



GENERALNI KONZULAT REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
CONSULATE-GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
Sydney

18 June, 2013

Mr. Joseph Skrzynski, AO
Chairman
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation
Locked Bag 028
CROWS NEST NSW 1585

Dear Mr. Skrzynski,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 17 May, 2013 (actually postmarked 12th June, 2013) in reply to my letter of 7th May 2013.

I indicated in my original letter to you that I didn't expect any changes in the decision made by the SBS Management, regarding the Slovenian language broadcasts from analogue to digital and the loss of two hours per week to one hour in a different time slot. However, due to a number of discrepancies in your letter of reply, which may be due to misinformation, I have no option but to correct your claims for the sake of accuracy, if for no other reason.

I have been advised that some of the language groups, in the same category of community size, have been luckier than the Slovenians. Their complaints and group pressure lead to consultations and a final compromise in their favour. Contrary to your claim that 'throughout the **consultation process, SBS engaged** with a range of stakeholders within the Slovenian community including listeners, community organisations, peak bodies and religious groups' is questionable. There were no consultations with any of them. Unless, you consider informing listeners of the decision made by SBS during broadcasts as consultation?

You listed the Slovenian organisations and contacts that SBS engaged with during the consultation process, including: The President of the Australian **Slovaks** Association? I thought we were talking about the Slovenians? Even if this is a mistake, there is no such thing as an Australian Slovenian Association! Therefore there is no President either! You further mention a number of organisations, some misspelled. Chairman of the Slovenian Aged Care Facility (Mother Romana Home) – this facility closed down in November 2012. You mention the St. Raphael's Slovenian Religious and Cultural Center **Melbourne (?)** – This center is not in Melbourne, it is in Sydney! This indicates that this letter was hastily prepared by someone who has very little knowledge of our Community and their needs.

Meanwhile I contacted most of the leaders of organisations you mentioned in your letter. They have all stated categorically, that there were never any consultations or discussions between representatives of SBS and their organisation, regarding the proposed changes. Unless announcements on Radio SBS-Slovenian program, or private discussions with some individuals by the Slovenian language presenters in Sydney and Melbourne, are considered as such?

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Therefore, yes, we were told this is what SBS will do – which I clearly understood as take it or leave it.

It is indeed sad that such an attitude is now prevailing in your organisation. Despite all the success and achievement by the SBS since its inception, a little compassion and good will would not go astray, when such drastic decisions are made. The pioneers, the volunteers who established the first Community Radio 2EA and 3EA, later SBS, have most certainly not had this in mind.

Your 'generous' offer of a few free digital radios to our community will unfortunately not solve the problem, a return of at least one hour on the analogue (AM) band would! Or, perhaps a different time slot, would also be a lesser shock.

Yours sincerely,



Alfred Brežnik, AM
Honorary Consul General

C.C.:

- Ms. Tania Smrdel, Executive Producer, SBS-Slovenian Language program
- Glas Slovenije - Slovenian Media House, Sydney
- Mr. Peter Mandel, OAM, Council of Slovenian Organization in Victoria
- Slovenian Ass. Melbourne
- Slovenia-Australian Ass. 'Planica', Springvale
- Slovenian Australian Social and Sports Club 'Jadran', Diggers Rest, Vic.
- Australian-Slovenian Cultural & Sports Club 'Ivan Cankar', Geelong, Vic.
- Slovenian - Australian Social & Sports Ass. St. Albans, Vic.
- Slovenian Catholic Mission, Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Melbourne
- Misli – Slovenian Magazine
- Slovenian Association Sydney, Wetherill Park
- St. Raphael's Slovenian Mission in Merrylands, NSW
- HASA – Historical Archives of Slovenians in Australia – NSW
- Club Triglav (Mounties Group), St. Johns Park, NSW
- Slovenian Society 'Tivoli', Newcastle
- Slovenian Australian Club 'Planica', Wollongong
- Slovenian Australian Association, Canberra
- Slovenian Bocca Club 'Planinka', Qld
- Gold Coast Bocca Club 'Lipa' Inc.,
- Slovenian Club Adelaide Inc.
- Holy Family Slovenian Mission, Adelaide
- Slovenian Embassy in Canberra