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Small, but Smart? The Structural and Functional Professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces



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Table of Contents

Graphs	7
Tables	8
Abbreviations and Acronyms	9
Introduction	11
1 The Structural and Functional Professionalization of the SAF: Past and Present	15
1.1 Introduction – Dilemmas of Terminology	15
1.2 Factors that Influenced the Structural Professionalization of the SAF	16
1.2.1 Findings and Expectations	17
1.3 The Consequences of Introducing Voluntary Recruitment to the SAF	23
1.3.1 Suspension of Compulsory Military Service	23
1.3.2 Legislature	23
1.3.3 The Recruitment of Personnel	24
1.3.4 The Selection of Appropriate Personnel	25
1.3.5 The Education and Training of Personnel	26
1.3.6 The Personnel Structure	27
1.3.7 Retention of Personnel	28
1.3.8 Leaving Military Service	29
1.3.9 Volunteer Reserve Forces	30
1.3.10 Values	31
1.4 From Structural to Functional Professionalization?	33
1.5 Selected Economic, Functional, Social and Political Aspects of the Professionalization of the SAF	34
1.5.1 Labor Market	35
1.5.1.1 A Theoretical Framework for Rotational Behavior.....	36
1.5.1.2 Research Data	37
1.5.1.3 Propensity to Re-Enlist in the SAF	38
1.5.1.4 Personal Attitudes towards Military Service	40
1.5.1.5 Normative Pressures	41
1.5.1.6 Self-Effectiveness	42
1.5.1.7 Remote Factors	43
1.5.2 Feminization of the SAF	47
1.5.2.1 A Historical Overview of the Process of ‘Feminization’ of the SAF	47
1.5.2.2 Career Opportunities for Women in the SAF	51
1.5.3 The Education of SAF Members	54
1.5.3.1 Convergent versus Divergent Education Models	54
1.5.3.2 The SAF’s Educational System	55
1.5.4 Military Families	56
1.5.5 Civil-Military Relations and Cooperation	60
1.5.5.1 The Military and Politics	61
1.5.5.2 The Political Neutrality of Military Personnel	61
1.5.5.3 The Parliamentary Oversight and Defense Committee	62
1.5.5.4 Unions	63
1.5.5.5 The Military and Civilian Actors	64
1.5.6 Defense Resource Management	66

1.5.6.1	Defense Planning	66
1.5.6.2	Defense Budgeting	68
1.5.6.3	Military Expenditures	70
1.5.7	Defense Procurement	72
1.5.8	The SAF as an Instrument of International Cooperation and Defense Diplomacy	74
1.6	Conclusion	77
2	The Deployment of Slovenian Armed Forces in International Operations and Missions (IOMs)	81
2.1	Introduction	81
2.2	Decision-Making on Participation in IOMs	84
2.3	SAF Peacekeepers' Social Profile	85
2.3.1	Members of the SAF and Their Motivations for IOMs	88
2.4	Leadership Issues	91
2.5	The Evolving Culture of IOMs	95
2.5.1	Multiculturalism	95
2.5.2	National Cultures	97
2.5.3	Organizational-Military Culture	97
2.5.4	The Culture of the IOM	99
2.6	IOMs and Military Families	100
2.7	The Female Peacekeepers	104
2.7.1	Gender-Related Cultural Differences	107
2.7.2	The Benefits of Deploying Female Members of the SAF	109
2.8	Civil-Military Cooperation of the SAF in IOMs	110
2.9	Conclusion	113
3	Slovenian Public Opinion Concerning the SAF	117
3.1	Introduction	117
3.2	Analysis	117
3.2.1	The Role of the Military Organization in Providing Security	117
3.2.2	The Public's Support for IOMs	121
3.2.3	The Transition From a Conscript Army to an All-Volunteer Force ..	126
3.2.4	Trust in the Armed Forces, Their Functioning and Reputation	127
3.2.5	The 'Feminization' of the Military Organization	131
3.2.6	Other Issues	133
3.3	Conclusion	134
4	General Conclusion	137
5	References	139
6	Appendices	155
	Appendix 1: The Recent Programs and Projects of the Defense Research Center ...	155
	Appendix 2: The Milestones in the SAF's Evolution	159
	Appendix 3: The Structure and Organization of the SAF	160
	Appendix 4: The Contribution of the SAF to IOMs from 1997 to 2012	163
	Appendix 5: The Slovenian Police in IOMs	165
	Appendix 6: Deployments of Slovenian Civilian Functional Specialists	165

Graphs

Graph 1:	Do you Want to Re-Enlist in the SAF?	39
Graph 2:	Re-Enlisting in the SAF According to Satisfaction with Military Service	40
Graph 3:	The Propensity to Re-Enlist in the SAF according to the SAF's Public Reputation	42
Graph 4:	The Propensity of Respondents to Re-Enlist in the SAF according to their Evaluation of the Successfulness of their Professional Career	43
Graph 5:	The Propensity to Re-Enlist in the Slovenian Armed Forces According to the Grade of Education	44
Graph 6:	Re-Enlistment with regard to Civic Participation – Participation in General or Local Elections and in Referenda	45
Graph 7:	The Degree of Real Information on Employment in the Slovenian Armed Forces by Different Fields	46
Graph 8:	Slovenian Military Expenditures 2000–2011 (in constant USD 2009)	71
Graph 9:	The Structure of Slovenian Military Expenditures 2000–2011 (in percent)	72
Graph 10:	Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultures	97
Graph 11:	Cultures at the IOM	99
Graph 12:	Comparing Male and Female Members of the SAF 2003–2012	105
Graph 13:	The Average Age of Female Members of the SAF in IOMs between 2003 and 2012	106
Graph 14:	The Geographical Dispersion of Deployed Female Members of the SAF	107
Graph 15:	Attitudes towards Defense Funding in the Period of 1991 to 2012 (in percent)	119
Graph 16:	Public Support for the SAF's Participation in International Peace and Humanitarian Operations (in percent)	121
Graph 17:	Support for Slovenia's Participation in IOMs (in percent)	122
Graph 18:	Public Support for the Different Types of IOMs Depending on Risk (in percent)	125
Graph 19:	Support for Participation in Various Areas	126
Graph 20:	Trust in Social Institutions (average values)	128
Graph 21:	Trust in the SAF (in percent)	129
Graph 22:	Reputation of the SAF (average values)	130
Graph 23:	Public Attitudes towards Women Entering the Military Organization (in percent)	132
Graph 24:	Gender and Career Opportunities in the SAF	133

Tables

Table 1: The Sample of Permanent Structure Research 38

Table 2: Sources of Motivation 89

Table 3: ‘Non-Traditional’ International Operations and Missions 100

Table 4: Preferences Regarding the Multicultural Setting of IOMs 100

Table 5: Public Support for the Various Tasks of the Armed Forces in
Contemporary Society 120

Table 6: Level of the Support for IOMs – Gender Comparison 123

Table 7: Support for a Conscript Army and AVF 127

Table 8: Public Attitudes towards Women in the SAF 131

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF	Armed Forces
ALTHEA	European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
ANA	Afghanistan National Army
AVF	All-Volunteer Forces
CENCOOP	Central Europe Cooperation
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMCO	Civil-Military Coordination
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Defense Research Centre
ERGOMAS	European Research Group on Military and Society
EU	European Union
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
EUFOR	European Force
EUFOR Tchad/CAR	European Force Tchad and Central African Republic
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
EUPAT	European Union Police Advisory Team
EUPM	European Union Police Mission
EUPOL COPPS	European Union Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support
FM	Field Manual
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HGQ	Headline Goal Questionnaire
HQ	Headquarters
IFOR	Implementation Force
IMAD	Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development
IOM	International Operation and Mission
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KPSS	Kosovo Police Service School
MLF	Multinational Land Force
MNBG	Multinational Battle Group
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MORiS	First Special Brigade

MP	Member of Parliament
MSU	Multinational Specialized Unit
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NATO AJP	NATO Allied Joint Procedures
NATO MC	NATO Military Committee
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTM-I	NATO Training Mission in Iraq
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHR	Office of High Representative
OMLT	Operational Mentor and Liaison Team
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PROVOJ	Professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces
QIP	Quick Impact Projects
RS	Republic of Slovenia
SAF	Slovenian Armed Forces
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOWI	Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr
SPO	Slovenian Public Opinion
SVNCON	Slovenian Contingent
TD	Territorial Defense
TRADOC	The Doctrine, Development, Education and Training Command
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
US	United States of America
WEU	Western European Union
YPA	Yugoslav People's Army

Introduction

There has always been a Slovenian military in its various forms since the distant past; however, the establishment and development of the contemporary Slovenian Armed Forces has been closely shaped by the process of Slovenian independence from the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, based on the nations' right to self-determination, in the early 1990s. The basis for the formation of the Slovenian Armed Forces was the concept of Territorial Defense, which had been a feature of every Yugoslav republic and autonomous province since the end of 1968, as Yugoslavia's response to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. Territorial Defense was part of the broader concept of a Total People's Defense and 'people in arms' and was manned on a national basis, with the aim of defending Yugoslavia's territorial integrity and sovereignty through people's resistance in the form of guerrilla warfare. The Territorial Defense and the Yugoslav People's Army, which had a more operational role, were the two constituent parts of the Yugoslav Armed Forces.

To protect the democratic process in Slovenia and to avoid the pressure of the Yugoslav People's Army on the Territorial Defense, the so called Maneuver Structure for National Protection was established in secrecy on the basis of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia and the Total People's Defense Act in 1990. The Maneuver Structure was established within and parallel to the Territorial Defense structure, and the final result was the formation of the first professional unit of the Territorial Defense, later named the First Special Brigade (MORiS). The line-up of the Brigade followed in December 1990 and the first joint tactical exercise of the Territorial Defense units and staffs took place in the spring of 1991.

In May 1991, Slovenian authorities decided to man the Territorial Defense with conscripts of Slovenian nationality, and therefore refused to send them to serve in the Yugoslav People's Army; prior to this, the Territorial Defense had been manned by military reservists that were not included in Yugoslav People's Army units. The Yugoslav People's Army authorities were furious and blocked one of the two Territorial Defense Training Centers in Maribor (the other one was formed in Ig near Ljubljana). Although the tension between the Yugoslav People's Army and the Territorial Defense units ran high, the latter was supported by citizens who blockaded the military barracks in Maribor and managed to protect the Training Center. All soldiers took an oath to the Republic of Slovenia on 2 June 1991 in both Training Centers.

The Slovenian Assembly declared Slovenian independence on 25 June 1991. The following day there was a huge celebration of independence in front of the National Assembly whilst the Yugoslav People's Army flew over the crowd and the political elite gathered in the square. The first honorable line-up of the Territorial Defense units occurred that evening. A few hours later, the Yugoslav People's Army initiated an attack against the newly-established Republic of Slovenia. The war, in which the Territorial Defense units and police forces successfully defended the country, had started.¹ Ten

1 According to the Slovenian Red Cross, the results of the war were as follows: 2,405 Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) prisoners of war; 131 federal police prisoners of war; 3 captured civilians; 136 injured members of the YPA; 89 injured members of the Territorial Defense; 22 injured policemen; 38 injured civilians; 1 injured foreigner; 39 members of YPA killed; 4 members of the TD killed; 4 policemen killed; 5 civilians killed; 10 foreigners killed (mostly truck drivers that were caught in road blocks set up by the TD to prevent the YPA armored units from progressing inland; the blocks were bombed by the YPA air force).

days later, the warring factions, stimulated by the EEC Troika, reached a ceasefire and signed the Brioni Declaration. Although the ‘freezing’ of all further moves to Slovenian independence was stipulated in the Declaration, the process could no longer be stopped. The last soldier of the Yugoslav People’s Army left Slovenian territory on 26 October 1991. By the end of 1991, the process of the international recognition of the newly established state had begun and was successfully completed with Slovenia gaining membership of the United Nations in May 1992.

After the war, the Territorial Defense remained predominantly manned by conscripts with the exception of the First Special Brigade (MORiS) which consisted of professional soldiers. In 1994, the Parliament adopted the Defense Act and the Territorial Defense was renamed the Slovenian Armed Forces, assuming the key responsibility for the defense of national territory and sovereignty. Three years later, in May 1997, Slovenia, which desired to enter both the EEC (later the EU) and NATO, began to assume its role in the humanitarian operation ALBA, in Albania, and to participate in the peace and security endeavors of the international community.

Several reform processes were launched in the Slovenian Armed Forces in the mid-1990s to achieve NATO standards in a bid to join the Alliance. Although the Slovenian authorities envisaged that the membership could occur in the first round of NATO enlargement after the Cold War, when Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were admitted, this proved not to be the case. Slovenia became a member of NATO in 2004. Its membership of the EU was achieved in the same year.

One of the crucial points in the development of the Slovenian Armed Forces occurred in 2002, when the decision was taken by the government to suspend conscription and to introduce an All-Volunteer Force. The conscript system was in a major crisis due to unfavorable demographic trends, a high level of conscientious objection, a high portion of medically unfit conscripts and the low operational capability of the armed forces, especially for the missions required by the international community. At the same time, the international security obligations of the country were increasing, therefore a change in the system of manning the armed forces seemed to be a logical and prudent decision.

Looking back at the key milestones briefly depicted so far, the timing of this book enables the authors to reflect upon more than two decades of the development of the Slovenian Armed Forces since Slovenia became an independent state, fifteen years of having participated in international peace operations and missions, as well as a decade of developing the All-Volunteer Force.

The main purpose of the book is to analyze the structural and functional aspects of the professionalization that has been taking place in the Slovenian Armed Forces over the last two decades. We understand structural professionalization to mean the change in the way that the armed forces are manned, whereby conscripts are (gradually) replaced by an All-Volunteer Force. We understand functional professionalization to be the process of achieving higher professional standards in the military’s work and the discipline of the soldiers regardless of the way the armed forces are manned. We will be in particular interested in answering the question to what extent and in what ways the participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in international operations and missions has influenced the level of its functional professionalization. In answering this question, we will also assess the extent to which possible participation in international operations and missions influences the motivation of potential recruits to join the military.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first part, we address the structural and functional professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces. We briefly consider the

clusters of factors that influenced the decision to suspend conscription and to introduce an All-Volunteer Force. We explore a number of factors including: historical experience, threats and new tasks, international cooperation, socialization, value orientation, civil-military relations and legitimacy, demographic, economic and technological developments. We also consider some of the expectations that accompanied the introduction of the All-Volunteer Force with regard to these factors at the time. We then revisit some of the factors and expectations in the light of a decade of experience since the introduction of an All-Volunteer Force. We first offer a general overview and then a detailed analysis of selected social, political, economic and functional aspects of the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces. The analysis covers topics such as resource management, the labor market, the process of feminization of the armed forces, civil-military relations and cooperation, education and training, and last but not least, international cooperation and defense diplomacy.

In the second part of the book, we focus on the participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in international operations and missions. We begin our analysis with a description of the decision-making process for participation in international operations and missions and the roles played by selected ministries, the military, the government and the parliament in this process. We proceed to introduce the social profile of peacekeepers serving in Afghanistan and their motivational structure. We also address leadership issues and the civil-military cooperation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in international operations and missions. Two issues become apparent: the evolving culture of international operations and missions; and the issue of military families. As far as the former is concerned, we explore the role of multiculturalism, national cultures, and organizational-military culture in performing international operations and missions, however we also assume that a particular new culture of international operations and missions is gradually developing. As far as Slovenian military families are concerned, we examine the families of soldiers serving in Afghanistan to demonstrate the existent gap between the promised legal solutions on one hand and the stark lack of support on the other. This fact does not contribute to the higher morale and effective performance of the Slovenian Armed Forces on the ground.

In the third part, we discuss the attitudes of the Slovenian public towards their armed forces. We explore the role of the military organization in providing security for the international community, the nation state, social groups and individuals. We also examine the public's support for the participation of Slovenia in international operations and missions, where we witness for the first time in a decade and a half a decline in support, with the number of supporters of Slovenia's participation being smaller than the number of opponents. Attitudes towards the All-Volunteer Force are analyzed, in addition to which, we measure the level of public support for the government's decision to suspend conscription. We also test the level of trust, reputation and performance rating of the Slovenian Armed Forces where we notice a relatively high degree of trust, which is, however, subject to fluctuations caused by the various 'affairs' in which the armed forces have been (in)directly involved. Several other issues are briefly discussed, ranging from the role of women in the armed forces to the level of public interest in military matters, especially the military profession and the socio-economic status of soldiers.

In the conclusion we revisit and comment on the main hypothesis of the book: the transition of the Slovenian Armed Forces from a conscript army to an All-Volunteer Force (structural professionalization) made possible its intensive involvement and participation in international operations and missions; meanwhile, the participation of the

Slovenian Armed Forces in international operations and missions has had a positive influence on increasing professional standards in the work and behavior of members of the Slovenian Armed Forces (functional professionalization).

The content of the book draws upon the two decades of research that has been undertaken by the Defense Research Center at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana. The armed forces were explored within the broader framework of the 'security studies' national research program and within several problem solving research projects and studies that focused on the legitimacy, rationality and efficiency of the armed forces, the reform processes in the security sector, the manning of the armed forces and their participation in peace operations, the participation of officers in international command and control structures, the attitudes of the Slovenian youth towards the military profession, human resources, cross-cultural relations, asymmetric warfare and the like. Our approach is a multi-disciplinary one. Whilst the emphasis is on security studies and a sociological approach, at the same time we have not neglected the political science (international relations), economic and psychological aspects of the analysis.

1 **The Structural and Functional Professionalization of the SAF: Past and Present**

1.1 Introduction – Dilemmas of Terminology

In 2002, when Slovenia officially began the process of abolishing – or, rather, suspending² – obligatory military duty (the draft has still been regularly carried out), the term ‘the professionalization of the SAF’ began to be employed. However, it was not clear, at least to the defense-studies’ community in Slovenia, what the term ‘professionalization’ actually meant. In the 1980s, military sociology ran an important debate on the military profession (Harries-Jenkins/Moskos 1981; Moskos 1986, 1988; Segal 1986; Caforio 1988; Harries-Jenkins 1990; Kuhlmann 1991) and, in the early 1990s, ERGOMAS undertook a research project on the Military Profession in Europe.³ At this time, professionalization was understood – at least in social-studies circles – as referring to the process of an overall qualitative improvement of the officer corps and also to the professional socialization of the individual military officer. As Abrahamsson (1972) notes, the concept of professionalization in academic literature usually has two meanings. “In the most common usage, professionalization is equivalent to *professional socialization*, that is, the process by which *individuals* are transformed from a state of relative unawareness of the theoretical and practical problems of the profession’s issue area, to the state of acute awareness of such problems.” In addition, “in a somewhat less common usage, professionalization refers to the historical transformation of a particular occupational group, under the impact of major political, economic, and technological developments.” (Abrahamsson 1972:16) This transformation, from a compulsory to an occupational system of staffing (known in several western countries as all-volunteer armed forces – AVF), which Slovenia officially began in 2002, was, of course, not a new phenomenon. In scientific circles, however, it was referred to as the ‘introduction of an occupational military’ (in Slovenian *uvedba poklicne vojske*) rather than by the term ‘professionalization’. This difference in terminology was clearly a result of, firstly, the major impact of Moskos’ Institutional/Occupational Thesis (first introduced in 1977) on defense studies in Slovenia, and, secondly, a consequence of the specifics of the Slovenian language.

In *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe: Building Professional Armed Forces* Forster, Edmunds and Cottey (2002) analyzed the various understandings of the terms ‘professionalization’ and ‘profession’ in the academic literature, and discovered that professionalization also refers to proper and democratic relations between the military and society. In addition, they also observed that the specific meaning also derives from Huntington’s (1957) understanding of the different approaches to control over the military (objective or subjective).

However, the confusion of terminology in describing the armed forces according to how they are manned can be successfully resolved through the application of the terms and concepts of structural (i.e. change in the structure as a consequence of change in

2 The Military Service Act (Article 22) prescribes three months of service in the case of an increased risk of attack on the state, the direct threat of war or declaration of a state of emergency by the National Assembly (Military Service Act 2002, Article 22). Other changes are prescribed in Chapter VII of the Military Service Act.

3 The results are published in several publications including in a special issue of *Current Sociology* (1994, 42: 3) and in a special issue of *SOWI Forum International* (1996, 18).

how the system is manned) and functional professionalization (redefining the role of the military and adopting professional standards of work and behavior).⁴ By framing the discussion with these two terms of structural and functional professionalization, the SAF in 2002 initiated the process of structural professionalization. In other words, the privates, non-commissioned officers, commissioned officers and other personnel in the military all work as employees.

1.2 Factors that Influenced the Structural Professionalization of the SAF

For different reasons, the question of the adequacy of the soldiers in the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) became particularly salient and controversial at the end of the 1990s. The European security environment had changed significantly bringing about changes in the field of real and perceived threats to security. Consequently, the armed forces of post-industrial countries were assigned different roles and missions. This required soldiers with highly developed technical and management skills, and high levels of intellectual capacity and psycho-physical fitness. The effective carrying out of new military missions, mostly in the international context, required mobile, polyvalent and modular armed forces that were able to offer a variety of reactions to various complex crises. This new state of affairs could not rely on armed forces made up exclusively or predominantly of conscripts.

In Slovenia in 2001, the institution of conscription was in deep crisis: the demographic trends in Slovenia were unfavorable, the level of conscientious objection was high and was increasing, and the number of conscripts who were not medically fit was also increasing. We should also mention the functional dimension of the issue, such as: new armed forces' missions; more complex and demanding military tasks; and the rather short-term and modest training and equipping of reserve units. On a broader perspective, in discussing the need to reform the Slovenian Armed Forces, one should also bear in mind the importance of social and vocational characteristics of post-industrial societies, as well as pluralization and individualization, specialization and professionalization.

At that time, in the study commissioned by the Slovenian MoD, the researchers involved established that there were four possible solutions for improving the recruitment situation of the Slovenian Armed Forces, according to the demands of security, society, culture and values, and the economics of a post-modern state.⁵ These were (1) a basic reform of universal military conscription, in which an individual solution or combination of solutions could be effected through the introduction of universal military

4 As Forster, Edmunds and Cottey (2002: 8) observed: "professionalization as a process involves defining the military's role, revising its force structure to be consistent with the redefined role and adopting professional standards – in particular in the areas of expertise, responsibility and promotion – so that the armed forces can carry out their missions. Professionalization – a form of policy adaptation – can occur for a wide range of reasons, which can be internal and/or external, imposed or voluntary. While the definition offered here identifies a number of core characteristics and sub-characteristics of professional armed forces, it is clear that the role of the armed forces is the most important of these and is central to any process of professionalization. Without a clearly defined and accepted external and domestic role armed forces are unlikely to develop the other characteristics of professionalism."

5 The researchers were Marjan Malešič, Pekka Visuri, Franz Kernic, Jean M. Callaghan, Karl Haltiner, Lutz Unterseher, Miepe Bos-Bakx, Joseph Soeters, Bernard Boëne, Philippe Manigart, Fabrizio Battistelli, Anton Bebler, Ljubica Jelušič, Damijan Guštin, Igor Kotnik-Dvojmoč, Vinko Vegič, Iztok Prezelj, Vladimir Prebilič, Uroš Svete and Erik Kopač (see Malešič 2003).