

PRESS RELEASE

## **Tomorrow first of the six charter flights between Slovenia and Japan**

**Ljubljana, 5 August 2016– Tomorrow, on 6 August, at 15:10 the first plane of this year's charter flights from Japan to Slovenia will land at Airport Jože Pučnik Ljubljana. In August and September we expect a total of six charter flights to Slovenia from Tokyo, Sendai, Nagoya and Osaka, organized for the first time by the Japanese airline company ANA.**

The resuming of charter flights from Japan this year is an important step in the systematic marketing of Slovenian tourism on overseas markets and is the result of the efforts of the Slovenian Tourist Organisation (WTO), Slovenian travel agencies and the Slovenian tourism industry to increase the number of visitors from this market of more than 126 million people.

The total number of Japanese passengers transported in this year's charter flights will be around 1250. Tomorrow, with this year's first aircraft 246 Japanese tourists are expected to arrive.

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Slovenia, H. E. Keiji Fukuda** states at the initiation of this year's charter flights between Japan and Slovenia: "On this occasion I would like to express my sincere welcome to charter flights to Slovenia, which were made possible through the participation of representatives of All Nippon Airways (ANA), JTB and Club Tourism. Slovenia is a small but charming country that prides itself with the remains of medieval towns in urban areas, as well as with rich natural diversity. Although it is nowadays possible to hear alarming words on the topic of European security situation, Slovenia is one of the extremely safe European countries. Anyone may at their convenience decide how to spend time while visiting Slovenia. It is possible to stroll through cities with rich history, which give rise to nostalgic memories of the Venetian Republic and Austrian Empire. Alpine mountains and the Adriatic Sea offer the opportunity for activities such as hiking, river fishing or water sports. Nature provides for relaxing, quiet breaks and paints different seasonal portraits of the beautiful lakes or limestone caves enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage Site. Finally, a special prosciutto and Slovenian wines, known for their diversity of flavors, are just some of the culinary experiences that undoubtedly make a trip memorable."

Mr. Fukuda also expressed his expectation that charter flights give an opportunity to Japanese guests to personally experience the unique features and charms of Slovenia and stressed that this is an important achievement that will contribute to the development of tourism and increased cooperation between Slovenian and Japanese people.

The **Slovenian Tourist Board (STB)** lists the Japanese market among key overseas outbound markets for Slovenian tourism, where it implements B2B activities in line with the strategy to ensure the return of the positive trend of arrivals and overnight stays. Ensuring charter flights between Slovenia and Japan this year was one of the key objectives of the Japanese outbound market this year. Arrival of guests to Slovenia on charter flights in the next two months represents an important step towards a return to growth in the number of Japanese tourists visiting Slovenia and also to the appropriate positioning of Slovenia as a safe and attractive European tourist destination in the segment of sole and circle tours of Japanese tourists.

For many years, STB has given special emphasis to the Japanese market, because their outbound market shows signs of potential return of the positive trend of the number of tourists and their overnight stays, despite the reduction in the number of Japanese guests and overnight stays in the past year, when due to terrorist attacks and a wave of refugees in Europe a strong decrease in the number of Japanese tourists throughout western Europe was observed. Last year, Japanese tourists in Slovenia generated more than 55,000 overnight stays (0.8% share of all overnight stays by foreign tourists), which is 8% less than the previous year. Their average length of stay in Slovenia was 1.5 days. Most Japanese tourists visit Ljubljana (52%), followed by mountain resorts (37%).

Slovenia and Slovenian tourism will be promoted on the Japanese market by STB in September at the JATA Tourism EXPO Japan fair, which is a world-famous exhibition of international and local tourist organizations, in which aviation corporations, hotels, travel agencies, transport companies, the media and other organizations from overseas destinations present themselves. The fair offers the opportunity to establish new business contacts and is open also to the general public. During the participation in the fair a working meeting of the Slovenian tourism providers and interested Japanese counterparts will be organized.

---