



**DR. MIHA POGAČNIK,
PROFESSOR AT LAW FACULTY
LJUBLJANA
CHAIRMAN OF THE SLOVENIAN
COMMITTEE FOR NATO**

THE NEW SECURITY IDENTITY

On January 24, 2002, the Slovenian Committee for NATO was established in Ljubljana. This committee is a voluntary non-profit, non-governmental association of citizens to promote Slovenia's early integration into NATO. The main task of the Committee is to inform our citizens about the advantages of early NATO membership. We notice that while many Slovenians feel strongly one way or the other about joining NATO, their arguments are often not based on facts. Our committee will inform the public about NATO – its history, organisational structure, and objectives. We will hold public events, seminars, and symposia. We will organise excursions to relevant institutions and issue NATO-related publications. Educated citizens will be in a better position to look at NATO membership and make educated choices.

Another of our Committee's goals is to promote a "state identity". Slovenia is a young nation – founded in 1991 – and we are still in the process of creating defence and security identities. It has been helpful for us to pattern ourselves after NATO member countries, to adopt their goals and principles.

At our first meeting we noticed that Committee members came from a wide slice of society – those active in Slovenian cultural, political, social, scientific, and academic life.

The day of our founding we adopted a statute recognising NATO as a democratic institution based on shared values. We see NATO as an international alliance with the highest level of solidarity among its members due to the Washington treaty principle – an attack on one country is an attack on all of them. We understand that after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block, NATO has new roles to play and new tasks to perform. NATO is working hard to resolve the conflicts of South-Eastern Europe and to defend against the threat of international terrorism. NATO is a key mechanism for creating the secure political climate required for economic and cultural development.

Even after Slovenia is integrated into NATO, our association will continue to support NATO enlargement, especially for our neighbours. Slovenia does not want to have a monopoly in South-Eastern Europe on stability, security and economic prosperity. We will not be satisfied until the entire region enjoys these benefits.

