Slovenije z geografskim informacijskim sistemom* Determining natural landscape types of Slovenia using a geographic information system (geographical institute);
- *Evropske multikulturne regije med družbeno-prostorsko konvergenco in divergenco* Multicultural European regions between social and spatial convergence and divergence (Koper department);
- *Meritve in analiza izbranih klimatskih parametrov v kraških jamah: primer sistema Postojnskih jam* Measurement and analysis of climatic parameters in karst caves: An example from the Postojna Caves system (karst studies institute);
- *Povečanje učinkovitosti in aplikativnosti preučevanja naravnih nesreč s sodobnimi metodami* Increasing the effectiveness and applicability of research on natural disasters using modern methods (geographical institute);
- *Prometna raba tal: spreminjanje in vpliv na vsakodnevno življenje* Transport land use: Changes and effects on everyday life (geographical institute);
- *Šolski učbeniki kot orodje za oblikovanje geografskih predstav o slovenskih pokrajinah* Textbooks as tools for shaping the geographical imagination of Slovenian landscapes (geographical institute);
- *Terasirane pokrajine v Sloveniji kot kulturna vrednota* Terraced landscapes in Slovenia as cultural values (geographical institute).

Geographers also participate in certain agency projects outside geography and the humanities.

3 Regular geographical publications

Following Slovenia's independence, geographers considerably increased their number of publications in international books and periodicals, but by far the largest number of their publications continued to appear in Slovenian books and periodicals, which are co-financed in part by the Slovenian Book Agency.

The oldest Slovenian geography journal is *Geografski vestnik* (Geographical Bulletin), which has been published by the Association of Slovenian Geographers since 1925. Since 2000 it has appeared twice a year. This journal for geography and related disciplines, as the association's publication is subtitled, publishes research and discussion articles in all areas of geography and related disciplines. The largest share of published articles is in human geography, followed by physical geography, and then contributions from related disciplines and regional geography. The articles have abstracts and summaries in English. The journal also publishes reviews of geographical publications, notes milestone birthdays and anniversaries of prominent experts in the field and presents their biographies and bibliographies, follows major events, conferences, and symposiums in Slovenia and abroad, and reports on the research work of geographical institutes (Turk 1999; Perko and Zorn 2008). The journal has been accessible on the internet since 1999 (Internet 3). The Association of Slovenian Geographers also publishes the popular science magazine *Geografski obzornik* (Geographic Horizon), which has appeared four times a year since 1954 (Potočnik Slavič 2003) and is also available on the internet (Internet 4), proceedings from conferences of Slovenian geographers (since 1969), and occasional books about Slovenia for global and regional congresses (since 1992). The Ljubljana Geographical Society, which is a member of the Association

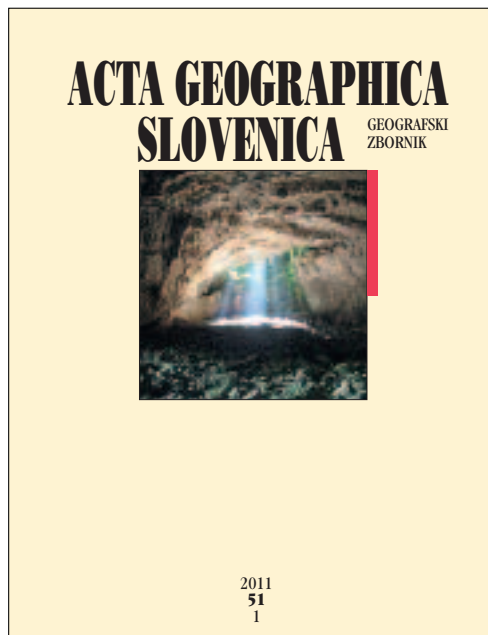


Figure 6: Title page of the journal *Acta geographica Slovenica*.

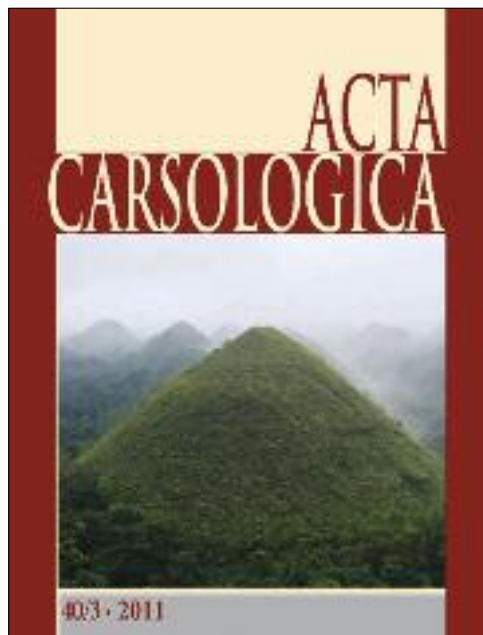


Figure 7: Title page of the journal *Acta carsologica*.

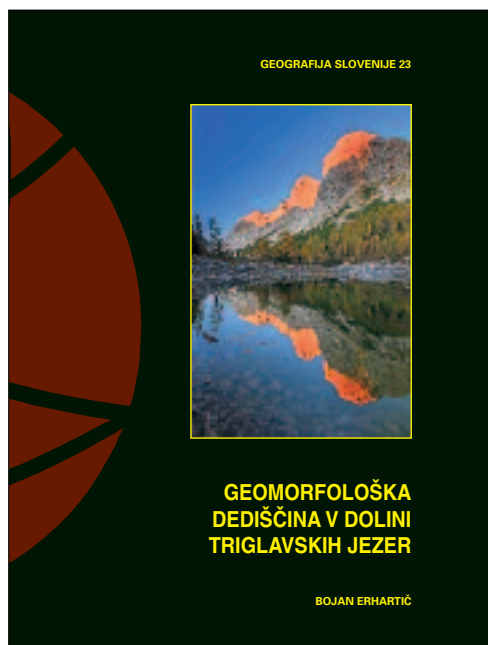


Figure 8: Title page of the book series *Geografija Slovenije* (*Geography in Slovenia*).

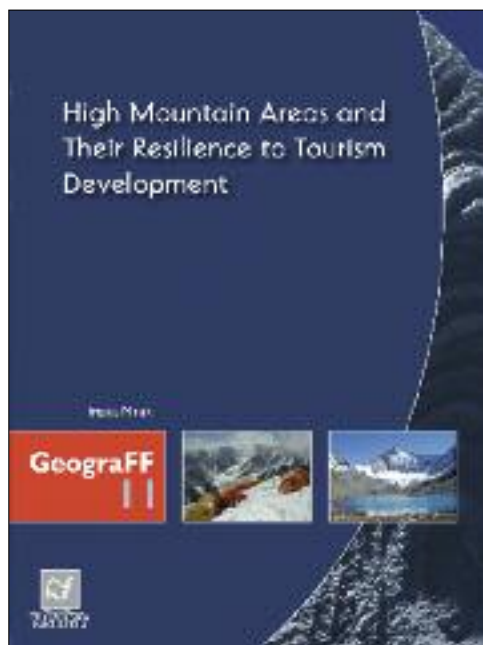


Figure 9: Title page of the book series *GeograFF*.

Table 1: Geographical institutions with current printed publications and projects:

English and Slovenian name	Mailing and web address	Regular research publications (journals and book series)	Number of national geographical programs underway (as of spring 2012)	Number of national geographical projects underway (as of spring 2012)
Anton Melik Geographical Institute, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Gosposka ulica 13 SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia http://giam.zrc-sazu.si	Journals: <i>Acta geographica Slovenica / Geografski zbornik</i> (since 1952) Series: <i>Geografija Slovenije</i> (Geography of Slovenia, 23 books since 1999) <i>Georitem</i> (Georhythm, 19 books since 2007) <i>GIS v Sloveniji</i> (GIS in Slovenia, 11 books since 1992) <i>Regionalni razvoj</i> (Regional Development, 3 books since 2009) <i>Naravne nesreče</i> (Natural Hazards, 2 books since 2010)	1	5
Geografski inštitut Antona Melika, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti	Titov trg 2 SI – 6230 Postojna, Slovenia http://izrk.zrc-sazu.si	Journals: <i>Acta carsologica / Krasoslovnii zbornik</i> (since 1974) Series: <i>Carsologica</i> (14 books since 2002)	1	1
Karst Research Institute, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Titov trg 5 SI – 6000 Koper, Slovenia http://www.fhs.upr.si	/	1	1
Inštitut za raziskovanje krasa, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti	Titov trg 5 SI – 6000 Koper, Slovenia http://www.fhs.upr.si	Journals: <i>Delo</i> (Works, since 1985) Series: <i>GeograFF</i> (11 books since 2008)	1	/
Department of Geography, Faculty of Humanities Koper, University of Primorska	Askerčeva 2 SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia http://geo.ff.uni-lj.si	Journals: <i>Revija za geografijo</i> (Journal for Geography, since 2006) Series: <i>Geografski vestnik</i> (Geographical Bulletin, since 1925) <i>Geografski obzornik</i> (Geographic Horizon, since 1954)	1	/
Oddelek za geografijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani	Koroška cesta 160 SI – 2000 Maribor, Slovenia http://www.ff.uni-mb.si/ oddelki/geografija	Journals: <i>Geografski vestnik</i> (Geographical Bulletin, since 1925) <i>Geografski obzornik</i> (Geographic Horizon, since 1954)	/	/
Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor	Oddelek za geografijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Mariboru			
Association of Slovenian Geographers	Gosposka ulica 13 SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia http://zgs.zrc-sazu.si/		/	/
Zveza geografov Slovenije				

of Slovenian Geographers, publishes the travelogues *Vodniki LGD* (Ljubljana Geographical Society Guides, since 2004).

Acta geographica Slovenica / Geografski zbornik is the main Slovenian geography journal. It is published by the geographical institute. From 1952 to 2002 it was usually published once a year, and since 2003 it has been published twice a year. Initially it was called *Geografski zbornik / Acta geographica*, but the name was changed in 2002, when it merged with the journal *Geographica Slovenica* (which was published from 1972 to 2002). Since 1993 it has been published in English and Slovenian, and it has also been available on the Internet since 1995 (Internet 1). Before the merger of the two journals, publications tended to be lengthy research articles in physical geography, especially geomorphology, glacier and natural disaster studies, as well as human geography, especially studies of mountain farms and land use. After the merger, there was a more balanced representation of various branches of geography (Topole 2000; Zorn and Komac 2010). Since 2003 the journal has been included in *Science Citation Index Expanded* and it is one of the Slovenian scholarly journals most cited abroad.

From 1950 to 1968 the geographical institute published *Dela inštituta za geografijo* (Works of the Geographical Institute), which is the oldest Slovenian geographical book series. Its successor is the research book series *Geografija Slovenije* (Geography in Slovenia), which has been published since 1999. The geographical institute has also published the research book series *GIS v Sloveniji* (GIS in Slovenia) since 1992 (Perko and Zorn 2010), *Georitem* (Georhythm) since 2007, *Regionalni razvoj* (Regional Development) since 2007, and *Naravne nesreče* (Natural Hazards) since 2010. The collections are also accessible on the Google Books web portal.

The karst studies institute publishes the world-renowned journal *Acta carsologica / Krasoslovni zbornik* (since 1955, with two or three issues a year since 1997), which is also available on the internet (Internet 2) and is included in *Science Citation Index Expanded*, as well as the research book series *Carsologica* (since 2001).

The Ljubljana department has published the journal *Dela* (Works) since 1985, which is also available on the internet (Internet 2), and the research book series *GeograFF* since 2008, the Maribor department has published *Revija za geografijo* (Journal for Geography) since 2006, also available on the internet (Internet 6), and the Slovenian National Education Institute has published *Geografija v šoli* (Geography in School) since 1991.

4 Conclusion

After Slovenia gained its independence in 1991, Slovenian geography flourished; among other things, this is shown by the great increase in the number of geographical publications. Seminal geographical and cartographic works about Slovenia were also published. Until the onset of the economic crisis there was also an increase in the number of geography researchers, who dealt with an increasingly broad selection of topics. Modern methods, especially connected to geographical information systems, were established. Digital cartography completely replaced traditional methods. After Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004, there was a marked increase in international cooperation by Slovenian geographers, in particular in the widest variety of European and other international projects. The focus of national and international projects has shifted from pure research to applied and targeted research.

Where to go from here and how? Currently in Slovenia the belief dominates that training experts in the humanities and social sciences cannot pull Slovenia out of the grip of the economic crisis that has affected Europe in recent years. Slovenian geographers face the important task of showing that supporting geographical research still makes sense. Perhaps this does not have a direct impact on job creation but it may, for example, help locate new activities in a place such that these activities will not suffer additional costs; for example, from natural disasters. Applied studies can be used to change such beliefs.

We are also faced by the task that, after over a decade of rapid and comprehensive development in Slovenia in many areas, it is necessary to update certain seminal works of Slovenian geography that were published at the end of the twentieth century and that are cited in Chapter 1. Money is also an obstacle because major Slovenian publishers are currently unable to afford such financial investment.

With the gradual blurring of borders between individual research areas, our educational institutions are facing increasing greater competition from non-geographical disciplines. Only their prompt response to this competition and social needs will make possible a demand for geographers among employers.

While writing this article and reviewing the literature, the authors also became aware that Slovenian geographers still lack a suitable perspective on themselves; that is, a thorough study of the development of Slovenian geography.

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