Mestna občina Ljubljana

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Številka: 620-14/2010-114
Datum: 20.11.2026

MINISTRSTVO ZA KULTURO
Dr. Ignacija Fridl Jarc

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ZADEVA: Ostro nasprotovanje odločitvi o prenehanju sodelovanja pri izvajanju mednarodnega projekta ICORN (Mesto zatočišče)

Spoštovani,

z veliko zaskrbljenostjo, ogorčenjem in razočaranjem smo na Mestni občini Ljubljana sprejeli vaše obvestilo, da Vlada Republike Slovenije oziroma Ministrstvo za kulturo ne namerava več sodelovati pri izvajanju mednarodnega projekta ICORN (Mednarodna mreža mest zatočišč).

Takšna odločitev neposredno ogroža nadaljnji obstoj enega najplemenitejših mednarodnih humanitarnih in kulturnih programov v Ljubljani in Sloveniji. Projekt ogroženim in preganjanim pisateljem in pisateljicam iz tujine že več kot desetletje omogoča varno življenje in svobodno ustvarjanje v miru. Umik države iz tega procesa je korak nazaj pri varovanju svobode izražanja in človekovih pravic, za katere se Republika Slovenija sicer načelno zavzema.

Spomniti želimo, da se je Ljubljana v mednarodno mrežo mest zatočišč (ICORN), ki je nastala leta 1994 na pobudo Salmana Rushdieja in Mednarodnega parlamenta pisateljev ter danes združuje 92 mest v Evropi in Ameriki, vključila leta 2010 kot Unescova svetovna prestolnica knjige. V času, ko smo nosili naziv svetovna prestolnica knjige, smo izvedli več kot 1600 projektov za promocijo knjige in branja, pri čemer je včlanitev v mrežo ICORN predstavljala eno naših najpomembnejših in najbolj odmevnih zavez.

S članstvom v mreži se je Mestna občina Ljubljana zavezala, da bo v dogovoru z upravnim središčem ICORN vsaki dve leti izbrala gostujočega pisatelja, mu zagotovila opremljeno stanovanje za bivanje z družino, izplačevala mesečno štipendijo v skladu z mednarodnimi indeksi življenjskih stroškov ter mu pomagala pri ureditvi pravnega statusa.

Pri slednjem je vloga države nenadomestljiva. Pred prihodom prvih gostov smo se na Mestni občini Ljubljana sestali s predstavniki Ministrstva za notranje zadeve, Ministrstva za zunanje zadeve in Ministrstva za kulturo. Na predlog Ministrstva za notranje zadeve smo vzpostavili jasen protokol: pravna podlaga za izdajo začasnega dovoljenja za prebivanje (za dobo dveh let) je 51. člen Zakona o tujcih, na podlagi katerega Vlada RS na predlog Ministrstva za kulturo sprejme sklep o obstoju javnega interesa Republike Slovenije. Brez tega sklepa uresničevanje projekta pravno in izvedbeno ni mogoče.
Vsa leta doslej, ne glede na politično usmerjenost posameznih vlad, so pristojna ministrstva prepoznala izjemen pomen tega projekta in zgledno sodelovala. Na podlagi tega sodelovanja je Ljubljana varno zatočišče in pogoje za delo nudila šestim ustvarjalcem oziroma družinam:

- pisateljskemu paru iz Maroka (december 2011 – december 2013),
- etiopijskemu pesniku (december 2013 – december 2015),
- iraškemu pesniku (od februarja 2016; po izteku rezidence je zaprosil za mednarodno zaščito in še danes živi v Ljubljani),
- iranski pisateljici in borki za pravice žensk s soprogom (od leta 2018; po rezidenci sta ostala v Sloveniji in pridobila slovensko državljanstvo),
- sirski pisateljici in gledališki ustvarjalki (2021 – poletje 2022),
- iranskemu pisatelju s soprogo (od leta 2023).

Ti ljudje so s svojim delom pomembno obogatili slovenski kulturni prostor, Ljubljana pa se je z njihovim sprejemom postavila ob bok naprednim evropskim prestolnicam. Da se je prav sedanje vodstvo Ministrstva za kulturo odločilo prekiniti dolgoletno prakso solidarnosti in odpovedati podporo preganjanim ustvarjalcem, je za Mestno občino Ljubljana popolnoma nesprejemljivo.

Če kdo, bi morali prav Vi, spoštovana ministrica kot nekdanja visoka predstavnica Slovenske matice, častitljivega slovenskega kulturnega društva, razumeti boj za svobodo pisane besede brez strahu pred preganjanjem.

Od Ministrstva za kulturo pričakujemo, da svojo odločitev ponovno preuči, prevzame svoj del odgovornosti in tudi v prihodnje Vladi RS predlaga sprejem sklepov o obstoju javnega interesa po 51. členu Zakona o tujcih.

Lep pozdrav,

MESTNA OBČINA LJUBLJANA - GLAVNO MESTO REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ŽUPAN

Doc. Rok ŽNIDARŠIČ
PODŽUPAN

V vednost:
- PEN International (info@pen-international.org)
- Združenje PEN Slovenija (slopen@guest.arnes.si)
- ICORN-Bergen (icorn@icorn.org)
- Društvo slovenskih pisateljev (dsp@drustvo-dsp.si)

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No: 620-14/2010-114
Ljubljana, 20th November 2026

Republic of Slovenia

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Dr. Ignacija Fridl Jarc

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Protest to the Decision to Withdraw from Cooperation in the Implementation of the International ICORN Programme (International Cities of Refuge Network)

Dear Madam Minister,

The City of Ljubljana has received your notification that the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, or the Ministry of Culture, no longer intends to participate in the implementation of the international ICORN programme (International Cities of Refuge Network), i.e. granting the residency permits to potential ICORN residents, with profound concern, indignation and disappointment.

Such a decision directly threatens the continued existence of one of the most important international humanitarian and cultural programmes operating in Ljubljana. For more than a decade, the programme has provided a safe haven for writers, journalists, and artists from abroad who face threats or persecution, enabling them to live in safety and pursue their creative work in peace and freedom. The State's withdrawal from this initiative represents a step backwards in the protection of freedom of expression and human rights, principles to which the Republic of Slovenia has repeatedly declared its commitment.

We would like to recall that Ljubljana joined the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), established in 1994 at the initiative of Salman Rushdie and the International Parliament of Writers, and now comprising 92 cities in Europe and the Americas, in 2010, when Ljubljana held the title of UNESCO World Book Capital. During that year, we implemented more than 1,600 projects promoting books and reading. Joining the ICORN network was one of our most significant

commitments and one of the most internationally prominent initiatives undertaken as part of the programme.

Through its membership in the network, the City of Ljubljana undertook to select a guest writer every two years in cooperation with the ICORN Secretariat and PEN Slovenia, provide them with a fully furnished apartment suitable for family accommodation, pay a monthly stipend in accordance with international cost-of-living indices, and assist them in obtaining the appropriate legal status in Slovenia.

The role of the State is indispensable, particularly with regard to the latter. Before the arrival of our first residents, the City of Ljubljana held coordination meetings with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. Following a proposal from the Ministry of the Interior, a clear cooperation protocol was established. The legal basis for issuing a temporary residence permit for a period of two years is Article 51 of the Foreigners Act, under which the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, acting on a proposal from the Ministry of Culture, adopts a decision recognizing the existence of a public interest of the Republic of Slovenia. Without such a decision, the implementation of the programme is not legally or practically possible.

Throughout all these years, irrespective of the political orientation of successive governments, the competent ministries have recognized the exceptional importance of this programme and cooperated with the City of Ljubljana in an exemplary manner. Thanks to this cooperation, Ljubljana has provided a safe haven and suitable living and working conditions to six writers and journalists, or their families:

- a writing couple from Morocco (December 2011–December 2013);
- an Ethiopian poet (December 2013–December 2015);
- an Iraqi poet (since February 2016; following the end of his residency, he applied for international protection and acquired asylum and continues to live in Ljubljana);
- an Iranian writer and women's rights advocate and her husband (since 2018; following their residency, they remained in Slovenia and acquired Slovenian citizenship);
- a Syrian writer and dramatist (2021–summer 2022);
- an Iranian journalist and political analyst and his wife (since 2023).

Through their work, these individuals have made a significant contribution to Slovenia's cultural and freedom of expression landscape. By welcoming them, Ljubljana has also affirmed its place alongside progressive European capitals that actively uphold the principles of international solidarity and the protection of freedom of artistic expression.

The decision by the current leadership of the Ministry of Culture to discontinue this long-standing practice of solidarity and withdraw its support for persecuted writers is entirely unacceptable to the City of Ljubljana.

We therefore expect the Ministry of Culture to reconsider its decision, assume its share of responsibility for the continued implementation of the programme and continue to submit proposals to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for decisions recognizing the existence of a public interest pursuant to Article 51 of the Foreigners Act.

If anyone, you in particular, Honourable Minister, as a former high-ranking representative of Slovenska matica, a venerable Slovenian cultural society, should understand the struggle for the freedom of the written word without fear of persecution.

We firmly believe that the Republic of Slovenia must remain committed to the principles of international solidarity, freedom of expression and the protection of persecuted writers and cultural practitioners, and that Ljubljana must retain its place within the international ICORN network of Cities of Refuge.



Doc. Rok ŽNIDARŠIČ
VICE MAYOR

Adressed also to:

- PEN International (info@pen-international.org)
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- Društvo slovenskih pisateljev/Slovene Writer's Association (dsp@drustvo-dsp.si)