**EUSTORY youth academy 2013** 

# The Eustorian

October 2013

1947

### GORIZIA-NOVA GORICA VIII

**HISTORY** 

# TWO COUNTRIES, ONE CITY?

**EXPERIENCES** 



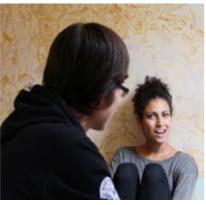
**REPORTS** 

# R.SLOVENIJA

1947

THIS MAGAZINE IS A RESULT OF THE WORK OF 23 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM 16 COUNTRIES













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### Gorizia and Nova Gorica

Let's bring together, what belongs together?

Until the end of the Second World War, Gorizia was Gorica, a Slovenian town, cultural, administrative, and economical center of the region. But in 1947, in the framework of the Paris Peace Treaties, the new borders between Italy and Yugoslavia resulted into a dramatic change: Gorica became Gorizia and part of Italy. The loss of the urban center of that region on the Yugoslavian side made it necessary to build a new town. As a political statement and manifestation of the bipolar world order in the second half of the 20th century, Nova Gorica was constructed right on the other side of the border. A mirror?

The End of Yugoslavia and the joining of Slovenia to the EU, the opening of the border changed the lives of the citizens of both cities – again.

Since May 2011, Nova Gorica has been joined together with Gorizia in a common trans-border metropolitan zone, administered by a joint administration board. But how joined is the city in real life? What do the people of both sides think about each other? We've sent out our reporters to both cities. They worked in teams, one went to reasearch in Gorizia, the other one in Nova Gorica with one mission: Bring back a story that can unite both cities in one article.

- Tina Gotthardt

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It felt strange to move to another country without leaving the city"

# TWO SPIRITS, ONE SOUL

Can you be in two places (countries) at the same time?

Well, we thought that it was impossible. Until today. Just ask the people from Nova Gorica and Gorizia. Here is the right place to reflect about the meaning of borders, the right place to put on a test your own vision for life.

We started the project with general thoughts. Are borders necessary nowadays? Are they impeding the exchange of ideas and experiences? Or maybe they are connecting the people in a multicolored mosaic? We were surprised at how much we actually find out.

After the experience we had today in Nova Gorica and Gorizia, the concept of "borders" somehow changed for us. Now it is not only their geographical meaning, but the impact of their presence. Our visit made us realize that the border for this two cities (maybe one?) is an opportunity to meet a different culture, not a restriction. The wise lesson that we learnt is that history and politics are putting borders, but people are constantly destroying them.

People from both sides of this border, Nova Gorica and Gorizia, see the world united, as an unseparable family. Nobody thinks that borders divide their territory.

The common point in our two adventures was the topic about friendship. Can borders separate friends or are they creating a multicultural

#### friendship?

Again, the border was the reason for us to split. One of us went to Nova Gorica, while the other visited Gorizia.

In Gorizia, there are two men and a woman that catch our attention. They seem to be friends, laughing and smiling. What most impresses us is that they are talking in Slovenian in the Italian side of the border. The first man is Italian, the second is Slovene. They speak both languages, that they have learned so they can go from one side to another of the border. The woman is Slovene, but she works as a journalist for an Italian newspaper that is written in Slovenian. They really enjoy going from one side to the other of the border to meet each other and to practice their Italian and Slovenian.

At the same time in Nova Gorica, two female friends are having a nice walk with their daughters. They seem happy, you cannot tell their identity or country. In fact, they are refugees from Israel who have come to Slovenia with the hope of starting a new life. The fate has separated them, not the border. But the border has brought them together. The one is living in Italy, while the other lives in Slovenia. They are married, one to a Slovenian man and the other to an Italian. Their favourite place to spend time is a tree, a special one that remembers how they found each other again. A tree with two branches but a common root, a tree with two spirits and one soul.

Both examples show friends that keep in touch and never found the border an obstacle. As the tree, their friendship and their marriages grown around the border. Two different spirits enthwined in one single soul. Now they have children -Slovenes

and Italians- who will continue this special conection.

The war, the borders and the past mean nothing for them. Overcoming barriers is the obligation of their generation.

The innocence of the children can be seen in their eyes. They don't know they are already "guilty" for demolishing the borders. This innocence can only be compared to the rain we had that day. A rain that washes away prejudices. A rain that cleans the consciousness. A rain that does not admit borders. A rain that unites two spirits in one soul. Nova Gorica and Gorizia.

- Irene & Martin







## **FACES WHICH CONNECT**

nce you cross the Italian-Slovenian border at Nova Gorica, you'll might notice some statues on both sides of the main street "Erjavčeva ulica".

Designed as an alley of remembrance, it should honor important faces of the Slovenian history, such as people, who fought for the rights of the Slovenian minority in the neighboring Italy.

There is no doubt that these figures had the original purpose to provoke the capitalist neighbour and to remember the Slovenian inhabitants of this city on their common legacy in order to keep the Slovenian identity alive.

In today's Europe, where borders only exist mentally, this historical faces should be seen as connecting elements between different people.

One of these issued heroes is the Slovenian lawyer and journalist Engelbert Besednjak (1894-1968), who actually can be considered as the founder of the first newspaper for the Slovenian minority in Trieste in 1954, called "Novi list".

This newspaper maintained its work until today under the name "Novi Glas" with the main purpose to point problems out, which the Slovenian minority is facing nowadays

But we do not need to talk about the famous faces from the history. Just in the surrounding of Nova Gorica, on the Italian side there is this other town called Gorizia. You can find many Slovenians there. Like this polite man we met while our walking. He lives in Gorizia and has his ordinary life, like us. But the interesting thing about him is that he feels himself as a part of this Slovenian minority. Maybe the newspaper "Novi Glas" is very important for him in some way, because this was the first thing he started talking about after we asked him how does he recognize himself.

He is a Slovenian, just as his parents are, he knows the language too, but he was born in Italy, in that small town near the border. Of course he recognize himself as a Slovenian, but he used to study in an Italian school, his friends are Italian, his wife too, so he is pretty much influenced

by the Italian culture. Growing up bilingual makes the question of identity more important to such people. This certain man, we talked to thinks that he can't consider Gorizia as his hometown, although it is his place of birth. Thus, he doesn't feel like fully accepted member of the Italian society.

In further to change this personal feeling he is supporting the newspaper of the Slovenian minority. It's not just a newspaper for him – actually it is the feeling he has - shaping the society as a part of the civil society. Imagine him waking up in the morning in his Italian bed and drinking an Italian coffee, and after that going outside on the Italian streets and buying this Slovenian newspaper. So every day it reminds him where his roots are from and what does have to change.

Just another face in the long history of Slovenian and Italian relationship.

-Fliza Haris

### THE MENTAL BORDER

n the 4th of April 2004, the Slovenian-Italian border separating Nova Gorica and Gorizia was opened by taking down the fence dividing the two nations. The physical barrier was removed, but what about the mental border?

Nova Gorica was built after the Second World War and was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It was to be "a city to shine across the border", as local politicians said, and is to this date mostly populated by Slovenians. The old city of Gorizia on the other hand, was founded in the middle ages and was a center of the region during the Austro-Hungarian rule.

When the new city was established, Italy was a young democratic republic thus; the border parted not only the two republics but also the East and the West. Nowadays Italians still primarily reside in the city, but Slovenians cross the border on a daily basis to work or visit family and friends. The biggest difference is that fewer Italians go to work in the Slovenian Nova Gorica because the pay is usually less. We talked to people from both sides of the border to explore their opinions and relationship to the cities. Two Italians from Gorizia told us that they mostly stayed in Italy and even though the border was opened, there is still a 'mental border' separating the cities: They identified themselves as Italians, not Slovenians.

Most people in the Slovenian town thought differently: They said that they crossed the border daily, but despite practically living without the border, they still felt like Slovenians. The two ethnical groups seem to maintain their national identity even without the border. However, the Italians girls told us that they expected a change towards a more multicultural society in which more people from the respective nationalities interacted with their neighbors.

Slovenians and Italians seem to hope for better coexistence in the future. Then Schengen agreement and the cooperation in the European Union might mean real progress in this issue. But even if the real borders cease to exist, are we able to cross our mental borders and overcome our cultural differences?

- Dominika and Jacob

# NOVA GORICA AND GORIZIA TWO OR ONE?

n the border of Slovenia and Italy there is a city. In the Slovenian side it's called Nova Gorica and Italian side it's Gorizia.

At first sight it's only one city, but when you cross the border, lot of things are different

The city itself is very old, so it has long roots. Trough changes of borders in the area One city has become two. It's interesting history affects peoples lives even today. Language question in cities like this is complicated. Everything has to be in both languages. It might be considered strange that in just the other side of the railroad people speak Italian, and on the other side Slovenian. Even though people speaking different languages live so close to each other, they usually don't learn both of them.

Gorizia is a very old city, but people of Slovenia only started building Nova Gorica in 1948. This is why cities look very different. In

Gorizia streets are very narrow and building are old and beautiful. Some of them are have been experiencing some damage during the years.

People living in the city think that buildings in Slovenian side are modern but built in a stupid way. To Italians this looks uglyer. Nova Gorica is indeed full of apartment buildings and different kind of styles. In Gorizia there are no high buildings at all and everything is built in an old way.

In Gorizia you can find sculpturess and water fountais of classical style. The buildings built to be nice to look at. In Nova Gorica you can see the affects of the Socialistic time and the city is built practicality in mind.

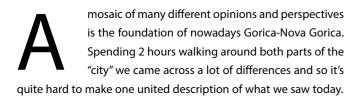
Discarding all the diffences, people of Nova Gorica and Gorizia live side by side, in peace.

- Noora and Agnieszka

# ONE CITY DIVIDED PEOPLE AND A BORDER BETWEEN THEM

### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ARCHITECTURE

### MANTALITY AND CURRENT SITUATION



The main differences are all related with the conclusions based on the historical facts. Some of the prejudices sadly runs through generations and still lingers in the air. But the views still are various.

A big influence on the city parts of what we saw today has been history. Like for example the architecture. In Slovenia you can still see and feel the traces of communism, but buildings in Italy are more antique and a lot of it was built during the times of fascism ordered by Mussolini. All the buildings in Slovenia was built after The Second World War, except the train station which was built by Italians in 1906. Because of this the Slovenian buildings are more modern, but still kind of simple compared to the more detailed and older Italian buildings. Tito ordered to built most of them during the times of communism, for example interviewing one of the Italians we came across some very interesting facts. There are three quite unusual buildings in Nova Gorica and a fourth that was never finished. If you look down at the city from

a higher point you'd be able to see that each of the buildings are shaped differently. Together they make a T, I and T, but the O is missing because the fourth building was not finished when Yuqoslavia fell.

We were also told that a lot of the old, antique Italian buildings were built by the Italian architect Maks Fabiani, he made them following Mussolinis orders, the art school in Gorica is a good example.

Due to the fall of the fascism the Italians were doing better and developed their economy. Still the Slovenes had communism and perhaps a little jealous on the Italians because of their good clothing and freedom. This caused the Slovenes to talk about the Italians. Later on the situation turned and it was the Slovenes who had the good economy thanks to a lot of cultural attractions and other things like casinos which they earned a lot of money on. Because of this the Italians started going to Slovenia for work. So once again Slovenians started to talk about Italians in a kind of a bad way. For example, the Italian women that we met told as a story from her own experience about this theme. For some time she worked in Nova Gorica in a bar. One day she had to serve two teenagers, Slovenian ones. And they just randomly called her "a fucking Italian."

So you can see, that even the kids still have this inexplicable feeling towards each other.

Today the situation is turned once more, and now many Slovenes go to Italy to work.

Even in such small places you can find different thoughts and today they still feel like two different cities. All though the relationship between Gorica and Nova Gorica is now considered good, you can see how the history and the old way of thinking still has an influence on some people.

- Enya, Ana and Johanne



And they just randomly called her "a fucking Italian."





# TWO CITIES [NOVA]GORICA

would like to go to the Italian part, don't you mind?" That is how it started. The expectations were to experience two completely different cities. But the truth is there are quite a lot of similarities – a surprise for us. Having spent two hours in Italy and Slovenia (only a few hundred meters apart from each other), we both came to the same question: Has the border any meaning to the people?

Yes, the border does influence the daily lives of people, but mostly in a positive way. In friendly talks with nice strangers of different backgrounds from Gorizia and Nova Gorica, we discovered that living close to the border has a lot of advantages. All the people mentioned that nowadays it is much easier then 30 to 40 years ago when there were many political conflicts and the Italians even felt real pressure and constant control crossing the border.

Now that everything changed Slovenians are traveling to Italy for jobs and a variety

of new technology, while the Italians are crossing the border for gasoline, cigarettes, food and drinks to the Slovenian side almost every day, because the prices are less expensive there.

But if the people are traveling around the cities from one end to the other anyway, why shouldn't they unite and make a big international city? This question came up in our minds, so we asked people from Slovenia and Italy to find several reasons pro and contra unification.

We were surprised to find out that many people believe unification can be possible in the future. They would not mind at all! As they say, it would make the life a bit easier; sharing of cultures would become more common. "It will make our soul rich and our hearts open."

We were lucky to also hear the opposite point of view. The Slovenian woman who immigrated to Italy 25 years ago doesn't find that the unification would be beneficial and she explained why. The events of DOES TH

**BORDER IN BETWEEN** 

**REALLY** 

MATTER?

the Second World War cannot be forgotten that easily. People of two different nations won't be able to avoid misunderstandings. Most likely her opinion can be explained by her belonging to a Slovenian minority group in Italy. We were thinking about that woman and her point of view: to be honest it took a lot of discussions before we finally agreed with each other.

Nova Gorica and Gorizia may be geographically close, some people might have a strong wish to be united, but nevertheless, we believe, it is not enough for political unification. Despite all the similarities the question of a national identity is rather problematic: Italians will always identify themselves as Italians and Slovenians will also keep their pride up. Different languages won't help them either. Friendship and close relations make life more enjoyable but can't overcome national barriers. The border does not matter but counts.

- Thorben and Anna

## THE "NEW" BORDER

f you want to go from Slovenia to Italy you can cross the border in Nova Gorica. You soon discover that Italy and Slovenia actually have this town in common. On the other side of the border Gorizia, which is a part of Italy, is a twin-town to Nova Gorica. The two cities look like one from above, but if you enter the city you will soon find out, that there are actual some significant differences that separates them. If you really want to know what the dissimilarities are you can focus on the architecture and maybe ask the locals if there is only a visual difference that splits the twin-city in two.

At first you will notice that in Nova Gorica the buildings are more modern than in Gorizia, due to the fact that the town is younger. After 1947 Nova Gorica started to develop next to the Italian town on the Slovenian side of the border. Back then the border was marked, but since 2004 the borders have been open. Back then Slovenia was a part of the former Socialist Yugoslavia, which also is seen through the typically socialist classism - the architecture is

very typical for socialist countries, where the shapes of the buildings have the geometrical form of a cube, which separates the two cities architecturally wise - in the Italian part the buildings are more traditionally build. Even the roads have different sizes: in Italy you can enjoy the narrow streets, while the Slovenian part have more open and wide streets.

Even though the two cities are geographically connected, the inhabitants don't feel a strong relation to the other side, and if you ask them, they say that there still exist a mental border that separates the two parts and creates an "us" and "them" mentality. This way of thinking is more common on the Italian because they don't enter the Slovenian part as much as the other way around, and they are not able to speak Slovenian language. Slovenians on the other hand learn Italian, which creates job opportunities in Italy, and in general cross the border more frequently. On both sides the inhabitants believe that the city will be more united in the future.

Because of the limited time we had to discover the parts of the city it was difficult to experience the true atmosphere of the city. The weather only made harder with the rain making us look down most of the time, like we were having a veil covering our eyes and keeping us from enjoying what we were seeing.

- Shila and Aurelien

### EVEN HOT CHOCOLATE IS AFFECTED

oday my friend and I had ourself a hot chocolate in the town Goricia, 1km away from each other. My hot chocolate costed 1€ and Marianns chocolate costed 3€. I was in a fancy restaurant, Mariann was at a little old café. I was in a new town, Mariann was in a old town. The town were I had my chocolate was intense, the town where Mariann had her hot chocolate was considered sleepy. The town where I had my chocolate was cheap, while the town where Mariann had her chocolate was expensive. We were in Goricia, we were in the same city, or were we?

Somewhere you have to draw a line, nothing but eternity have no such thing as a limit. This was what we experienced to day, the limit that have cut the border town Goricia apart; the limit between Italy and Slovenia; earlier the limit between fascism and communism; between two different nations. The limit in between this two parts of the town and have changed. Today there is no problems in passing over the border from one country to another, and there is no longer a physical fence to prevent people from moving from one side to another as before. But on the other hand this make the

(uppdelning) split clearer than ever.

It's a fact that this city is serving two different governments with to different cultures; paying different taxes and following two different laws. This is really in the air of city. City residents are different due to the language that they are speaking and even their ambitions are different through the ages. There was a time when residents of Italian part of the city gained their prosperity at the expense of Slovenia. There were no opportunities in Slovenian part to buy jeans, watches and other such an exclusive but at the same time also really usual items. It was a collaboration: the way, how to live peacefully together and also the reason why Italians had their standards of life too high that in turn caused a fading of that ambitious Italian part of the city.

Nowadays there is no cooperation, we can buy fancy things also from Slovenian part of the city and we can only guess what kind of life they lived there and what kind of thoughts they had.

- Mariann and Tilda

# A BLURRED LINE SHARP IN MINDS

A DEEPER INSIGHT IN PEOPLES MINDS

How the border connects people in two countries

he first moment where we got curious about the border between Gorica and New Gorica was when we asked our guide to show us the exact border-line on the map. He was not really sure about it and pointed out the border quite vague. We started to ask ourselves if the border is still important in Gorica. After we learned about the history of the town, we split up to discover the personal view of the Italians and the Slovenians. Do they think the border is still important, does it mean something for the people, do they care?

At first we were really surprised that we walked into a city that was apparently completely different than our expectations. Where was the Italian sun, ice-cream and pasta? Where did the special atmosphere of a small Slovenian town go, that we maybe had stereotypically in our heads?

Although we didn't seem to have come in the countries like we had them in mind, we both went to

explore one of the city parts. After comparing, we discovered that the two parts are completely different. We started to ask the locals if they feel the same way.

Though we interviewed 22 people, we haven't found a common opinion. Old or young, Slovenian or Italian, tourist or inhabitant: everyone has its own opinion about the border and the city. The more people we interviewed, the more different opinions we got.

The most important thing that we noticed was that you can not divide the opinions between the Italians and Slovenians, because they don't base their opinion on the side they were born, but on their personal experiences.

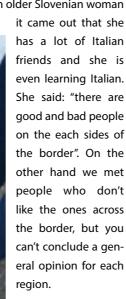
When we asked their opinions about the others, the Italians suggested that the older people would have a lot of negative opinions about each other because of the historical context and the stereotypes. When we interviewed an older Slovenian woman

> has a lot of Italian friends and she is even learning Italian. She said: "there are good and bad people on the each sides of the border". On the other hand we met people who don't like the ones across the border, but you can't conclude a general opinion for each

The vision of the city wasn't clear either.

Some considered it as one city divided into to parts by the border and some were seeing it as two completely different cities. There were some Italians and Slovenians who just couldn't imagine the city being one unit. And then there was a dream of a 12 year old Slovenian, whose parents came from both sides of the border, that someday the city will become united and the border will





**SLIGHTLY AMUSED** QUESTIONING **AFFECTED SCEPTIC** Here we can see all the emotions during a lecture

Most of the people were looking at the former border in a negative way. It was something they hated and wanted to get rid of. But there was this Italian businesswoman who earned more money when the borders were closed and when she had more Slovenian customers buying things which were not available in Slovenia.

The older people will carry the border in their memories and their heart (like a Slovenian women said to us), but the next generations eventually won't care anymore. Despite of that there is still this object you can touch which still prevents people from crossing the border in a lot of places in the city. In European history any fences, walls and barriers are not waking any good memories. It is important to show where the border is, but it is not good to prevent the people from crossing it wherever and whenever they want. This is why at the end we committed an act of ecological terrorism. We planted a Czech chestnut at the fence. Maybe in another 20 years the tree will make a hole in the wall and create a new border crossing.

- Oldrich and Varenka

Planting a tree at the border:



# TWO COUNTRIES IN ONE CITY

**HOW TWO EUSTORIANS EXPLORED** 

A DIVIDED CITY



e decided to explore two Gorizias-the Slovenian new part (Katarina from Slovakia, 19) and older Italian side (Antonio from Germany, 18). »Immediatly when I came to Gorizia(IT) I knew that I was in Italy. The streets, buildings and people.«

Our main goal was to compare life in cities according to meaning of inhabitants and visitors. Nina,26, live in Gorizia(SLO): »It depends on time where is better to stay, e.g. it's going to be »Andreas-Fiesta« and much more to do now, but in summer is here »Gusti di Fouiera«-eating fiesta at the borders where Austrian, Italian and Slovenian chefs cook traditional meals.« So, it's obvious that young people aren't influenced by states borders. They are there, where is fun. But what another opinion? We got to know from the older couple (50 and 52 years old) of Austrian tourists that Nova Gorizia (SLO) worth for holidays. »Even we came by car, the train station is here, too and we can travel easier. More developed infrastucture convinced us.«

When we have talked about our experiences from two dimensionally different Gorizias - Slovenian and Italian - we found out that both have their positives. Nova Gorizia (SLO) exist from 1947 and everything is quiet modern, but if you want to see history and old city (IT) you can move whenever and nobody will punish you;). It's common to live in one side and to work in another. You wouldn't see, if there aren't signs which show you the line. Nevertheless, both cities are connected by people. This is the most important characteristic for this unique place - two countries and one city!

- Katarina & Antonio

# GORIZIA – NOVA GORICA

### THE DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE OF A CITY

orizia and New Gorizia are one city in two different countries now. However, it hasn't been always like this. Due to the frontier that separated Slovenia from Italy, New Gorizia was built as a completely different town in order to hold the Slovenians who were living in the old city. This situation caused the growth of two different societies that were one once and separated from one day to the other.

During the last century, Gorizia was forced to change sides several times. Belonging to the Austro-Hungarian empire in one year, the city would be ocuppied by Italian forces the following year. After WWII, the borders were new drawn. Old Gorizia was occupied by Italy whereas the Yugoslavian Partisans started to build a new town called New Gorizia on a small eastern part of the old city. A fence was constructed to separate those two cities. This frontier remains until 2007 when Slovenia got into the Schengen Agreement.

New Gorizia looks rather different in comparison to the old city. Whereas its buildings are minimalistic as the architecture of the 50s and 60s socialist countries looked like, old Gorizia buildings still hold the spirit of the 19th century. Another point is that all the Gorizian (traffic) signs are written in Italian while in New Gorizia, all are written in Slovene. Those two cities look like completely different ones due to the fact that they had been separated since the very beginning of the building of New Gorizia. Nevertheless, they are one now and you can move from one to the other without passport checks and registrations. This last wall in Europe was destroyed in 2007 and the reality is shown now. After more than 60 years being separated, the inhabitants of Old and New Gorizia are now on the way to grow back together and come to terms with the incomprehensible happenings of the last century.

Nowadays, both Italian and Slovene are taught in the schools of the two sides and people are now fully capable of understanding and speaking both languages. Some generations later, families are reunited again and stories about citizens with relatives from both countries who were not able to visit each other cannot be heard anymore.

In conclusion, despite the fact that different policies and governments changed lots of times in the territory of Gorizia and New Gorizia, the citizens found more things in common than differences and never were really separated from their neighbors.

-Michele and Ramon



### **EUSTORY**

- IS AN INFORMAL, INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF NON-GOVERNMEN-TAL ORGANISATIONS CARRYING OUT HISTORICAL RESEARCH COMPETI-TIONS FOR YOUTH IN DIFFERENT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.
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Since the EUSTORY network was founded in September 2001 on the initiative of the Hamburg-based Körber Foundation, some 156,000 youth have already participated in EUSTORY history competitions with about 75,000 contributions. In addition to those involved in the individual national member organisations, there are more than 2,500 teachers, experts, scholars and volunteers who give their time to EUSTORY and its projects.

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