***PRESS RELEASE***

**A record year for the Slovenian tourism comes full-circle with a brand new tourist information website and excellent results of the global digital campaign**

Ljubljana, 16 December – ***The Slovenian Tourist Board's strategic decision to focus their key 2016–2017 activities on digital content marketing yielded excellent results. The goals of the digital campaign called 'Slovenia – Make New Memories' have been exceeded and a brand new tourist information website named*** [*www.slovenia.info*](http://www.slovenia.info/) was launched today, whose design follows the latest internet technology trends. The two projects wrap up a record year for the Slovenian tourism, in which Slovenia earned its place among the most attractive and sustainable countries.

**Resounding and Record-breaking 2016**

Upon re-establishing the Slovenian Tourist Board (Slovenska turistična organizacija – STO) as an independent organisation on 1 August 2015, the team under the leadership of Maja Pak placed content digital marketing among their key priorities for the next two years. STO's main activity is to promote and advertise Slovenia as a green, active and healthy boutique tourist destination. Among other things, this included the design of a new Slovenian tourist portal named [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info/) and a global digital marketing campaign titled *Slovenia – Make New Memories*.

In 2016, the STO team not only successfully implemented both demanding projects, but also carried out and upgraded other promotional activities and business events. STO invested in television and outdoor marketing, hosted over 250 foreign journalists, organised over 45 exhibitions and exchanges, and held 100 presentations for tour operators. All these endeavours yielded corresponding effects. Slovenia was awarded the prestigious title of the world's first green country, and it also got to the final round in the selection for the National Geographic World Legacy award and WTM London Global Sport Tourism Impact award. At the ITB Berlin tourism trade show, Slovenia received two recognitions for its ads promoting Slovenian tourism. Various rankings placed it among the most attractive and safe countries in the word, and numerous renowned media houses across the globe described it as an interesting tourist destination.

With an increase recorded in arrivals of foreign tourists (+11%) and overnight stays (+10%), the results of the first ten months exceeded the average increase in Europe, forecasting a record year for Slovenian tourism.

**Mobile first – emphasis on the mobile**

A tourist destination's visibility is directly connected to its visibility at the world wide web.

The number of digital and mobile users is growing on the global level, and there is an especially rapid increase of people browsing the Internet on their tablets or mobile phones. This year's statistic of the previous [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info/) website shows that 40% of visitors accessed it via their mobile phones, and they stayed on the site for approximately 2 minutes. Viewers are more impressed by short messages in the form of ads, amazing photos and videos, than by the length of texts or the quantity of information.

The decision to choose a tourist destination is significantly influenced by the impression a visitor receives at its official web page. Since there is great competition among tourist destinations, it is necessary to build visibility by standing out visually as well as through creativity and an advanced user experience. Each destination faces the challenge to enter into what we call the tourist's buying decision process. The task of a modern website of a national tourist organisation is mainly to satisfy the first two phases of the buying process, namely dreaming and exploring, in order to enable the third stage at which a person decides for a visit and makes the purchase with suitable providers. The destination experience in the form of stage four is followed by stage five – sharing the experience. This is where a modern website of a tourist destination plays another role, namely enabling the visitors to share their experiences through modern digital tools, which then encourages new dreams and explorations. The social media thus work as an extension of a modern web page and add to its comprehensive communication story.

**How to fall in love with SLOVEnia**

Based on the public tender of 15 April 2016, STO, together with a selection board, chose the Creatim Ržišnik Perc, d.o.o. company for the creation of a new [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info/) website. The company convinced the board with the solutions based on the following starting points: mobile adjustment (mobile first), unique visual image consistent with the I Feel Slovenia trademark, as well as with modern trends in web page design, a simple information architecture that enables the users to always know their location and their next step, the link between art and textual content into a communication unit, and actively encouraging visitors to participate through social media.

The new central Slovenian tourist portal [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info/) is completely adapted for mobile devices, both for users and from the technical point of view, which is in line with the growing trend regarding the way how people access tourist web pages. The design places high-quality, inspiring images of Slovenia, which look impressive on small screens as well, at the forefront. They are accompanied by shorter texts providing condensed information, written in the style of creative advertisements. The integration of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and

the Tripadvisor website provides the web page with an important socially critical reference.

The aim of the new [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info/) website is to invoke interest and desire to visit Slovenia, especially among foreign guests, by using the questions WHERE? and WHAT? The visitors can reach tourist packages via links to tourist service and accommodation providers. That way, the new portal optimally satisfies their wishes and needs.

**New features for business communities**

Within the project of designing the new Slovenian tourist information website, the business pages have also been updated, while the photo gallery has been expanded into a full media section for managing media content. The technologically advanced system for managing media such as photographs, video and audio tapes, as well as documentary material, enables advanced editing, mass imports of material and automatic processing.

One of the important advantages is the possibility to prepare packages of materials for the professional public (journalists, tour operators and others) for a further effective promotion of Slovenian tourism.

**42 million people dream of a green, active, healthy country**

To strengthen the recognisability and reputation of Slovenia as a green, active and healthy boutique tourist destination as well as to promote attractive tourist products, STO, together with the Slovenian tourist industry, launched a global digital campaign called *Slovenia – Make New Memories*. It was carried out between 18 April and 11 November 2016 through various channels such as key national portals in 13 international markets, the Google display network, search marketing and social networks. As one of the major digital campaigns in Slovenia, it was run in 12 different languages. STO used 30 authentic quotes, 40 excellent photographs and 3,669 key words. The campaign included 108 video advertisements, 535 animated HTML5 banners in 29 formats and 869 marketing creations for social networks. All advertisements led to one of 72 pages, where the Slovenian tourism industry was introduced by offering specific tourist arrangements.

The final results of the campaign exceeded the planned goals. The campaign reached 42 million unique clients(exceeding the planned goal by 67.6%). Over 217 million ads were shown (85.5% more than expected). The most surprising results were achieved at the YouTube channel (the ads reached more than 15 million views instead of the planned 3 million), on Instagram (reaching 2 million users, although one million was foreseen), and on VKontakt (reaching

50 million, while 2 million were planned). The Feel Slovenia Facebook page attracted 229,517 new likes (exceeding the planned goal by 129.5%).

STO will continue with the global digital campaign *Slovenia – Make New Memories* in 2017.

**Digitalisation is an opportunity**

*"Digitalisation is an area where we must follow new trends and make efforts for the industry to seize all opportunities offered by digitalisation . Slovenia must recognise the full development potential offered by digitalisation in order to become more competitive and attractive; the digital campaign and the new tourist web portal are a step in this direction. I am pleased that the re-establishment of STO as an independent organisation has already produced concrete results,"* said Minister of Economic Development and Technology Zdravko Počivalšek when commenting on the results of STO's work in 2016.

*"I am proud that the entire STO team has achieved all goals which were set upon re-establishing the Slovenian Tourist Board as an independent organisation. Thanks to their committed work and understanding the need to upgrade our previous efforts with the latest methods in the field of advertising and marketing, we now have a tool that will allow us to be even more effective and visible. The new central tourist portal will function as an ecosystem, while its flexibility, user experience and creative editing policy will make it more effective in convincing visitors at the stage of pondering and exploring to decide on a purchase. In order to increase our effectiveness even further, we will organise training workshops in digital marketing at all levels in 2017.*

*The fact that our decision to introduce digital marketing has been the right one and that we are on the right track was proven by the exceptional results of this year's global digital campaign 'Slovenia – Make New Memories'. In addition to maintaining a strong focus on digital marketing, we will also continue to upgrade business events in our key markets,"* says **Maja Pak**, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board.

**Who are the target groups of Slovenian tourism**

The results of the project aimed at determining target groups of Slovenian tourism will, on the one hand, help STO in further promoting Slovenia as a green, active and healthy boutique tourist destination, and, on the other hand, also help the Slovenian tourism industry in marketing and designing tourist products and services.

In collaboration with the Valicon Ljubljana, d.o.o. company and the representatives of Slovenian tourism industry, STO implemented the project to define target groups of foreign tourists in Slovenia. They were identified through an analysis of the existing STO and Valicon sources, as well as different international studies on segmentation, travel habits and tourist preferences, types of consumers, lifestyle trends, workshops with representatives of the tourist economy and STO, a qualitative

study including individual interviews and elements of ethnographic research among foreign tourists in the field across Slovenia, a quantitative research among the providers in main markets by using STO representatives in foreign countries and a quantitative pilot study among the general public at a chosen market in Great Britain.

The results of the acquired information revealed 12 personas or target groups of Slovenian tourism, which differ in their attitude to spending free time, motives and expectations when choosing an individual destination,

costs, spending habits etc. The tree key motives in determining segments and creating the target groups were experience as well as the concept of socialising and taking care of oneself.

Based on the dominant motive, the target groups are divided into three segment groups:

- EXPERIENCE (group type – explorers): adventurers, green explorers, active families, urban conscious;

- SOCIALISING (group type – companions): devoted mothers, active nostalgics, carefree youth, urban consumers, social foodies;

- TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF (group type – muses): spoiled lovers of beauty, forever young, relaxed escapists.

The research project enables the implementation of the acquired knowledge into everyday practice, which is necessary because of the organisation's focus on digital marketing. The majority of the work will still have be done in the field of target marketing, where specific, adapted marketing messages will be developed for each key target group, and a corresponding communication channel will be chosen. Providers and destinations of the Slovenian tourism economy can serve as a base for new or continued development of the segmented offer of products, services and marketing.

**Additional information**

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