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MIKROFON

COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

INFORMATIONAL BROADCAST
OF MIKRO+POLO COMPANY



Karl mikro+polo
YOUR PARTNER IN THE LABORATORY

MORE ABOUT THE MIKROFON



MIKROFON is the internal magazine of Mikro+Polo d.o.o. Authors of articles in sections such as »BARE ON AIR,« »FIELD MIC,« »YOU ASKED, WE ANSWER,« and »THE MICROWAVE« are nominated to write. The nomination system means that the current article's author selects a colleague for the next issue of MIKROFON. So, read each article carefully –you might be the next nominee!

Do you have a question for an expert, are facing a dilemma, or need advice? Our company employs numerous specialists across various fields who may be able to help. We have at least one architect, biochemist, biologist, biotechnologist, economist, electrical engineer, pharmacist, geographer, civil engineer, IT specialist, chemical technologist, chemist, woodworker, media communicator, microbiologist, lawyer, mechanical engineer, and food technologist—covering everything from A to Z.

You can submit your ideas, articles, suggestions, opinions, praises, comments, or questions at any time in one of the MIKROFON mailboxes. The first is located at the employee entrance in the administrative building (above the mailboxes), and the second is at the warehouse entrance.

Alternatively, you can reach us via email at marketing@mikro-polo.si. We appreciate every message!

MIKROFON

Internal magazine of Mikro+Polo d.o.o.

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IMPORTANT DATES

OCTOBER

1. october

Tanja Marhold 33 years v M+P
 Simona Rosc 33 years v M+P
 Marko Podgornik Verdev 31 years v M+P
 Matjaž Lešnik 21 years v M+P
 Jaka Oset 19 years v M+P
 Breda Kodba 17 years v M+P
 Damjan Zupanič 15 years v M+P
 Timotej Bedjanič 6 years v M+P
 Gašper Podgornik Verdev 5 years v M+P
 Tilen Podgornik 5 years v M+P
 Tadeja Mihev 4 years v M+P
 Tomi Slana 4 years v M+P
 Samo Mladič 4 years v M+P
 Denis Krajnc 2 years v M+P
 Nejc Jager 1 year v M+P
 Birthday of Gašper Podgornik Verdev

4. october

Birthday of Matjaž Bezjak

8. october

Birthday of Tanja Gvardjančič

10. october

Gregor Leutgeb 3 years v M+P

13. october

Birthday of Aleksander Govedič

14. october

Birthday of Timotej Bedjanič

16. october

Tomaž Kocmut 1 year v M+P
 Birthday of Sanela German

18. october

Birthday of Judita Rigler

22. october

Branka Kadič 5 years v M+P
 Bernard Jerot 3 years v M+P
 Birthday of Robert Vaupotič

23. october

Maja Lavrenčič 4 years v M+P
 Birthday of Marko Podgornik Verdev

27. october

Birthday of Marko Koprivnik ...
 Never again 39

28. october

Birthday of Davorin Veronek

NOVEMBER

1. november

Andreja Matelič Obranovič 21 years v M+P
 Saša Popović 18 years v M+P
 Samo Klobučar 9 years v M+P
 Luka Dobaj 7 years v M+P
 Doroteja Ketiš 4 years v M+P
 Sanela German 3 years v M+P
 Tanisa Fašnik 3 years v M+P
 Goran Vukadinović 3 years v M+P

2. november

Birthday of Ivana Klarić Došlić

3. november

Birthday of Teja Pihlar

4. november

Robert Vaupotič 1 year v M+P

8. november

Tadej Verhovnik 4 years v M+P

10. november

Birthday of Rok Purg

13. in 14. november INVENTORY

14. november

Birthday of Boštjan Perko

15. in 16. novmeber CLEANING ACTION

16. november

Birthday of Zdravko Kmetec

17. november

Mario Križanič 4 years v M+P

20. november MIKROVALOVKA

21. november

Birthday of Katja Kampuš

24. november

Birthday of Pia Ulaga Čokl

27. november

Birthday of Andreja Zimič

28. november

Rok Purg 1 year v M+P

29. november

Birthday of Aljaž Vršič

DECEMBER

1. december

Boris Grobelnik 23 years v M+P
 Branko Arnuš 13 years v M+P
 Nina Mori 8 years v M+P
 Mihael Namestnik Brbre 3 years v M+P

5. december

Aljaž Slatinjek 5 years v M+P

8. december

Birthday of Barbara Kovačič

14. december

Birthday of Mojca Vek
 Birthday of Branka Kadič

15. december

Birthday of Branka Matjašič

19. december

NEW YEARs PARTY
 Birthday of Monika Banfi

20. december

Birthday of Dejan Hojnik

22. december

Hajrudin Čoko 10 years v M+P

23. december

Birthday of Zoran Kodba
 Birthday of Lara Hudej

24. december

Birthday of Janja Ogrizek
 Birthday of Darin Geržina

27. december

Zlatka Nikl 7 years v M+P

28. december

Birthday of Slavko Kulundžič...
 Never again 39

30. december

Birthday of Matjaž Dogša



 ■ **MARKO PODGORNIK VERDEV** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AUTUMN

A TIME FOR INVENTORY,
NEW BEGINNINGS, AND
LOOKING AHEAD



Autumn holds a special place in my life. Nature slows down, leaves fall, and the pace seems to ease – at least on the surface. Yet for me, autumn has never been a time of stillness; it's a time for reflection and a fresh start. At home, we celebrate no fewer than nine birthdays during this season, which is a celebration in itself. But autumn is also when I recall a turning point – in the autumn of 2006, I took over the leadership of our company. So this year marks my twentieth anniversary as director. Two decades that have never been easy, yet have been filled with stories, challenges, setbacks, new beginnings, and – most importantly – victories.

If I look back to 2006: back then there were around fifty of us, and our revenue stood at eight million euros. We were a trading company fighting for our place on the Slovenian market. And today? Today there are nearly three times as many of us – close to 150 – and we generate around thirty million euros in consolidated revenue. That's not just a number; it's a story of growth, of courage, of how we evolved from a distributor into a company with its own production, its own brands, its own products. More than that – we've grown into a community with its own culture, one we write together, every day, through our actions, relationships, and attitudes.

When anniversaries like this come around, I always ask myself: what's next? Where do I want to take this company, and what do I expect from myself as a leader? Even after twenty years at the helm, the same enthusiasm still

drives me. I still dream of building a true multinational right here in Maribor – a company that creates the most beautiful laboratories in the world, yet remains genuinely local at heart. A company that sets the standard not only in the quality of its products and the speed of its service, but also in its culture of doing business.

If the first twenty years were about building the business, and the last ten about focusing more on employee benefits, then we are now entering the era of MIKRO+POLO 3.0. This is the phase in which we will bring those two worlds together into one whole. We will continue to strengthen our benefits, our relationships, and our culture of inclusion, diversity, and sustainable operations. But all of that must stand on a solid foundation – successful business. Without profit, there is no stability, no development, no rewards. Business is the foundation; everything else follows from it. That's the reality we must embrace and live by.

Now we're in the last quarter of the year. I know it's clear to everyone that this year's revenue hasn't quite reached last year's level. But what matters more is that we've operated better. Why? Because we've focused on what truly matters. Because we've kept an eye on our performance, our costs, and our quality. Because we've understood that only by following instructions carefully and respecting the rules can we build long-term security. And because we know that customer satisfaction isn't an empty phrase – it's the condition for our survival.

We continue to invest – in growth, in stability, in the future. And we're still investing energy into "cleaning up" our processes – making things simpler, clearer, and more efficient. Every change requires effort; every improvement demands patience. That's why I want to sincerely thank you, my colleagues. We're proving that sometimes it's worth taking a step back, so we can take more steps forward later. It's a philosophy that has saved us many times before, and I'm certain it will continue to do so in the future.

Among us are many new faces. To them I want to say: welcome to a company where collaboration, support, and shared victories are not just words on paper but values we live by. Every new person brings new energy, new perspectives, and new opportunities to make us all even better together.

But MIKRO+POLO is also a company that knows how to celebrate. So I'm already inviting you to our year-end party, once again organised by Darin. The formal part – with the annual review and the awards for the best Mikropolovci – is practically mandatory. And the party after dinner? Well, we all know it'll be unforgettable. Just as only we can make it.

So for me, autumn is never just a time for stock-taking. It's a time for new beginnings, new promises, and new dreams. It's the time when we write the future together. And that future, dear Mikropolovci, is – as always – in our hands.



Inventory & Clean-Up Week

THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER
(SERVICE AND LOGISTICS)

FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER
(LAB AND LBI)

SATURDAY, 15 NOVEMBER
(COMPANY-WIDE CLEAN-UP)

SUNDAY, 16 NOVEMBER
(COMPANY-WIDE CLEAN-UP)


 ■ IVANA SZABO LAB INTERIOR

YOU COME FOR THE PAY, YOU STAY (OR LEAVE) FOR EVERYTHING ELSE

That's what a good friend told me when he decided to change jobs. And it was precisely those "other things" that became the main reason for my own change. It takes time to make a mental cut, and once you cross that line, there's no going back..

Change requires time and courage – especially when you're part of a team that works well, where relationships are respectful and cooperative, and where you've built genuine friendships. Yet even in the best collective, there comes a moment when you feel you've outgrown the existing framework – personally or professionally. And then come the questions: What if I'm not accepted in the new environment? Will I find a team as good as this one? What if I've made a mistake?

Despite all that, I decided to take the leap and applied for a position in a company known for its unlimited annual leave, countless employee benefits, and genuine understanding of its people. I'll admit – I was sceptical. Who really offers unlimited holidays these days, a gym during work hours, and shorter Fridays without clocking negative hours? "Yeah, right," I thought.

I focused on what mattered most: is the job itself something I'd truly enjoy doing? Would it make me happy and fulfilled? And if even half of what was written in the job post was true, then there wasn't much to think about. I accepted the offer – along with the responsibility that comes with it. You don't want to disappoint people who believed in you and gave you a chance to prove yourself.

The first pleasant surprise came even before I started: a kind welcome email from HR. It's nice when someone makes you feel expected, introduces key people, and explains what you can look forward to. I think it's incredibly important to have someone – in addition to colleagues – you can turn to during those first months with questions, worries, or

dilemmas. It helps ease the initial anxiety and reassures you that you're not alone.

1 September – for children, the start of the school year; for me, the start of a new career chapter. Already on the first day, I was amazed by the warm welcome: smiling faces, a relaxed atmosphere, a genuine willingness to help. Socially, I felt included straight away. Professionally, of course, it was another story – a new system, new tools, an overwhelming amount of information. That feeling of being "like a burek in outer space" stayed with me the entire first week.

What surprised me most were the internal emails that weren't about business at all, but rather about the challenges parents face at the start of the school year, children's stress, and the role of parents in supporting them. It's refreshing and deeply human when an employer shows genuine interest in the personal side of employees' lives. In today's world, that's more the exception than the rule.

Five days in – team building in Poreč: great company, perfect weather, games without borders, and a flawless result. An opportunity to get to know your colleagues in a more relaxed setting, open new conversations, and see people in a different light.

What truly impressed me was the workshop on HR development strategy. The main goal was open discussion on topics such as employee motivation, interpersonal relationships, building trust, supporting older employees, and teamwork. For me, it was a new experience – each topic opened up reflection on satisfaction, motivation, and communication.

After the first ten days, I can say with confidence that the saying "if employees are happy, something must be wrong" doesn't apply here. Mikro+Polo invests in relationships, in culture, and in people. And none of that should ever be taken for granted. The work must be done, of course – but that's what allows us to enjoy the results together.

I believe we'll continue to successfully carry out our projects while building a culture where happy employees are not an exception – but the norm.

Now then – ACTION!

 ■ DAMJAN ZUPANIČ SERVICE

INSTALLATION – DOWN TO THE MILLIMETRE

How to Prepare for a Proper Laboratory Instrument Installation

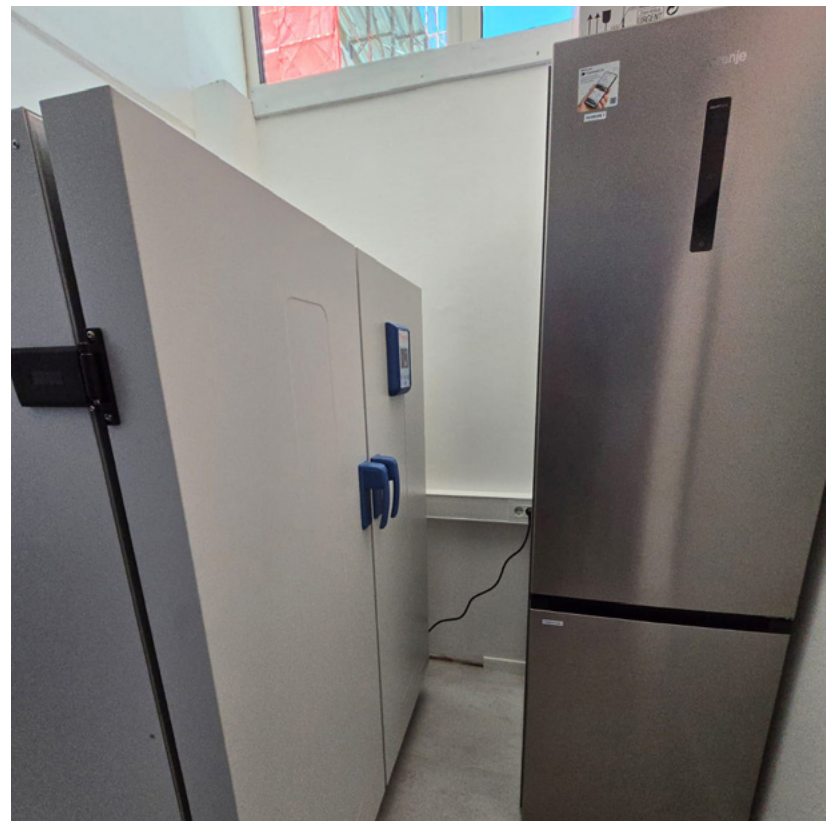
A professional installation of laboratory instruments is a key step in ensuring accuracy, safety, and long service life of your equipment. Improper installation can lead to measurement errors, damage, or even health and safety risks for staff. To ensure optimal performance, a number of steps must be followed – from preparing the workspace and checking environmental requirements to properly training users.

In this article, we'll outline the essential steps to make sure your installation goes as smoothly as possible.

1. CHECK THE INSTRUMENT REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Before installation, it's essential to carefully review the technical specifications and manufacturer's instructions. These details typically include:

- **Power supply:** Check the voltage, frequency, and type of power required.
- **Temperature and environmental conditions:** Each instrument may have specific requirements for temperature, humidity, and ventilation. Ensure the space meets these conditions.
- **Space requirements:** Verify that there's enough room for the instrument and that the area allows easy access



for servicing and maintenance.

- **Connections:** Check what types of connections are needed (e.g. water, gas, computer network, etc.).

2. PREPARING THE INSTALLATION AREA

The space where the instrument will be installed must be suitable for its operation. Key factors to consider include:

- **Accessibility and ergonomics:** The instrument should be easily accessible to users, positioned at an appropriate height, and allow enough room for handling, cleaning, and maintenance.
- **Stable surface:** It must be placed on a stable, level surface to avoid vibration or movement that could cause errors or damage.
- **Cabling and piping:** Ensure there's enough space for all necessary utilities, such as electrical cables, pipes, or other connections. Don't forget about safety measures like heat protection and short-circuit prevention.

3. INSPECT THE INSTRUMENT BEFORE INSTALLATION

Before starting, always check that the instrument is in good condition and that all parts are included.

→ **Visual inspection:** Look for any signs of damage, scratches, or visible defects that could affect performance.

→ **Delivery check:** Confirm that all components, manuals, and accessories (such as screws, cables, or safety fittings) are included.

→ **Pre-test:** If possible, run a test to confirm basic functionality before full installation.

4. CARRYING OUT THE INSTALLATION

Follow the manufacturer's instructions closely and observe all safety guidelines. The process typically includes:

→ **Electrical connection:** Make sure the instrument is correctly connected to the power source and that all safety protections are in place.

→ **Water and gas connections:** If required, ensure that all hoses and fittings are properly attached and free of leaks.

→ **Software configuration:** For instruments with digital or software components, confirm that all settings and connections are correctly configured.

5. TESTING AND PERFORMANCE VERIFICATION

Once installed, perform testing to confirm correct operation:

→ **Basic functionality:** Test all key functions (e.g. measurement, heating, cooling, etc.).

→ **Calibration:** Verify that the instrument is properly calibrated – this is often crucial for ensuring accurate results.

→ **Safety check:** Inspect all safety systems such as valves, alarms, and overheating protection.

6. USER TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION

After installation and testing, it's vital to ensure users are familiar with the instrument's operation.

→ **User training:** Provide comprehensive training on operation, maintenance, and safety procedures.

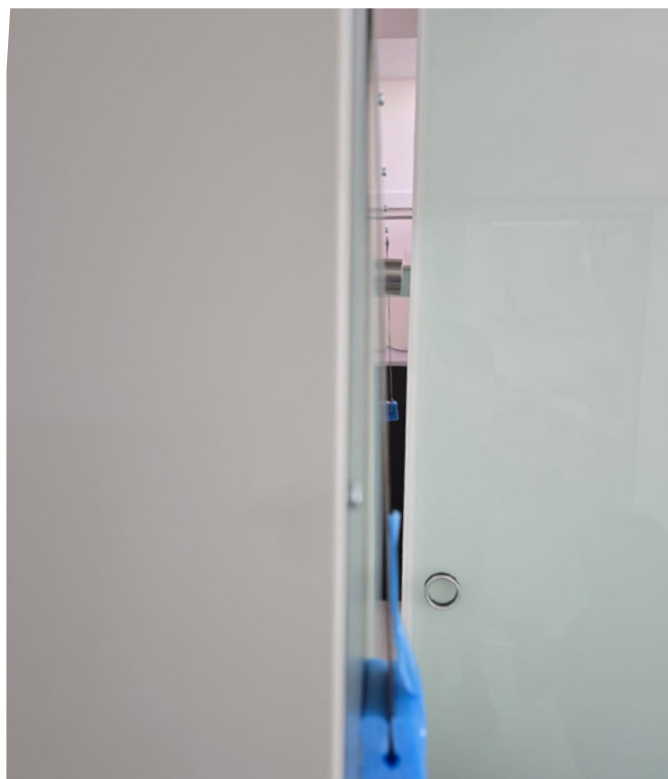
→ **Documentation:** Record all settings, calibration data, and test results – this documentation is invaluable for future maintenance or troubleshooting.

5. MAINTENANCE AND REGULAR INSPECTIONS

Post-installation, regular maintenance is essential. Periodic cleaning, calibration, and performance checks help extend the instrument's life and ensure accuracy and reliability.

CONCLUSION

Proper laboratory instrument installation requires careful planning, precision, and adherence to safety procedures. By preparing the workspace, checking environmental and technical conditions, and ensuring adequate user training, you can guarantee smooth operation and reliable, accurate results in your laboratory.



 ■ ZORAN KODBA LAB PROGRAMME

AN EXCITING AUTUMN – FULL OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES!



As the newly appointed Head of the Department for Chemicals, Laboratory Equipment, Consumables and Laboratory Furniture on the Slovenian market (although I've been with the company for over 14 years), I currently find myself navigating a sea of new information, processes and challenges. But honestly – I couldn't have asked for a better learning experience. My colleagues are an incredible source of knowledge and experience, and they're always willing to share it. I, in turn, try to absorb as much as I can.

We're heading into a very eventful autumn that will carry us right through to the end of the year. In this issue of Mikrofon, you can already read about some of the congresses, professional events, and training sessions awaiting us both at home and abroad. Alongside these, we're preparing a series of other sales activities that will undoubtedly make our everyday work even more dynamic and exciting.

A particularly important chapter this autumn is our expansion into Croatia. Together with two of our renowned suppliers from the Laboratory Programme, we've been granted exclusive representation rights for the Croatian market. This is a major opportunity – and at the same time a great responsibility – as we now need to establish a sales strategy that will be successful in the long run. To that end, we're already looking for a new team member who, ideally, will cover both programmes in Croatia. Naturally, this will also bring additional training, sales meetings and – what matters most to me personally – new learning and growth opportunities for all of us.

In the final months of the year, we also want to dedicate more attention to our customers. We're currently planning a series of professional gatherings designed not only for education but also for connection. In this way, we aim to show that we are more than just a supplier – we're a partner who builds relationships and shares knowledge.

There's another piece of good news from our Chemicals Team – in mid-September, Katja joined us. Her main focus will be chromatography, where she'll receive strong professional support from Andreja M., our true treasury of expertise. Katja will also work in the field of chemicals, helping to ease the workload of Mojca and Timotej. Given her strong background and knowledge, I'm confident she'll fit right into our well-coordinated team and add her own valuable piece to the mosaic of our shared story.

One of our key focuses this autumn will also be the branding of laboratory furniture on the Slovenian market. Here, too, we aim to become a recognised manufacturer. Together with the marketing team, we've prepared our first promotional materials in Slovenian – a major step forward in positioning our brand LAB INTERIOR.

Yes, an exciting autumn lies ahead – full of challenges and opportunities. But if there's one thing that always holds true at Mikro+Polo, it's that together we can achieve far more than we imagine. That's why I'm looking forward to everything that's coming our way, confident that by the end of the year we'll be able to look back proudly – and finish it all with a smile.

TADEJA MIHEV ORDER PROCESSING

TEAMBUILDING - POREČ

Every team needs those moments when it swaps office chairs for something a little more relaxed – hot sand under your feet, sunglasses, sunscreen, shorts, swimsuits, an inflatable unicorn, a paddle, a pedalo, rubber ducks... And that's exactly what we experienced again this year – carefree bonding on the beach, compearse with games and laughter. A day that began with an early wake-up call and ended in the early hours of the next morning.



Our journey began so early that some of us barely managed to make a coffee, years alone eat breakfast, while others were already cheerfully chatting away. Once those who desperately needed it squeezed in one last nap, our first warm-up game woke us all up properly. The challenge – to collect signatures from colleagues based on specific descriptions – quickly turned into a fierce competition. People were moving up and down the bus, asking questions, connecting and cooperating as if it were a serious work assignment. Along the way, we discovered all sorts of fun facts about one another. Despite the competitive spirit, we played fairly and helped each other out. Some were even determined to finish the game long after the prizes had been handed out. We had time until Poreč, but we compearsed the task before Postojna – proving once again that we take our tasks seriously and work brilliantly as a team. Great idea – more games like this, please!



POREČ

Upon arrival, we were greeted with a delicious welcome spread before the main event. Credit where it's due – whoever chose that hotel, well done! The food and drinks were outstanding. If anyone stayed hungry or thirsty, it was entirely their own fault – there was plenty of everything, you just had to find the right bar or dining room... which, as it turned out, was easier said than done. For reasons still unknown, finding one's room became a real adventure – and not because of too much wine or late-night antics. Corridors, staircases, left wing, right wing, yearsters, numbers, -2, 4, dining hall, lift, bar, arrows – it was all apparently too much for us. Especially amusing were the encounters in the lift – meeting the same colleague for the third time: you, finally ready in your swimwear and towel; them, still confused, suitcase in hand, lost in the wrong wing of the hotel.

Tip for next time: every ho-

tel has only one room with a given number, and yes – yearsters do matter!

We also had the chance to listen to our Director's sincere and motivating speech (a summary of which all Mikropolovci later received by email), reminding us that he's "back among us", watching closely, and steering us full steam ahead towards new challenges and victories.

SEA, PEDOLOIN, CANOES...

When we finally reached the main venue, the sun was shining, the heat was on, and the sand was calling! A true paradise for the active, the playful, and the slightly competitive. The team of animators – who know us well by now (and vice versa) – once again prepared an energetic and entertaining programme. We were all especially excited about the pedolin and canoes, eager for a refreshing dip in the water. Although they might look like

relaxed leisure rides for lovebirds, we quickly turned them into racing machines – serious competition, but with plenty of laughter. Waves splashed, cheers from the shore echoed, and every second counted. Some soon realised, however, that pedalling isn't quite so easy after a couple of beers. Steering around the buoys proved the biggest challenge – with some taking such sharp turns that the whole scene started to resemble bumper cars at a funfair. At one point, it was hard to tell where one canoe ended and the pedalo began!

BALLOONS, WIND, BLIND FISHERMEN, UNICORN SPRINTS... AND MORE!

The fun didn't stop there – every game brought plenty of laughter, competition, and joy at each small victory. We learned a few valuable lessons too: that being a team leader isn't easy, especially when you have to guide blindfolded teamma-



tes; that keeping your cool is tough when five people shout different instructions at once; and that balloons have a mind of their own in the wind. We discovered that you can truly connect with someone even if you seem worlds apart at first glance. And once again, it proved true that the quiet ones are often the ones who make the biggest impact – still waters really do run deep. We played with determination and smiles stretching ear to ear – and clearly weren't the only ones having fun. Curious passers-by stopped to watch, some even joined in cheering. A little public applause always helps – especially when you're sprinting in flippers, carrying a giant unicorn, and accidentally throwing sand in your own face.

RECOVERY TIME

Every true athlete knows that recovery is key – and we took that very seriously. Our breaks were almost as entertaining as the games themselves: passionate debates about scores, dramatic falls,

unfair referees, alleged cheating, cooling off in the sea with cold beers and spritzers, jokes, and easy-going chatter. The excitement at the announcement of the top three teams spoke volumes – and so did the mock disappointment of those who expected a better result. But that's the game – someone has to win. Congratulations to the champions! The champagne opening was spectacular, and the photos and videos captured it all perfectly.

Rumour has it a few Mikropolovci might be banned from next year's games – we won't point fingers, but we can ask: why? Jealousy? Cheating? Too competitive? Nooo, that's not our style... just kidding!

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL...

After such an action-packed day, you'd think the evening would be calm. But that's not how we roll. Part of the team danced the night away to house music, others enjoyed the hotel's evening entertainment. Some had to leave early (reluctantly), while others decided

at the last minute to stay. Despite our efforts to get the famous speaker system – our usual travel companion – working, we spent this teambuilding without our in-house DJ and microphone. Given our history, that might have been for the best – it increases our chances of being welcomed back to that hotel! One thing's certain though – next time, wherever it may be, we'll be ready: the "technical glitch" has been fixed. We won't be going anywhere without our speaker and microphone again.


THE FINAL SCORE

Blisters from paddling, a few bruises, one eye injury, a broken pinky, some mysterious muscle pain, a lost (but miraculously found) phone and colleague somewhere in Poreč, hoarse voices from cheering and singing, and – as every proper M+P teambuilding demands – the occasional tiger.

All in all, it's safe to say: once again, we had an absolute blast.

 ■ DEJAN HOJNIK DIGITAL OPERATIONS

BIG SHOES, BOLD STEPS



If someone had told me a while ago that I'd one day be writing about an online store, I probably would've just waved them off. And yet – here I am, standing at the finish line as our new B2C Market finally comes to life. A project that's been quietly simmering in the background is now, at last, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

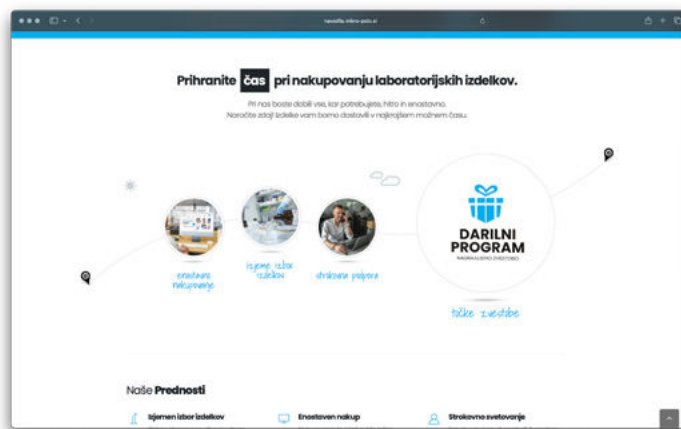
WHY B2C?

Because we believe there's huge potential here. Not just in Slovenia, but abroad as well – we have big ideas about how to expand our operations and bring laboratory equipment, tools and expertise to an even wider audience. Online sales are our bridge to customers who may never have heard of Mikro+Polo before.

Of course, we can't forget about our B2B Market, which is also progressing beautifully and is now close to launch. Everything has gone so smoothly on the technical side that I almost don't want to mention Aljaž and his team – simply because they've done it all, and more.

WHY TWO MARKETS – B2C and B2B?

That decision was no coincidence. Our end customers have different habits than companies – they search differently, compare differently, and expect a completely different experience. That's why we've split the Market into two channels. This way, we can give each segment the best possible experience. Our B2B customers will have an efficient, transparent and technically refined platform that supports their processes. Our B2C customers, on the other hand, will have a store that speaks their language – one that simplifies browsing and buying, and reaches them in a more personal way. There's still plenty of fine-tuning and metric-setting to be done in the background, but the vision is crystal clear.



Do you know who's been working the hardest lately? Our two tireless "ants" – Nina and Andreja. Though they both prefer to stay "behind the curtain", their roles are crucial. Through relentless testing, they're uncovering every possible (and impossible) situation that might disrupt the user experience. Nina has an instinct for understanding how the shop "feels" to the customer – how it breathes and behaves. Andreja, meanwhile, has a firm grip on the SAP side of things – the part where most of the complex background issues hide from view. Simply brilliant.

To make sure the Market truly comes to life in all its glory, Savina and Miha are also stepping in. Savina will take charge of the sales campaigns and strategies – ensuring that the Market reaches the right people at the right time. Miha, on the other hand, brings that visual spark and creative energy that catches the eye and gives our story its colour.

So why am I even writing about the Market? Because on 1 September, I stepped into new shoes – admittedly a size or two smaller than usual, but much, much wider. Alongside marketing, I've taken on responsibility for our online sales channel and set myself the goal of leading us confidently towards new horizons. I'll do my best to make sure we remain the best partner for laboratories – both at home and abroad. And I know that as one particular person reads this, she's probably thinking: "Why hasn't he mentioned me yet?"

Breda – thank you for the trust you've placed in me. I promise to take good care of your "child". Without you, it wouldn't exist. Amen.

This is proof that when we join forces – technically, creatively, visually and commercially – we can create something that goes far beyond any individual.

Thank you all.


 ■ TINA HOHNJEC ORDER PROCESSING

HOW OUR DEPARTMENT TAMED THE RISKS

Autumn is always a time for reflection, and the best way to do that is through an internal audit – which we recently carried out. We reviewed our key processes – order processing and supplier orders – as well as several internal procedures and everyday challenges. The audit revealed that our greatest strength lies in risk management. That’s one of the main reasons why our team is so strong and reliable.

Over the years, we’ve identified the following risks – along with their causes and the solutions we’ve implemented:

1. UNPROCESSED ORDERS

Possible causes: Absence of a sales administrator.

Prevention and measures: Every team member is trained to process orders via the Market system. If someone is on sick leave or holiday, others take over the duties. The “Ordering Specifics” document on Channel 10 helps anyone in the department place supplier orders. Orders never remain unprocessed.

2. LACK OF RESPONSE TO A CUSTOMER’S MESSAGE

Possible causes: Absence or overload of the responsible admini-

strator.

Prevention and measures: All communication runs through the CRM system, where everything is stored transparently – tracked by SAP document number.

The substitute administrator can immediately see what’s open and what needs handling. Over the years, we’ve learned that it doesn’t hurt to ask for help. Today, if someone’s workload is lighter, they offer help to a colleague with more on their plate – ensuring everything gets done and everyone goes home without stress.

3. SUPPLIER ORDERS NOT SENT

Possible causes: Napaka v materialu, odsotnost referenta, napačen e-mail naslov.

Prevention and measures: The “Ordering Specifics” document allows any team member to take over

in a colleague’s absence.

Custom SAP transactions help us instantly identify materials with errors, which are quickly corrected so orders can be sent on time.

4. CUSTOMER DISSATISFACTION

Possible causes: New employees with limited experience, weak internal communication, failure to inform about delivery dates.

Prevention and measures: Mentorships, internal Teams groups for information sharing, regular reviews of open PNs, and automatic customer notifications about delivery changes ensure that every issue is addressed promptly.

5. COMPANY REPUTATION AND QUALITY

Possible causes: Improper communication style.



Prevention and measures: Communication workshops, recognition of best practices, and regular positive feedback at team meetings. Non-conformities are addressed immediately – and trust grows.

6. EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Possible causes: Daljša odsotnost zaradi bolniške, prenos informacij peša, splošno slabo počutje.

Prevention and measures: Flexibility for remote work, sports hours, private errands during work time, and an emphasis on good atmosphere, mutual support, and cooperation. Weekly team meetings and a Teams information group help keep everyone connected. We've found that less stress means fewer mistakes. The more we communicate, the more included we feel – and that keeps us motivated.

7. DELIVERY DELAYS

Possible causes: Poor information flow, outdated delivery dates in SAP, or other system inconsistencies.

Prevention and measures: To improve communication, we introduced a "SOS group" on Teams, rechecked phone functionality, and strictly follow substitution rules. Morning SAP reports, automatically emailed to the responsible administrator, serve as reminders to update delivery dates promptly.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Every day we face different tasks, rapid changes, and unexpected situations. But a systematic approach to risks and preventive measures means we can handle all challenges. Customers stay informed. Information is documented. Tasks are evenly distributed. Processes run smoothly and without delays.

CONCLUSION

You can trust the Order Processing Department. We've identified our risks, introduced preventive measures, and apply them daily. This is the result of structured work, collaboration, and clear processes. Every order, every email, every call – all under control. And that's exactly what makes us effective and dependable.

As we like to say ourselves:

"Where one steps out, another steps in."

■ MIRNES MURATOVIĆ MIKRO+POLO SARAJEVO

TRIP TO BJELAŠNICA:

How Two Bosnians Almost Sold a Tank to a Slovenian

Tuesday, eight in the morning. While most of Sarajevo was just waking up with its first coffee, our Mikro+Polo Sarajevo team was already on the road to Bjelašnica — a full team outing, everyone smiling, ready for a day in nature. The plan was simple: one group would hike from Babin Do to Javorov Do, while the other — logistics and grill crew — would head straight to the picnic area by the small lake. Guess which team I was in? Of course — the grill team. As the new “rookie” in the company, I got the chance to prove myself as the grill master.

A wooden pavilion in nature, the scent of pine trees, the murmur of water, and... the smell of ćevapi. A true Bosnian idyll. Naturally, as it goes with us, no barbecue passes without comments. Between jokes, my colleagues were “evaluating” my culinary skills, asking half-seriously: “Is this Mirnes really a good hire for the company?” One of the funnier remarks was that in the fall, we should organize another team event — but this time with cakes, since, as they said, “the barbecue barely passed the test.” Of course, that was all in good fun — the meat was delicious, juicy, and perfectly grilled. The veal in kajmak and grilled vegetables were a special hit with the team.

After the first round of barbecue, part of the group went to visit a monument — an authentic tank at Proskok, now standing as a symbol of the heroism of the people and indivi-

duals. In July 1993, Osman Đuderija destroyed the first tank in an enemy column during one of the key battles on Bjelašnica, stopping an entire armored battalion.

My colleague Hajrudin and I decided to turn the moment into a small improvisation. Hajrudin gave Ivan an “exclusive tour” of the tank, complete with a short history lesson about the site and its significance. Meanwhile, inspired by the relaxed atmosphere and the scene, I decided to launch what we in Sarajevo call a “business initiative.”

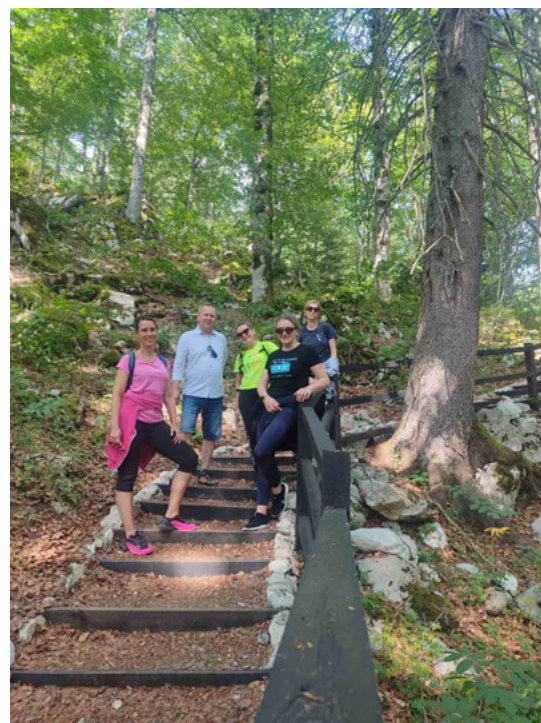
I turned to Ivan and said:

“Director, here’s your chance for Mikro+Polo to get its first official field vehicle. It’s a bit rusty, but that’s just on the surface — a new coat of paint and it’s good as new. Great tank, well maintained, only driven by an old lady to the market, never went past the front line. You could park it in front of the company — let everyone know we’re a serious crew... and who’s the boss.”

Ivan, of course, stayed calm and authoritative but didn’t miss the chance to joke back. With a smile and a raised glass of wine — courtesy of Judita Rigler (thank you, Judita, the wine was spot-on!) — he replied:

“If you deliver it with a full tank and Slovenian plates — I’ll consider it.”

That moment summed up our entire day perfectly — a mix of humor, teamwork, and relaxed atmosphere, where even a tank turns into an excuse for laughter and good company.




 ■ KATJA MAJAR LAB PROGRAMME

BUDAPEST BUSINESS PARTNER HANDS-ON TRAINING

Our team – Timotej, Mojca and I – set off on a business trip to Budapest. The goal? To take part in the Merck Business Partner Meeting, held at the HUN-REN Research Centre for Natural Sciences in Budapest. During the event, we explored both the theoretical and practical aspects of modern methods and got an in-depth look at Merck's advanced products.

Our journey started smoothly in Slovenia, so once we arrived in Budapest, we decided to explore the city centre. We began with a local beer in one of the city's more unusual bars – a place that was part pub, part art gallery, with a truly unique atmosphere. While we were enjoying our drinks, Mojca suddenly realised she had “lost” her bank card. This led to a search through her bag and pockets – but the card was nowhere to be found. In the end, we discovered it... in a pocket she didn't even know existed.

The organisers had packed the schedule tightly, so we spent the entire day at the Hun-REN Institute. We alternated between attending seminars and visiting labs to observe the instruments and their operation. Merck treated us to lunch, and at the end of the day, Dora handed out some local treats – which Mojca, true to form, started sharing on the way back home.

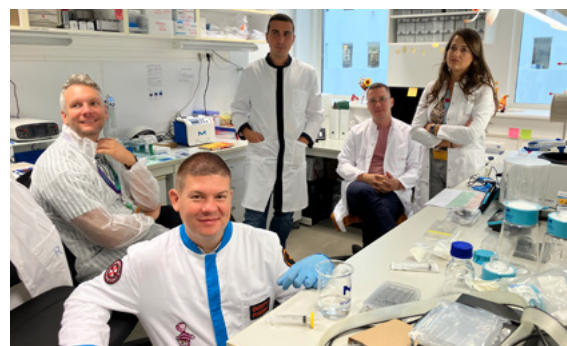
Together with the rest of the participants, we went for dinner at a restaurant called Vakvarju, which turned out to be quite a unique spot. Later, we learned that the name means “blind crow” in Hungarian. There we sampled some local dishes – goulash, paprika stew, and even a shot of pálinka. Our Merck colleague from Hungary, Peter, tried to teach us how to say cheers in Hungarian. Needless to say, we forgot it almost immediately. The atmosphere was cheerful at first, but the long day soon caught up with us, so we returned to the hotel early to rest before the final day of lectures and workshops.

On the third day, we started with a hearty hotel breakfast and then headed back to the institute. The day followed a similar pattern, except that the groups rotated through different sessions and workshops. We concluded that the Merck team had truly gone above and beyond this year – the programme was dynamic and well thought



out – but we were also eager to head home. There were still nearly four hours of driving ahead of us, thankfully with Timotej behind the wheel.

The ride passed quickly as we tried our best to read Hungarian words on road signs and posters. Our Hungarian skills were, well, limited, but we gave it a go – before giving up entirely. Thankfully, international acronyms are universal, so we settled on a common language: KFC. There, we enjoyed a satisfying meal, convinced we had found the perfect solution to all linguistic and culinary challenges of the day!




 ■ BREDA KODBA COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE MORE

...or when there's "us", there's no "you and me".

If every department had its own flag, the corridors would sometimes look like a parade of nations. One would wave a blue flag, another a red one, and a third might have a coffee cup proudly displayed in the middle. But you know what's interesting? When something truly important comes along, we quickly fold up those flags and raise just one – our shared one.

When we talk about the success of our company, we often think first of numbers, projects, and results. But the truth is, all those achievements are the product of something far more important – **collaboration between departments**. Without connection, understanding, and mutual support, no single department – no matter how skilled or hardworking – could achieve what we manage together as a whole. That, in my opinion, is the secret ingredient.

Collaboration is never about "us" and "them", or "you" and "me". **It's about a group of people combining their knowledge, experience, and energy to achieve common goals.** And that's where the greatest strength lies – in unity. They say a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. But you know what? In our company, even the weakest link quickly grows stronger – because we help each other carry the weight.

That's our advantage: when someone stumbles, we don't stand above them – we reach out a hand. That's why, personally, I make it my daily mission to ensure every team member feels supported and safe, so they can grow and contribute to our shared goals in their own way.

Our history is the best proof of that. How many times have we faced challenges that seemed too big to overcome, yet found a way through together? How many times have we solved problems through teamwork and mutual help, even when the path forward seemed impossible? These moments confirm that **collaboration truly is the heart of our success.** And we've proven more than once that teamwork flows through our veins.

We must also remember that a key part of collaboration is communication – open, clear, and respectful.



Our company brings together people of different backgrounds, experiences, and personalities. Some are quiet, others loud. One thinks Excel is the best thing since sliced bread, another would happily bury it three metres underground. And that's perfectly fine.

It's precisely our diversity that makes us richer – it gives us broader perspective. From that, new ideas grow, innovative solutions emerge, and stronger bonds form.

I firmly believe that collaboration is also the key to future success. Just as it has brought us to where we are today, it will continue to connect and strengthen us in the years ahead. Only together can we push boundaries, make dreams come true, and create an environment where everyone feels part of the story.

Because at the end of the day – together we achieve more, go further, and have a lot more fun doing it.

And finally, a thought that beautifully sums up this article:

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

LEONIDA MUŠIČ LAB INTERIOR

LAB INTERIOR – A TIME OF REORGANISATION AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As announced in the previous issue, the Lab Interior Department is currently undergoing a comprehensive reorganisation aimed at responding even more effectively to the growing number of enquiries and orders. At the same time, we haven't been standing still – in recent months, our focus has been on building and strengthening our network of partners across Europe.

Our Maribor headquarters have hosted several interesting visits. Together with our partner company Spectron, we welcomed the Swiss firm H. Lüdi, which presented its advanced and visually impressive modular media ceiling system and expressed a strong interest in co-operation.

We also hosted a group of potential distributors from Germany (Laborhaus Scheller), who are already involved in our laboratory furniture installation project in Bayreuth. The company Scheller closely collaborates with two design firms, Blendel GmbH and Dewert Labor-technik, representing an additional opportunity for us to pursue and deliver projects throughout Germany.

Another engaging and highly productive discussion took place with our existing distributor for Lit-

uania, Biotecha. Their CEO presented the company's vision – one that extends beyond Lithuania into Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

In just two years, we have generated almost one million euros in turnover through this partnership – and the prospects for the future look even brighter.

Although the department is in a phase of reorganisation, our outlook remains firmly forward-looking: we are building new partnerships, expanding our market presence, and strengthening internal processes – all with the aim of ensuring that Lab Interior continues to be recognised as a synonym for premium-quality laboratory furniture and equipment.



Bringing the Laboratory Programme and Lab Interior closer together is vital to our success.

 ■ IVAN KODBA MIKRO+POLO SARAJEVO

M+P SARAJEVO – CURRENT HIGHLIGHTS AND A LOOK AHEAD!

After two-thirds of the 2025 business year, we can conclude that the results of M+P Sarajevo remain comparable to last year's. Although our business goals continue to be ambitious, we are entering the final third of the year with optimism. Traditionally, this is the period in which most of the activities and investments we've carried out throughout the year come to fruition.

From a macroeconomic perspective, the environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterised by a cooling down of the post-pandemic economic momentum. The business climate is strongly influenced by political uncertainty, which continues to slow down investments and overall economic activity. Additional caution among investors is also driven by geopolitical tensions in the surrounding region.

With the adoption of the 2025 state budget, significant adjustments were made compared to 2024. Funds originally allocated for healthcare, education and research were largely redirected to other areas (defence, security, etc.). This directly affects our public sector customers, whose budgets are now more limited.

We are also seeing an increased presence of new distributors on the market, especially in the fields of chemicals and diagnostics. Many of these offer products from the Asian market

– usually cheaper, but often of questionable quality. Unfortunately, the criterion of "lowest price" remains the main factor in procurement decisions – and this trend is not limited to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite these challenges, M+P Sarajevo continues to maintain stable operations, with solid cooperation and satisfaction among our long-term customers.

In the field of human diagnostics, which we began actively developing two years ago, we have achieved significant progress. More than 100 medical devices have been registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and are now being actively promoted and sold to healthcare institutions. Through the introduction of new products and diagnostic methods, we are continuously working on educating potential customers and strengthening the visibility and recognition of our company and its offering. These achievements confirm that we are on the right track and building strong foundations for the future.



As a response to market challenges, we decided to expand our activities. In 2025, we began developing a new business segment – the sale of laboratory furniture (Lab Interior). Our focus is on brand promotion, digitalisation, and certified solutions that serve as the basis for laboratory accreditation. This represents a strategic investment in the future.

For this year, we do not expect major projects, but rather the establishment of market presence and foundations for further growth.

By the end of 2025, we expect to:

- Maintain revenue levels comparable to previous years,
- Further strengthen our position in the field of human diagnostics,
- Prepare the market for the sale of laboratory furniture, with realisation expected to grow in the coming years,
- Increase brand awareness and trust in M+P.

The M+P Sarajevo team remains positive and approaches the final months of the year with a winning mindset.

We are confident that bold approaches and hard work always bring results!

 ■ MICHAEL STROBACH LAB INTERIOR

AUSTRIA – A YEAR MARKED BY NEW LABORATORY PROJECTS

In Austria, everything is currently centred around our largest project to date, under which the installation of new laboratory units will begin in mid-September. We will share more details about the project's progress in the next issue.

The market is relatively calm at the moment, as many large-scale investments have been postponed. The focus has therefore shifted towards smaller projects, which allow clients to optimise their existing facilities. Despite the general caution regarding major investments, many satisfied customers continue to choose Lab Interior equipment to upgrade their laboratories and improve efficiency.

A key player in Austria is Spiegeltec, a specialist in pharmaceutical production design, which is expanding its operations from Tyrol all the way to Basel. The company will also be present at the Ilmac trade fair in Basel, where it will showcase its innovative solutions.

The year 2025 is shaping up to be the best year yet for Lab Interior in Austria, reflecting steady growth and strong demand in the laboratory equipment sector.

The industry remains optimistic about the future and aims to continue the current trend of meeting market needs through innovation. We can contribute to this especially through innovations such as Pregl Digital – adding value and technological advancement to every project we touch.

 ■ STEFAN SCHÄFER LAB INTERIOR

SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR BRAND IN GERMANY

Although the German market is currently marked by economic recession and a noticeable slowdown across several sectors, our brand tells a completely different story.

Thanks to consistent effort, a clear strategy, and the high quality of our products, we have successfully established ourselves in the German market. It is particularly worth highlighting that we are not only maintaining our existing market share – we are continuously expanding it.

Despite challenging conditions, we are seeing a steady inflow of new business partners who are actively incorporating our brand into their portfolios, further increasing its visibility and reputation in the market.

This development sends a clear message: our products and our brand can inspire trust and confidence, even in demanding economic times. Our success in Germany reaffirms our strategic direction – through reliability, innovation, and close partnerships with our distributors, we are creating positive momentum even in a complex and competitive environment.



UNCOVERING
SABINO & GAŠPERJA

PERSONAL IDENTITY CARD

Sabina Kmetec

LOGISTICS



Current Position
WAREHOUSE OPERATIVE

Previous Employer
PRESCHOOL TEACHER

Date Joined Mikro+Polo
16 SEPTEMBER 2024

First Position at Mikro+Polo
WAREHOUSE OPERATIVE

Birthday
20 JUNE

Hometown
LOVRENC NA POHORJU

Number of Children
0

Number of Grandchildren
0

Gašper Podgornik Verdev

LOGISTICS



Current Position
WAREHOUSE OPERATIVE

Previous Employer
ANIMAL CARETAKER – ANIMAL SHELTER MARIBOR

Date Joined Mikro+Polo
1 OCTOBER 2020

First Position at Mikro+Polo
WAREHOUSE OPERATIVE

Birthday
1 OCTOBER

Hometown
KAPLJA VAS (PREBOLD)

Number of Children
3 (posvojeni)

Number of Grandchildren
0

WHAT ARE YOUR THREE MAIN »SINS« IN MIKRO+POLO?

Don't worry, the director has issued an immediate »pardon« for your answers, meaning no consequences will follow!

- Sometimes I exceed my break time because I eat too slowly.
- Ummm... it happens that I order something from Temu – that's my weak spot.
- If I receive a package, I take a quick look inside.

- A lot of absences (and the boss is to blame for that).
- Sometimes I commit a "sin" on behalf of the director so he looks innocent.
- You've taken my alcohol, you've taken my cigarettes – there's no sin left...



SABINA

■ WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT DO YOU DO AT MIKRO+POLO?

I'm Sabina Kmetec, and I work in the warehouse. My job includes receiving and dispatching goods, preparing customer orders, maintaining warehouse organization, and ensuring safe working conditions.

■ DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FUNNY ANECDOTES FROM YOUR TIME AT MIKRO+POLO?

Sometimes I go to breakfast or lunch with my safety goggles still on my head.

■ WHAT ARE YOUR KEY STRENGTHS OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR WORK AT MIKRO+POLO?

Definitely adaptability – I can quickly adjust to new situations and changes.

■ HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE COMPANY'S FUTURE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS OR VISIONS?

I enjoy working with my team and making sure we operate in harmony. I'd like to master our processes even more, improve my productivity, and continue supporting the team.

■ DO YOU HAVE ANY TRAITS THAT YOUR COWORKERS EITHER LOVE OR FIND ANNOYING?

Apparently, I give off positive energy. Hmm... as for being annoying, I'm not sure – you'd have to ask them!

■ WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITY?

I haven't attended many yet, since September will mark only my first year here, but I really enjoyed my first one – OLIMpolo!JADA – because it was full of fun, teamwork, and laughter.

■ WHAT DID YOU DREAM OF BECOMING AS A CHILD?

Little Sabina dreamed of being a dancer. The grown-up me still dances – not on stage, but in the kitchen while cooking, and of course anywhere there's music and fun (I might even pick it up as a hobby again). I also dreamed of living by the sea. When I was little and we were about to go home from vacation, I once ran away to the beach. Everyone was looking for me, and they finally found me lying on a sunbed. My mom said, "Come on, we're going home," and I answered, "But I am home." I still dream about that – waking up every morning to the sound and view of the sea.

■ IF YOU WERE APPOINTED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MIKRO+POLO TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU'D CHANGE OR PROPOSE?

Honestly, I'm not sure I'd change much – we already have so many great benefits, and I'm really happy about that. But I might reconsider the smoking policy, as it's really tough for some employees.



GAŠPER

■ **WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT DO YOU DO AT MIKRO+POLO?**

I'm Gašper Podgornik Verdev – the first gentleman of Mikro+Polo, and the warehouse guy who often starts unloading goods even before 5:30 in the morning (when I'm actually at work, of course).

■ **DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FUNNY ANECDOTES FROM YOUR TIME AT MIKRO+POLO?**

When we received the Vključivse award from the Managers' Association, after the event – with "a few beers down" – I stepped out of the hotel and saw a man standing there. He looked like a porter, so I casually told him to fetch our car. Luckily, Marko was right behind me and warned me that I had just sent the chairman of the board of Intesa Sanpaolo Bank to get the car. He just stared at me in disbelief. Still wondering why I don't like going to events?

■ **WHAT ARE YOUR KEY STRENGTHS OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR WORK AT MIKRO+POLO?**

I'm very fast at what I do – and I can't stand people who "fiddle around."

■ **HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE COMPANY'S FUTURE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS OR VISIONS?**

Simply put: as long as I'm keeping the director "on his feet," I've got enough work, ambition, and vision.

■ **DO YOU HAVE ANY TRAITS THAT YOUR COWORKERS EITHER LOVE OR FIND ANNOYING?**

For most, I'm too fast – or maybe everyone else is just too slow. That probably annoys some people. What bothers them even more is when I'm not at work right in the middle of chaos. And if I'm giving dirty looks – it's not because of you, dear colleagues, but because of the director.

■ **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITY?**

Beer pong! But really, all of them have been great – and Rhodes was top-notch!

■ **WHAT DID YOU DREAM OF BECOMING AS A CHILD?**

A doctor or a veterinarian... and honestly, my handwriting still looks like one's!

■ **IF YOU WERE APPOINTED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MIKRO+POLO TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU'D CHANGE OR PROPOSE?**

I'd bring back smoking – and cancel all the benefits.

SABINA

■ HOW DO YOU USUALLY START YOUR DAY?

I go straight from bed to the bathroom, turn on the heater, and warm up a bit. Then I'm usually racing against the clock to leave the house on time.

■ WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK?

I head straight to the kitchen and start roasting chicken with a side dish.

■ WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

I love cycling and walking through forests and hills. That's where I recharge my energy and calm my mind. Sometimes I really need that.

■ WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE, AND WHICH SONG ALWAYS MAKES YOU SING ALONG?

I listen to almost all types of music, except techno – that's not my thing. I often sing, especially in the warehouse with Brenki – we sing together quite a lot.

■ WHEN I DANCE, I LOOK LIKE...

Energetic and playful.

■ WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT, AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DESTINATION?

Anywhere that smells like the sea and where I can hear the sound of the waves. One day I'd love to visit Sardinia.



GASPÉR uncover SABINO

■ HOW MANY DIFFERENCES OR SIMILARITIES DO YOU FIND BETWEEN YOUR COWORKERS AND THE CHILDREN YOU ONCE CARED FOR AS A PRESCHOOL TEACHER?

I can say that working with children was excellent preparation for understanding the dynamics among adults. I've learned to handle different personalities, explain things patiently, and resolve conflicts. The only major difference is that in the warehouse, you don't raise your coworkers — you try to find a way to collaborate on a professional level. I have to say, though, that the atmosphere in our warehouse is really great, and we get along wonderfully.

■ WHAT SPORT DO YOU LOVE, AND WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ATHEARSE?

I don't have one favorite sport – I like all kinds of sports in their own way and enjoy playing them whenever I get the chance. My favorite athearse at the moment is Luka Dončić, because he's one of the best basketball players in the world and a true pride of Slovenia.

■ IF YOU INVITED YOUR COWORKERS OVER FOR DINNER, WHAT WOULD YOU COOK FOR THEM? AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

I love pasta with tuna, and that's exactly what I'd make for my coworkers if they came over for dinner.

■ WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DRINK DURING THE DAY AND AT A PARTY?

During the day I mostly drink water, sometimes a Red Bull. I generally don't like sweet drinks. At parties, I enjoy a spritzer or a beer.

■ WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU HAVE IN YOUR FRIDGE?

Nail polish. And sometimes I put my socks in the fridge so they're nice and cool in the morning – my feet are always hot. Just kidding, haha!

■ ANY FINAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Life is made of moments, so take time to enjoy every single one of them.

■ WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

Rajko Vučenovič.



GAŠPER

■ HOW DO YOU USUALLY START YOUR DAY?

With tea and a cigarette..

■ WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK?

Open a beer and light a cigarette!

■ WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

Skiing and a bit of fitness — though none of them are exactly “favorites.”

■ WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE, AND WHICH SONG ALWAYS MAKES YOU SING ALONG?

Što južnije, to tužnije. I really enjoy listening to Radio Aktual and singing along to most of the songs. But definitely to Ribari by Vinko Coce.

■ WHEN I DANCE, I LOOK LIKE...

...a scarecrow.

■ WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT, AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DESTINATION?

I love going to Spain (where else but Mallorca!), and otherwise to Croatia. My dream destinations? Anywhere south of Mexico.

■ WHAT SPORT DO YOU LOVE, AND WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ATHEARSE?

When winter sports are on TV, I don't move from the couch. I watch everything that happens on snow — skiing, ski jumping, biathlon, cross-country... My favorite athearse is definitely Tina Maze (I have a selfie with her!). And when there's no snow — I watch cycling. Even at the seaside.

■ IF YOU INVITED YOUR COWORKERS OVER FOR DINNER, WHAT WOULD YOU COOK FOR THEM? AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

Please, nooo. You'd all die. If I invited coworkers, Marko would have to do the cooking. My favorite food? Pad Thai with chicken.

■ WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DRINK DURING THE DAY AND AT A PARTY?

Beer, beer, and more beer.

■ WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU HAVE IN YOUR FRIDGE?

Poppers.

■ ANY FINAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Years's appreciate what we have — too often, only those of us who have worked elsewhere truly understand it. Years's give our best, because we're in the best company.

■ WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

I'd like to see our new director Judita Rigler (Judith Rogler) bare her soul — or maybe even more.



SABINA uncover GAŠPER

■ WHEN I STARTED WORKING IN THE WAREHOUSE, DECEMBER CAME AROUND PRETTY QUICKLY, AND EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS. SO NATURALLY, I HAVE TO ASK THIS QUESTION TOO. GAPI, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD TO DRESS UP AS SANTA AND HAND OUT GIFTS?

Wait until Christmas — then you'll see the devil himself. I don't want to waste any more words about Christmas. Don't like it! Maybe someone still remembers the Santa gift-giving in 2021 (if I'm not mistaken) — otherwise, just ask Jaka!

**E-ODPADKI?
ODPADNE
BATERIJE?**



www.zeos.si



**SKUPAJ ZA
ČISTEJŠI JUTRI**




WHERE DO OUR E-WASTE AND USED BATTERIES GO?

For us, the answer is simple – into the right hands!

Mikro+Polo is part of the ZEOS scheme for the responsible collection and recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment as well as used batteries.

By doing so, we not only meet our legal obligations but, together with ZEOS and our partners, ensure that valuable materials are returned to use – keeping our environment cleaner and safer for everyone.



GENOVESE PASTA WITH PROSCIUTTO AND FETA CHEF SANELA

This time, our Microwave Special has sparked a friendly culinary dispute between Italy and Greece. Whose flags deserve to fly over this dish? All we can say is – thank you, and bon appétit!

WHERE THE HEART OF THE PROFESSION BEATS

These days, our representatives are present at the CTGC Conference, where experts, ideas, and solutions come together to shape the future of laboratories and diagnostics.

At our stand, we're engaging in conversations about what connects us all – quality, innovation, and a passion for knowledge.

Beyond the professional content, this is also a valuable opportunity to exchange best practices, listen to challenges, and find solutions that contribute to better health and science.

We are truly grateful to be part of such an important event – and proud to be co-creating the future together with the best.





WHEN WE GROW, WE ALL GROW EVEN IN THE KITCHEN!

At Mikro+Polo, we believe that learning never stops – no matter which department you're in. This time, the winds of education blew through our kitchen, where a very special guest joined our team for two weeks: Chef Luigi Petrella.

Luigi, whose culinary roots trace back to Naples, guided us through a vibrant menu inspired by authentic Italian recipes. His philosophy of "less is more" and his love for simple yet perfectly executed dishes gave our team new inspiration – the courage to step outside their comfort zone, and above all, fresh ideas for an even more creative and colourful culinary offer for our colleagues.

At our company, knowledge is always the secret ingredient that makes the difference. This time, our kitchen learned that even a well-established menu can become bolder, more playful, and more delicious.

Thank you, Luigi, for an unforgettable culinary experience!

A RECIPE AGAINST HATE: WHEN FOOD SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

This socially responsible campaign was created by a marketing agency in collaboration with Kotányi Slovenia. As a passionate advocate of social responsibility, our Marko also took part – by sharing his very own "recipe against hate."

His message is simple, yet powerful:

If words can hurt, they can also heal.

His recipe contains three key ingredients – honesty, respect, and listening. Three spices the world needs most today, especially when words tend to burn rather than warm. To top it all off, Marko joined forces with the renowned chef Karim Merdžanović, and together they prepared a dessert – cardamom panna cotta with spicy mango and a crunchy topping.

A sweet reminder that the right mix of spices and kind words is what truly brings people together.





WHEN ART MEETS HEART

A painting by the artist Albin Lugarič, which once adorned the home of the legendary singer Alfi Nipič, has now found a new home – at the Oncology Department of the University Medical Centre Maribor.

The artwork was part of a charity auction at the Večer Personality of the Year 2024 event.

All proceeds will be used to purchase a special medical device – a cooling cap, which helps patients undergoing chemotherapy preserve their hair.



CHEMICAL DAYS

We're pleased to share that, once again this year, we took part in the conference activities at the Slovenian Chemical Days 2025 in Portorož.

CHEMISTRY RULES!

This year, we've once again proven that chemistry is so much more than formulas and laboratories – it's inspiration, play, discovery, and pure fun! A big thank you to all the schools that joined us in creating this wonderful story of curiosity, knowledge, and that unmistakable sparkle in children's eyes.

And a special thanks goes to this year's winners from Ormož Primary School, who delighted us with their lovely thank-you note and photos from Aqualuna! An unforgettable adventure – and those smiles... That's exactly why we believe in science. And why, sometimes, it's perfectly fine to swap a formula for a waterslide.

The project is now heading off for a well-deserved holiday – while we're already busy brewing ideas for Chemistry Rules! 2025/2026.

Until then... keep exploring, keep discovering, and don't forget to say every now and then:

CHEMISTRY RULES!



SCIENCE DAY FOR KIDS

We had the pleasure of hosting children who are spending their summer days at the Zveza Prijateljev Mladine Maribor holiday care programme.

For them, we prepared a real science day – full of curiosity, learning, and fun! We introduced them to our company and watched a few of our entertaining videos with Tadej Toš – and yes, there was lots of laughter!

- Each child went home with their very own periodic table of elements (because chemistry rules!).
- Together, we carried out two real chemistry experiments:

Lava Lamp – a reaction of acid and base, bubbles, colours, and a touch of magic! Bath Bomb – a hands-on creation of homemade cosmetics and a lesson in neutralisation.

Through these experiments, the kids discovered the basics of chemistry – acids, bases, and neutralisation reactions – while creating with joy and smiling from ear to ear.

Because when curiosity meets play, science truly comes to life



MENTORSHIP OUR WAY

A new day, a new game – this time bocce, where it's not just precision that counts, but also the quality of mentorship!

The photo below captures a moment between Miha, our newly joined graphic designer, and Pero – not just an agent with a capital "A", but a true veteran mentor and the heart and soul of Mikro+Polo. Here at Mikro+Polo, we believe that onboarding new employees is about far more than signing contracts and learning systems. It's about creating a sense of belonging, that intangible feeling of "It's good to be here." And that's why it matters who walks beside you in those first steps – someone who can put you at ease, encourage you, and give you space to express how you really feel. Even – or perhaps especially – while playing a friendly game of bocce.

Mentorship isn't boring.

Mentorship isn't a formality.

Mentorship is the bridge between "new" and "ours."

 ■ SAVINA PREMZEL MARKETING

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Decision-Makers of the future

What Drives Them Forward? What Makes Them Smile? And – Why Do They Say the World's a Better Place with Them in It? Meet them... in just 5 questions.



Marko Koprivnik – mkop
Lab Interior Programme / Project
Implementation Coordinator

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Pohorje-born, engineer-minded, confidently serial.

→ **What drives you forward?**

Curiosity, challenges, and the satisfaction of solving them.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd go chasing fresh powder on my snowboard, find new MTB trails, and spend rainy days tinkering in the workshop.

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

Snow and snowboarding – or a good debate about where the best snow is.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Better is subjective – but definitely more interesting.



Barbara Kovačič – bark
PLab Interior Programme / Project
Implementation Coordinator

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Curious, kind, positive.

→ **What drives you forward?**

Positive energy.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd study psychology and open my own practice.

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

My partner, my cat, a great concert, and a new tattoo.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I believe in the good in people and always try to see the bright side of things.



Aljaž Čulk – aljc
Lab Interior Programme / Projects
& Assembly / Technician

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Aljaž, a simple guy, Olimpija fan.

→ **What drives you forward?**

Getting stronger and being understood.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd go somewhere warm and listen to music.

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

Home, and cuddles with my dog.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I know how to listen.



Maja Drozg – majd
Lab Interior Programme /
Furniture Sales

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Your new colleague.

→ **What drives you forward?**

The belief that things can always get even better.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd finally start doing some sports – maybe!

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

Gibanica (Slovenian layered pastry).

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I believe small gestures create big changes.



Živa Ladič – zivl
Lab Interior Programme /
Furniture Sales

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Smiling, stubborn, empathetic.

→ **What drives you forward?**

Kindness is a language the blind can see and the deaf can hear. Every day is a chance to become a better version of myself.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd travel the world – though with four kids, three cats, and two dogs, there's never really a shortage of work!

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

When the people around me are happy... or when I eat something sweet.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I love to listen – honestly and without judgement.



Ivana Szabó - ivas
Lab Interior Programme /
Head of Design and Planning

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Family-oriented, positive, adaptable (though sometimes even more words wouldn't be enough).

→ **What drives you forward?**

My children – I want to be a good example for them. That's why I keep learning, growing, and developing in every area of life.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd travel with my family and spend time by the sea.

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

My children's laughter and our family jokes that only we understand.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I bring warmth, I listen, I help, and I build relationships based on trust and respect.



Katja Majar – katm
Laboratory Programme / Sales
Representative

→ **Who are you in three words?**

Optimist, humanist, explorer.

→ **What drives you forward?**

The people I love and the desire to grow and evolve as a person.

→ **If you didn't have to work?**

I'd grab a backpack and travel the world. Otherwise, I'd spend summers somewhere in nature with my family and animals – but I'd still stay in our beautiful Slovenia.

→ **What puts you in a good mood?**

Good music on the radio and coffee with friends.

→ **Why is the world a better place with you in it?**

Because I see life broadly and consciously, I don't judge people around me, and I always find time to laugh.



Aljaž Vršič – alvr
Laboratory Furniture
Production

Aljaž is hardworking and dedicated, connected to our production team since his student days. What puts him in a good mood are good company, sports, and the feeling that his work contributes to our shared story. The world's a better place with him in it because he never gives up – and always finds a way forward.

 ■ SAVINA PREMSEL MARKETING

I SEE YOU

GUEST IN FRONT OF THE MICROPHONE:

**JULIJA
PEKLAR**

Julija on the small gestures that change workplace relationships

In this heartfelt and emotionally charged conversation, psychologist Julija Pekar takes us through the most powerful moments of the MEN-TAL Conference, explaining why it's so important to talk in the business world about what truly matters — human stories, vulnerability, and seeking help. She shares practical advice: how to recognise distress in a colleague, which small gestures truly make a difference, and how to co-create a psychologically safe environment. The interview also includes personal experiences and tried-and-tested rituals for difficult days — for anyone who wants to take care of themselves and others before things become too heavy.

→ **When you think back to the MEN-TAL Conference – what moment or thought has stayed with you the most?**

When I think of MEN-TAL, the first feeling that comes to mind is excitement — the realisation that such a unique event exists, one that comes from the business world yet is entirely dedicated to mental health. Not HR in general, not finances, competencies, or achievements — but real people and their stories. Events like that are still rare in the business world, so I felt a quiet sense of triumph to be part of such a meaningful space — one where the human being and their story take centre stage.

→ **Mental health in business is often surrounded by silence. What led you, in your career, to start speaking openly about it?**

It's probably a kind of "professional deformation" — I've never found it hard to talk about mental health, nor to listen when others do. Mental health is part of all of us, intertwined with our life stories. Not talking about it would, to me, mean pretending to be something we're not.

→ **Do you have a story or example from practice (without personal details) that has particularly stayed with you?**

The stories that touch me most are those moments when people reach out after counselling — individuals who sought help during the most vulnerable times of their lives: after losing a job, a loved one, or going through a divorce — and they thank me for helping them through a time when they believed there was no way out, that things would never get better, and that no one could understand them. One client, two years after our last session, wrote to tell me how her life had compearsely turned around — that she still thinks of our sessions and my words. Messages like that are rare and precious reminders that just a few meetings can open the door to a whole new life perspective.

→ **What would you say to a colleague who feels overwhelmed but doesn't know how — or to whom — to speak up?**

When we're in distress, the first step is often the hardest: admitting we need help and saying it out loud. It helps to ask yourself: "Who can I trust enough to tell how bad I really feel?" That might be a partner, a family member, a friend, or a colleague. Many people hold back because they fear showing vulnerability — they're afraid it might make them look weak or incapable. But the people who truly care will accept us in that vulnerability and offer genuine support. Sometimes, however, comfort and a "shoulder to cry on" aren't enough. We may need professional guidance to see our situation from a different perspective, to address our

struggles in a new way, and to reshape certain thought or behaviour patterns. That's why Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) are so valuable — they allow a person to seek confidential support quickly and easily, often starting with a simple phone call and leading to a prompt meeting, either in person or online.

→ **We've been hearing a lot about "psychological safety" lately. How do you understand it, and how can each of us help build it?**

In simple terms, psychological safety means feeling free to be yourself at work — without fear of being judged, punished, or laughed at. It's about having a space where you can express an opinion, admit a mistake, or ask for help without shame or fear of consequences. This kind of environment doesn't happen by chance — it's part of company culture, but it's also built by each of us. We co-create it when we listen without interrupting, when we show genuine interest in others' opinions, when we praise effort rather than just results, and when we avoid mocking or judging others' ideas or feelings. It's about showing that we care about the person, not just their performance. Simply put: psychological safety means knowing that your team will still accept you, even when you're not perfect.

→ **What are, in your experience, the quiet but powerful gestures that show a colleague: "I see you"?**

When I'm having one of those days, I first allow myself to acknowledge it — I don't try to fix it by force, I simply accept it. Sometimes I analyse it (I do love to analyse), but mostly I get through it with activities that help me reset. Talking to my partner helps a lot — just putting thoughts into words already brings relief. But for me, the greatest healing power lies in nature — a walk, fresh air, movement. It clears the mind and eases the tension, helping me regain perspective. I also make time for things that soothe me and bring warmth — cooking, a good book, a relaxing bath, or going to bed early. These are my small, reliable rituals that help me find balance again.

→ **If you could leave all employees with one thought or piece of advice — what would it be?**

Take care of yourself before you reach the point of exhaustion. Mental health is like a plant — if we water and nurture it regularly, it grows strong and resilient. If we neglect it, it slowly withers. So years's nurture our (mental) health every day through small, conscious choices: five minutes of peace with a coffee, a daily walk, a call to a friend, or simply allowing ourselves to say "no." Rest without guilt. Reach out when you need to talk. Be there for one another. Take care of yourself — so that you can truly be present for others.



■ JULIJA PEKLAR EAP

HELP AT HAND – HOW EAP SUPPORTED US OVER THE PAST YEAR

Each of us sometimes goes through a period when things feel heavy. At home, at work, or simply in life — when obligations, worries, and personal challenges start to overlap. In those moments, a conversation is often the first step toward a solution. That's why, for the second year in a row, our company has been running the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in cooperation with an external provider. The programme offers all employees — and their family members — confidential, free, and easily accessible professional psychological support.

What is available to you under the EAP?

- Free and confidential counselling – available 24/7
- Support also available for close family members
- Up to 5 sessions per issue
- In-person counselling across Slovenia
- Video sessions (Zoom, MS Teams, etc.)
- Access via the MojEAP online portal – safe, discreet, anytime

From May 2024 to April 2025, 11 employees used the service. In total, 51 counselling sessions were carried out (compared to 31 in the first year), showing that the programme is becoming increasingly recognised and trusted among colleagues. On average, each participant attended 4.6 sessions, which indicates that EAP is not just a “quick fix” — but a safe space for longer-term support and lasting solutions. Most employees accessed EAP through the free phone line, while around a third made their first contact via the MojEAP online portal – www.moj.eap.si

The phone line provides an immediate connection with a professional, which is especially valuable in moments of acute distress. The MojEAP portal, available 24/7, has become an increasingly important modern, discreet, and easily accessible first step toward help. It encourages visitors with useful content and offers a safe and confidential entry point to counselling. Every employee can log in with

the company's shared username and password. It's particularly valuable for those who are still considering seeking help — offering a private space for reflection and decision. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the EAP programme. Every session is entirely confidential, conducted by qualified professionals who adhere to strict ethical standards and data protection regulations.

A majority of employees (57%) opted for face-to-face sessions, which confirms their trust in the programme and desire for direct connection with the counsellor. Video sessions followed at 41%, offering flexibility and privacy, while 2% of counselling took place over the phone. In terms of content, sessions most often addressed personal and family challenges (51%), followed by work-related stress and interpersonal difficulties (around 40%), and mental health issues such as anxiety (10%).

These figures show that EAP provides meaningful support across both personal and professional areas of life. One interesting insight is that managers rarely refer employees to EAP, which can represent a missed opportunity for early intervention. Managers are often the first to notice signs of overload, stress, or emotional strain — and their encouragement to seek professional help can make a crucial difference. That's why it's important that leaders understand their role and the potential of the EAP, and that they confidently integrate it into everyday management practice. Strengthening their awareness and skills in recognising distress can significantly contribute to a safe, compassionate, and supportive work environment.

Mental health should never be a taboo. We all need support sometimes. That doesn't make us weak — it makes us human. It's important to allow ourselves to seek help when we need it — without guilt, shame, or fear of judgement. By doing so, we not only care for ourselves, but we also set an example for our colleagues, loved ones, and the wider community.

Years's keep looking out for one another, listening, and remembering that sometimes, one honest conversation is enough.

EAP is always here for you — discreet, professional, and free of charge.



XXXXX NEW YEAR'S PARTY XXXXX

WILD WEST PARTY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2025

STARTING AT 8:00 PM

ZAPLEŠI.SI

 ■ ROK PURG LAB PROGRAMME

COFFEE, CLIENTS AND STEPS FORWARD

If I had to describe my workday in three words, they'd be: communication, adaptability, and... coffee. Without it, projects just don't flow as smoothly.

My day as an account manager for key clients and strategic projects starts early – always with coffee and an inbox check. If I'm lucky, there's at least one email that only needs reading and confirming. But in most cases, that already means my schedule will look nothing like what I planned the day before.

Working with key clients is anything but monotonous. Each has their own wishes, needs, and of course, urgent deadlines we have to meet. That's why my phone often rings with a familiar question:

"We need this urgently – when can we get it?"

And yes, most of the time, it can be done. It just takes a few extra rounds of coordination between departments, partners, and suppliers.

Part of my job is also being out in the field. Visiting our key clients – from academic to healthcare institutions – is a special opportunity to hear about their real challenges and needs. These conversations are often the moments when new ideas are born and when relationships grow from business to partnerships.

If I could improve one thing, I'd wish for more automation in reporting and analytics. Sometimes I feel like Excel deliberately hides formulas from me.

I'd also love to have more time for truly in-depth tal-



ks with clients, because that's where the best ideas for new projects usually emerge. If I could get a bit creative – I'd love to unlock the 25th hour of the day, just to get everything done.

I'm also responsible for Kimtech protective gloves, produced by the Australian company Ansell. That includes researching different models, as clients often contact us when they're looking for an alternative or the right product for a tender.

My goals for the future are clear: to keep building long-term relationships with key clients and decision-makers, seek new opportunities for growth and improvement, and become an even stronger link between our clients and internal teams.

In the end, every day here is a mix of speed, flexibility, and teamwork. And although it can get intense, there's great satisfaction when a client starts recognising our strengths and the quality of our products – and the project finally starts moving in the right direction.

I believe we have an outstanding portfolio of world-renowned manufacturers, which makes my job a little easier – because clients truly want quality solutions.

And for the next issue, I'm nominating **Maja Lavrenčič**.

■ HOLY STATS MARY HEAD OF THE CUTE BOYS

I'M BACK FROM HOLIDAY — FULLY MOUTHED

Right, I'm back from holiday, in case anyone didn't know. Had a cracking time up there. My people, honestly, I ate and smoked everything on that break. Nearly choked a few times on the amount, but I've got supplies for sure until the end of the year. You know December will be here before you blink.

I smoked so much that when I was walking with my sisters in Biograd, the firefighters followed behind me in case I spontaneously combusted. I told them not to bother trailing me — if I do catch fire, I'll just douse myself with my drink.

On the last day of holiday I scoped out Facebook and Instagram and snooped who you lot were up to. I set up an Instagram because nothing happens on Facebook any more. Then I see Tamika swimming among some jellyfish. Seriously? No thanks. I'd rather eat sand than stick my foot in that water. What if a jellyfish stings you in the... area? What would you say then? What would the husband say? Unless you shove your bits in? Then they might get fried. Promise me you'll tell me the whole story next time. Think twice before you dive into that gelatinous stuff.

Hojnik... my beloved Hojnik, what can I say? Could you ever years one holiday go without plastering your chiselled body all over the place? In the water, on the rocks, on the shore, on the paddle board — whatever. I was nearly passing out in the shade, and it wasn't even that hot. Then I flick through Instagram and see Marko and Gašper partying in Berlin. I don't dare comment there.

That ex-metal cow Kadić and her boss Damzi — in my professional statistical opinion — have been on holiday for far too long. She was everywhere, he was just counting days and posting photos. It never ended. Those two have done four shifts straight. They even came back to the sea for a second time while they were still there. So, Marijica's moving to service!!! I'll boot Kadić off her seat at work so there's room for me. Also, since she's got a German surname, I'll keep an eye on things so my lads, not hers, get the perks.

A quick note for everyone at the company: follow my Instagram @sexistatistka — I need to do my holiday statistics, and I'll poke

about your profiles to gather material for the paperwork the boss will want. I can't just make stuff up, can I? Or can I?

Anyway, after holiday we went to Poreč. The last time I was in Poreč was 1974 with a kids' camp. Lovely foreign memories. Back then we didn't need jellyfish for everything to be right.

I hate when we draw names from the bag and you don't get the lads you want. Next year we vote, and I'll be first in line. Then you'll see how the team forms up. We'll be great! And then, once I finally grabbed attention, I thought I'd show off on a kayak so the lads would look at me — yeah, right. Hojnik stole the show. I struck a pose, put some effort in to hold the position, and look round to see who's watching me... no one. Everyone was clustered round Hojnik. Honestly, Hojnik, I told you before to stop snapping and posting. You're not the only person in the company! Thank goodness Kadić then broke her finger so the others would look at something else, because I fell so hard I'm still swimming today.

Listen, if not sooner, I'll see you at the cowboy night — I want to see what guns you lot have!

Marija out!

■ VALERIJA ŠLAMBERGER COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

UPGRADING OUR DOD CERTIFICATE

EXPANDING AND DEEPENING OUR COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES

At Mikro+Polo, we have been consciously and consistently building a culture of responsibility – towards our employees, the environment, and the wider community – for many years. We are pleased to announce that between 2025 and 2027 we will upgrade our existing “Socially Responsible Company” (DOD) certificate, with which we currently cover four key areas of social responsibility at Level 2.

In cooperation with the Ekvilib Institute, we will expand the scope of our certificate to five areas during 2025, with the strategic goal of reaching Advanced Level 2 by 2027. This means implementing at least nine selected measures in each area, along with all ten core measures and seven mandatory supporting activities required by the certification framework.

CORE MEASURES (10)

Organisational Governance

1. Management's commitment to social responsibility.
2. Reporting on social responsibility.



Work-Life Balance

3. The option to adapt work processes due to employees' caregiving responsibilities.
4. Encouraging and ensuring respect for employees' private lives.

Organisational Culture and HR Development

5. An internal policy on employment relations and employee cooperation.
6. Employee satisfaction measurement.

Health and Safety at Work

7. Employee participation in shaping the occupational health and safety policy and reviewing its activities.
8. An operative and up-to-date plan for health promotion in the workplace.

Environment

9. Resource management system.

10. Analysis of the organisation's environmental impact.

MANDATORY SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES (7)

- 1. Internal communication:** presenting and adopting measures together with employees through existing or new channels.
- 2. External communication:** informing and raising awareness about certification activities.
- 3. Employee surveys:** opinion research on selected certification areas.
- 4. Manager training:** education for leaders in certification-related topics.
- 5. CSR coordination:** appointment of a representative or project team to coordinate certification activities.
- 6. Stakeholder information:** informing employees about direct contact points for questions or suggestions.
- 7. Management review:** an annual review of the implementation of measures and activities.

Our Focus Areas for 2025–2027

- **Work-life balance**
- **Organisational governance**
- **Health and safety at work**
- **Organisational culture and employee development (with an emphasis on intergenerational cooperation)**
- **Environmental care**

Project Team

To successfully expand and deepen our responsible business efforts, we have formed a cross-departmental project team, including:

- Valerija Šlamberger, Quality System Manager / Team Leader for DOD *Lead for Work-Life Balance and Organisational Governance*
- Zoran Kodba, Deputy Director, Laboratory Programme *Lead for Health and Safety at Work (sports, recreation, and healthy lifestyle activities)*
- Branka Kadič, Order Processing Officer *Lead for Organisational Culture and Employee Development (focus on intergenerational cooperation)*
- Karolina Mauser-Markovič, Health and Safety Officer *Lead for Health and Safety at Work (operational implementation of OHS measures)*
- Branka Matjašič, Environmental and Waste Management Officer *Lead for Environmental Care*
- Breda Kodba, Director of Commercial Operations *Strategic and implementation support across all certification areas*

Why the Upgrade?

Because it's the natural continuation of our journey. In the previous certification period, we implemented 52 measures, which we have now carefully redistributed across five key areas, selecting nine per area. This will allow us to focus more effectively on what truly matters to us, our

employees, and our environment.

By including additional areas and raising the certification level, we aim to:

- strengthen internal cohesion and organisational culture,
- improve employee health, wellbeing, and safety,
- ensure better balance between work and private life,
- contribute to sustainable development and environmental responsibility,
- remain a role model and partner for good practice in the Slovenian business community.

In the coming years, we will place even greater emphasis on environmental responsibility and health and safety at work. Our project team will regularly attend DOD events and meet quarterly to exchange ideas and collect feedback from employees.

Looking Ahead

We proudly continue on the path of sustainable development and believe that, together, we can achieve our ambitious goals.

The DOD certificate remains our compass – guiding us to stay a responsible, safe, and forward-thinking employer that nurtures a positive work environment while caring for the community and the planet we share.

 ■ DEJAN HOJNIK DIGITAL OPERATIONS

BETWEEN THE RIVERBANK, TAVERNS AND PONDS

The Map of My Life

You're probably wondering: "Was Hojnik really nominated to write about his hometown?" No, I wasn't. But when a hole opens up – Hojnik jumps in.

And so I started thinking. How would I even describe my hometown? How do you pick one place when there have been so many? You start digging through your memories, going back as far as you can, and suddenly – there it is. The first picture, the first scent. I decided to write this entirely from memory – no Wikipedia, no historical facts – just how I experienced the places that shaped me.

If I have to start somewhere, it's Hoče – the place where I spent the first two years of my life. Apart from my mum's milk, I don't remember much, and even that's kind of blurry. And no, that's not because of age. Years's just say I didn't explore Hoče much – in my first year I couldn't walk, and later I wasn't exactly allowed to wander off on my own. So, we'll close the first chapter there.

Then we moved to Dogoše, where we stayed for five years. The horizons widened a bit, but if you ask me today what stands out, I can name three things:

→ My first day at kindergarten – absolutely terrifying! I still remember screaming as they left me there.

→ The school dentist at Drago Kobala Primary – even now when I drive past that school, I instinctively touch the corners of my mouth, remembering how that check-up "tore me apart."



And to balance it with something less traumatic:

→ The slope below the famous Kangler roundabout, where I learned to ski – and, of course, walk back up the hill each time.

But years's not dwell on a place where I only spent five years. The real story starts with the place where I grew up – Dravski Dvor, or "Drajhof," as we called it. No, I'm not a nobleman, even if we have "a manor" in the name. For me, it was the perfect place to grow up: flatlands, fields, forests... our biggest hill was literally a molehill. It was also the last village where people didn't yet say things like "ke, ko to, luba gela, ka si ti ja nur malo..." – though a few did slip into that dialect from time to time. The new Maribor–Ptuj motorway later drew that line even more clearly.

As kids, we explored every corner of the village. We discovered old bunkers, climbed almost every tree, and built our secret hideouts there. We even crept around the actual manor from which the village got its name (Drau Hof). It was a dangerous mission, because "Strašek," the owner back then and our local character, used to shoot at us with an air rifle. That's probably why I turned out so good at paintball later on.

And if I had to list the main attractions of the place?

The taverns, of course. A village with four streets, around 400 people (back then), one grocery shop, one clothing store (that's where Sanela fell in love with shopping), and – five pubs! Two of them were ours: Apollonia Bar and KA-TO Bar. That's where we spent most of our teenage years – playing pool, darts, table football, or ordering "0.3 vodka with lemon" (because tequila was out of reach). Every weekend brought a new adventure and stories we still



laugh about over coffee today. That's where friendships were forged that still last.

But the story doesn't end there. As you grow up, you experiment with new things. I tried being a city man. A proper one. My address? Somewhere between Niagara and Plusminus. If you're 24, there's no better spot for partying every weekend. But then you realise – you prefer nature over concrete, gardens over markets, and peace over nightlife. That's when life – or rather, we – moved to Rače, where we finally put down roots.

Rače is turning into a small town. We've got everything we need for everyday life, without having to jump in the car for every errand. It's surrounded by the Rače Fishpond



Nature Park – perfect for walks, runs or cycling. In the centre stands Rače Castle, which hosts concerts, festivals, and even an ice rink with a Christmas fair in winter. It's a place I wouldn't trade for anything. Close enough to my mum's house in Dravski Dvor to pop over for milk – but far enough that she can't just show up in slippers for coffee. And it's a great spot for quick getaways via the motorway – to our second home across the border, in "ljepa naša."

But that's a story for another issue. Maybe when I retire.

*Molehill – a small mound of soil made by a mole.

Nomination goes to milady – **Darja Kozar.**



■ ŠPELA GRUBELNIK OBDELAVA NAROČIL

JAPAN, HERE I COME!

Travelling through tradition, technology, and personal moments.

First Impressions – Why Japan?

I'd long wanted to visit Japan – a country that, in a single breath, blends futuristic megacities, ancient temples, breathtaking nature, and a culture like no other. Spring was the perfect time: we missed the full cherry blossom, but found a different beauty – crisp air, clear skies, and the pulse of a place that beats to a rhythm quite unlike our own.

Arriving in Tokyo, I felt a mix of excitement and mild bewilderment. The city is vast, glowing with neon, packed with people, and moves at a pace that's hard to grasp at first. But that very contrast – between meticulous order and an almost chaotic buzz – is what makes Japan so unique.



THE ROUTE

We designed our itinerary to capture Japan's many faces: from the capital Tokyo, to the natural drama around Mount Fuji, into Kyoto's cultural heart, on to lively Osaka, and finally Hiroshima and the tranquil island of Miyajima.

We travelled entirely by public transport – the metro, buses, and the famous Shinkansen. The trains' speed, discipline, and punctuality impressed us again and again: up to 320 km/h, yet you scarcely feel it.

Our hotels were simple and functional. Tokyo and Kyoto stood out for spotless order; Osaka, surprisingly, felt a notch below – a gentle reminder that the stereotype of total perfection doesn't always hold.



TOKYO – FUTURISTIC JUNGLE, ANCIENT CALM

Tokyo is a city of contrasts: soaring architecture, colossal shopping districts and tech wizardry, yet hidden among them are temples and parks of deep quiet.

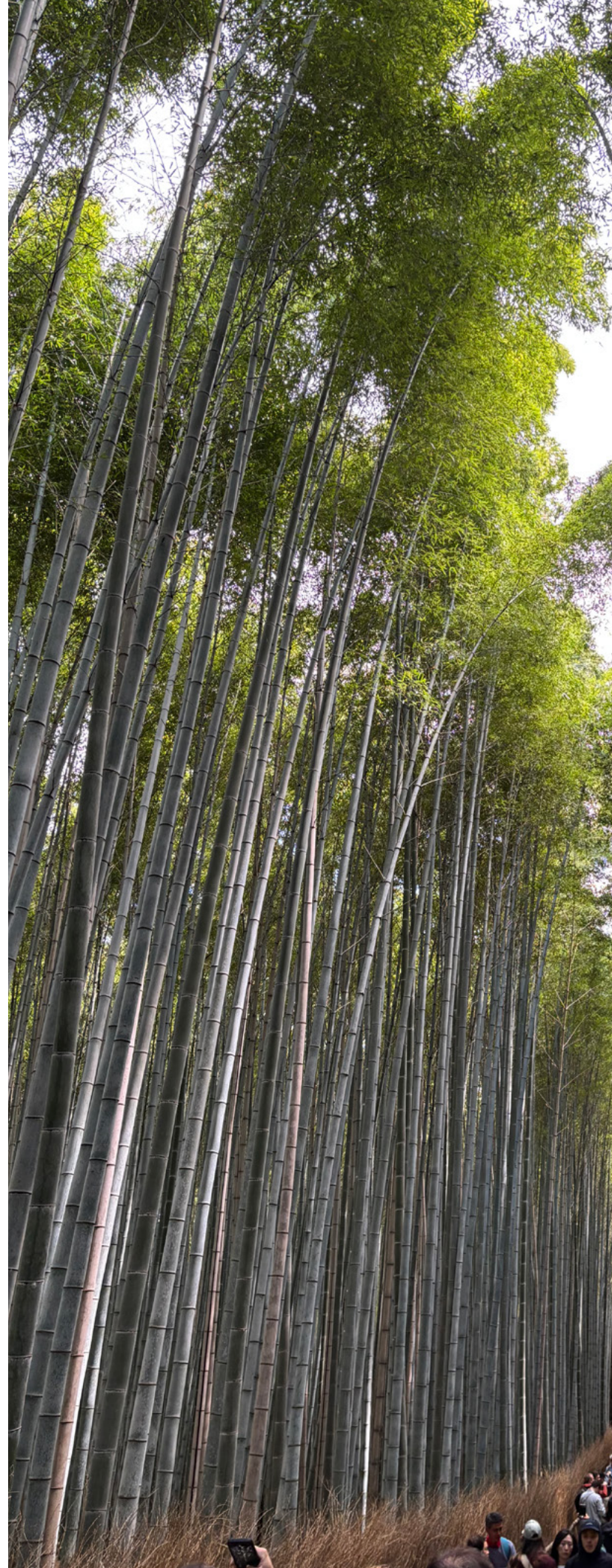
Shibuya Crossing was unforgettable – the world’s busiest pedestrian crossing. In seconds, thousands of people flow across from every direction. It looks like chaos until you’re in the middle of it, and then it feels flawlessly choreographed – the pure heartbeat of Tokyo.

Tokyo Skytree was equally striking: at 634 m, Japan’s tallest tower. From the 450 m deck the city seems endless. Just as precious, though, were the temple gardens – a glimpse of Japan’s other soul: ritual, nature, and reverence.



AT THE FOOT OF FUJI – VOLCANIC VALLEY & BLACK EGGS

We visited a valley where hot springs create an otherworldly landscape. There we met a local curiosity: black eggs boiled in sulphurous water – the shells turn black from mineral reactions. Legend says each one adds seven years to your life. The smell is... memorable, but the experience blends geology, folklore, and a little magic.





KYOTO – BAMBOO GROVES, GOLDEN PAVILIONS & SAMURAI ECHOES

We toured Nijō Castle, once home to shoguns and samurai – stately halls and gardens speaking of power and refinement.

Even more dazzling was Kinkaku-ji, the Golden Pavilion, its gilded exterior mirrored in the surrounding pond – almost surreal. We ended with a matcha tea ritual, where aesthetics, silence and presence come together in a way uniquely Japanese.

At Fushimi Inari Taisha, walking through the seemingly endless avenue of vermilion torii gates felt like passing into the sacred – one of Japan's most iconic scenes.

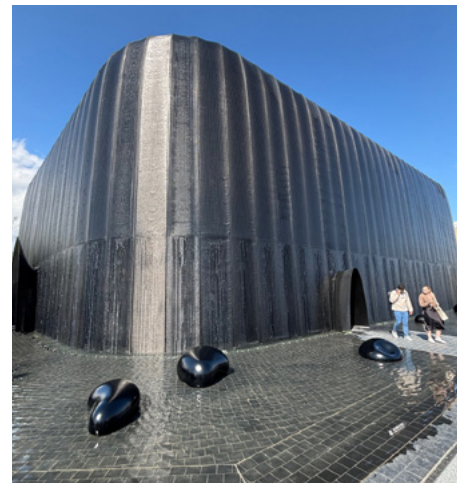
Nearby Nara surprised us with its free-roaming deer. Tourists feed them special crackers; adorable at first, they can be persistent – and nibble when disappointed. A vivid little adventure in itself.

Kyoto's Gion district still echoes with the old Japan. One evening we attended a performance where geisha showcased dance, music, and ritual. Yes, curated for visitors – but the discipline, grace, and tradition shone through, challenging the misconceptions we often carry.

OSAKA – CELEBRATION, CITY PULSE & THE EXPO

A swift Shinkansen hop took us to Osaka, where I celebrated my birthday. We chose a humble-looking yakiniku spot – and discovered the old truth: the plainer the exterior, the more authentic (and delicious) the food.

Osaka felt very different from Tokyo – less orderly, a little messier, but more open and carefree in spirit. We also visited the Expo; queues were long, often over an hour, which dulled the shine, but the national pavilions were still fascinating windows on the world.



HIROSHIMA & MIYAJIMA – SILENCE AND SYMBOLS OF HOPE

Hiroshima was the most moving part of the journey. The Peace Memorial Museum presents survivors' stories, artefacts and images with quiet power. The A-Bomb Dome stands in solemn remembrance.

A short ferry ride took us to Miyajima, famed for the great Itsukushima torii that appears to float at high tide. Deer wander freely; food is a draw too – we tried freshly grilled oysters and okonomiyaki, the hearty noodle-and-cabbage pancake beloved across Japan.



FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Food was central to our experience: ramen, all kinds of sushi, and frequent raids on the ubiquitous 7-Eleven. We learned the unspoken rule: the simpler and less flashy the restaurant, the more authentic the taste. Tsukiji market in Tokyo served some of the freshest sushi we've ever had.

Surprisingly, we found a lot of fried and processed food, while fruit and veg were scarce – and pricey. We missed them enough that our first stop back home was the local mar

EVERYDAY ANECDOTES – LOOS & BUSES

Japan isn't only temples and towers. The toiyearss deserve a chapter: control panels with heated seats, bidet functions, privacy music, even drying – like a tiny space capsule. I'll admit to a few puzzling minutes (and a good laugh) figuring out which button did what.

On buses and metros, I learned the true meaning of "squeeze." Just when you think no one else can possibly fit, everyone exhales and somehow one more person slides in – like living Tetris.

THE JAPANESE – A NATION OF CONTRASTS

The people left a strong impression: disciplined, polite, considerate – queues, rules and ritual woven into daily life. Trains are quiet, service is unfailingly courteous.

Yet beneath the order lies a harder reality: long workdays, limited family time, and increasing solitude. Japan struggles with high suicide rates; the Aokigahara forest near Fuji has become a bleak symbol of this burden.

At the same time, joy and playfulness flourish: anime and manga are embraced by adults as well as children; character mascots dot the cities; vending machines sell everything from drinks to trinkets – the thrill of a small surprise at every corner.

This duality – precise order and heavy pressure on one side, playful pop culture on the other – is what makes Japan so different, and so deeply human.





CLOSING THOUGHTS – MEMORIES THAT STAY

We finished where we began – Tokyo. Lights, sounds, constant motion: the perfect finale. Standing on a busy street, I reflected on how far from home I'd travelled – not just in distance, but in perspective.

The flight back passed quickly, but my suitcase carried more than souvenirs: images, scents, moments I'll keep for a long time.

If I had to capture Japan in a single thought: it's not merely a trip, but an experience that lifts you into another world – and shows just how endlessly diverse human culture can be.

For the next travel story, I nominate **Mojca Vek**, who recently explored Corsica.



 ■ BRANKA KADIČ SERVICE

TEAM BUILDING ANECDOTES

This time, the anecdotes are dedicated to our latest team building adventure..

Never before – on any of our trips, parties or gatherings – have so many things happened as they did this September in Poreč.

1. The first injury struck right after the opening round of the green-purple showdown, when Zupi emerged from the water after a fierce pedalo battle with a neatly sliced sole. No blood loss, but a lovely 1.5 cm-long cut.

2. Not to be outdone, Peter decided that wasn't enough and accidentally dropped a cigarette butt – on the same foot, between the toes! So poor Damjan ended up with two fine burn blisters to match.

3. Somewhere along the way we spotted Vekova with a scraped knee. The incident happened in the water – pedalo, kayak, who knows? Doesn't matter, we're just listing injuries here.

4. Dejan was so focused on his duel he didn't even blink – which turned out to be a mistake. An inflatable unicorn caught him right in the eye! We weren't quite sure whether it was the same one that got hit by bamboo last year, or the other one. Unfortunately, Dejan had to travel to Ljubljana for surgery. Next time he'll definitely wear proper safety glasses – there's no shortage of those in our warehouse.

5. And because that still wasn't enough, I managed to break my little toe in the second-to-last game. But trust me – it was worth it. A TOE FOR VICTORY!

6. While we were figuring out who would take Dejan and me to which hospital, we suddenly saw Patrik limping along with his toe bandaged!

If I've forgotten anyone, my apologies – but given the impressive injury list, that might actually be for the best.

Now, the only question left is this:

Was it the lunar eclipse? The fact that we were well-behaved and didn't drink alcohol?

Or are we simply too competitive? Who knows – and who cares?

It was absolutely phenomenal!!!



 SAVINA PREMSEL MARKETING

“SAJ NISMO S CUKRA”

WE'RE NOT MADE OF SUGAR

In this Mikro Language Corner, we've prepared a special collection of everyday phrases – the kind you hear over coffee, in logistics, at the hairdresser's, or on the stairs. We've translated them into all the languages spoken by our colleagues, just to make this last quarter a little better than the previous one.

Because honestly – what could be nicer than being able to say the same thing to a colleague from another country, each in your own language... and still compearsely understand each other.

→ **Glih za glih!** (Styrian dialect) | **Komaj smo uspeli!** (Slovenian) | **Just made it!** (English) | **Gerade noch geschafft!** (German) | **Jedva smo uspeli!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **On a réussi tout juste !** (French).

→ **Druge ni.** (Styrian dialect) | **Druge možnosti ni.** (Slovenian) | **No other way.** (English) | **Es gibt keinen anderen Weg.** (German) | **Nema druge.** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Pas d'autre choix.** (French).

→ **Kaj te češ lepšega.** (Styrian dialect) | **Kaj si lahko želiš lepšega?** (Slovenian) | **What more could you want?** (English) | **Was will man mehr?** (German) | **Pazi na sebe!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Prends soin de toi !** (French).

→ **Da si neoš kaj naredo.** (Styrian dialect) | **Pazi nase!** (Slovenian) | **Take care of yourself!** (English) | **Pass auf dich auf!** (German) | **Igra** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Jeu** (French).

→ **Na hlape se že furam.** (Styrian dialect) | **Sem že na rezervi / čisto brez moči.** (Slovenian) | **Running on fumes.** (English) | **Ich fahre schon auf Reserve.** (German) | **Vozim na rezervi.** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Je roule sur la réserve.** (French).

→ **Naj se viji, da mamo več.** (Styrian dialect) | **Naj se vidi, da smo years boljši!** (Slovenian) | **Years it show we did better!** (English) | **Man soll sehen, dass wir mehr haben!** (German) | **Nek se vidi da nam ide bolje!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Faut que ça se voie – on a progressé !** (French).

→ **Babike opasne ste!** (Styrian dialect) | **Ženske, res ste hude!** (Slovenian) | **Ladies, you rock!** (English) | **Frauen, ihr seid spitze!** (German) | **Žene, opasne ste!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Les filles, vous êtes formidables !** (French).

→ **Pubeci naši, kaj bi mi brez vas!** (Styrian dialect) | **Fantje naši, kaj bi brez vas!** (Slovenian) | **Guys, what would we do without you!** (English) | **Jungs, was würden wir ohne euch tun!** (German) | **Dečki naši, šta bi mi bez vas!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Les gars, que ferions-nous sans vous !** (French).

→ **Daj ti iji s pesom vun.** (Styrian dialect) | **Pojdi s psom ven.** (Slovenian) | **Take the dog out for a walk.** (English) | **Geh mit dem Hund raus.** (German) | **Izvedi psa van.** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Sors promener le chien.** (French).

→ **Nea se sekiraj!** (Styrian dialect) | **Ne sekiraj se!** (Slovenian) | **Don't stress!** (English) | **Kein Stress!** (German) | **Ne nerviraj se!** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Ne t'en fais pas !** (French).

If you also have a phrase that's worth translating – send it to us! We might include it in the December issue of Mikrofon - marketing@mikro-polo.si

Sao guraj dalje! (Keep pushing forward!)


 ■ BRANKA KADIĆ SERVICE

THE PAINTER AND THE SKETCHER

I've already introduced Tadeja once before – in a duel with Mojca – but our Tadeja has another fascinating passion: painting and drawing. Since both of us wanted to try something new this time, we years GPT prepare the questions for her. And I must say – we were both very happy with the result. Years's take a look at what Tadeja and GPT talked about.

How did your journey in painting begin?

→ It started back in school, when teachers noticed that I drew well. That's how it all began – I just kept drawing. Today it's much easier, since I can watch tutorials online. In primary school, we didn't have that option – at least not the way we do now.

Has any artist influenced your work?

→ Not really. None in particular. Though I must say, I really like Picasso's early works – not the famous abstract ones, but the earlier pieces.

How would you describe your style to someone who hasn't seen your work?

→ I don't really have a defined style. I don't have that much time to

think about techniques or plan what I'll create. I'm more of a copyist, really. I don't think anyone could look at a painting and immediately say it's mine. Usually, I see something I like and try to recreate it.

How do you approach a new piece?

→ I've partly answered that already – I see something and then redraw it. If someone commissions a painting for someone else, I always ask what that person likes (animals, flowers, nature ...). Then I browse online for something that would fit them.

What do you like to paint or draw with?

→ At the moment, mostly watercolours and brushes, but on one piece I often combine everything – pencil, coloured pencils, pen, paints, chalk ... whatever feels right.

What emotions or thoughts do you want people to feel when they receive your artwork?

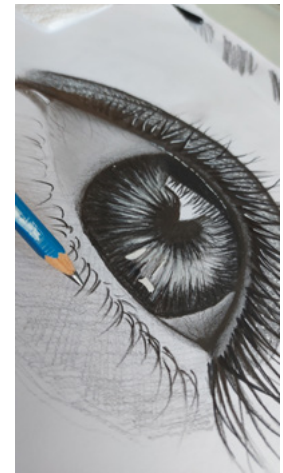
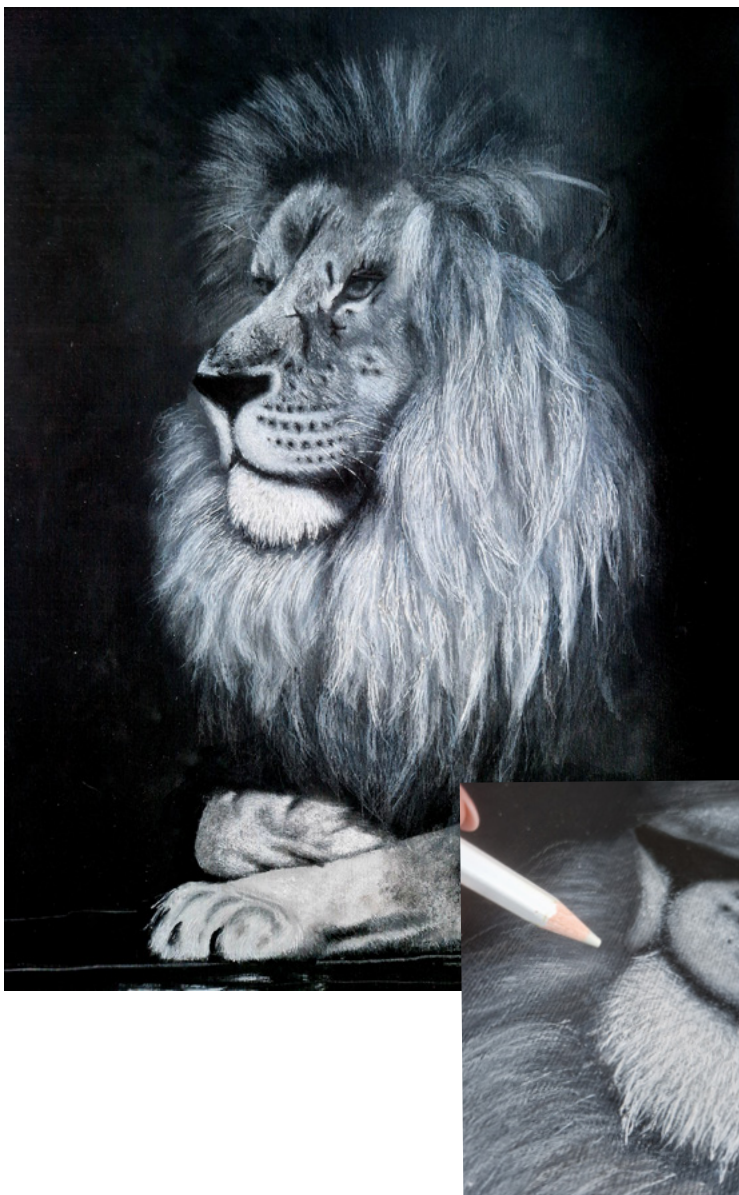
→ *Most of all, I want them to feel happy. To think: "That's exactly what I wanted."*

Do you ever face creative blocks, and how do you overcome them?

→ *Deadlines are my biggest block. Also, when I don't have peace and quiet. Space is another issue – I don't have a dedicated room, so I draw on the kitchen table. Now that my daughter draws with me, there's even less space!*

Has your style changed over the years?

→ *A bit, yes. I've started using new techniques – for example,*



watercolours, which I didn't dare to try before. I pay more attention to details now. Thinking about it, I'd say I'm much bolder and more confident than I used to be. The internet helped a lot with that too – I can follow step-by-step guides and learn as I go.

Tell me about the moment when you first felt like an artist..

→ *I can't say exactly with which painting it happened. But it started online again. My family had praised me before, but when an actual artist commented on my work and complimented it, that's when I truly felt it.*

When do you know a piece is finished?

→ *Almost never! I usually stop when I think it's done for the first time – and then I just hand it over. Otherwise, I'd keep adding and changing things forever.*

What advice would you give to young artists?

→ *It's not just for artists – it's for everyone: don't give up too quickly, and don't focus only on the final goal. Take it step by step.*

A great example was in Vodice, when we were drawing whales. Many people thought they'd never manage to finish theirs, but since we went step by step, everyone ended up with a whale – and each one was beautiful in its own way.

Thank you, Tadeja – and GPT.

 ■ MONIKA BANFI LAB PROGRAM

LIFE WITHOUT PASTA? UNTHINKABLE! RIGATONI WITH BURRATA, PISTACHIOS AND PROSCIUTTO

Dear colleagues, during the week, time often slips away and cooking a proper lunch or dinner can feel impossible. That's why it's always handy to have a quick but delicious idea up your sleeve. This time, I'm sharing a recipe for rigatoni with burrata, pistachios and prosciutto – a dish that takes about 25 minutes to prepare but looks and tastes like something straight out of a restaurant.

Preparation:

1. Cook the pasta al dente and save a little of the cooking water
2. In a dry pan, quickly crisp up the prosciutto and set it aside.
3. In a larger pan, heat some olive oil, add chopped garlic and halved (or quartered) cherry tomatoes.
4. Add the pasta along with a bit of the cooking water, stir in the pesto and half of the burrata (save the other half for serving).
5. Cook for another minute or two, adding more pasta water as needed until the sauce reaches your desired consistency.
6. Plate the pasta, top with the remaining burrata, sprinkle with chopped pistachios, torn prosciutto, lemon zest, fresh basil, and black pepper..

The recipe is simple, yet the flavours are rich and well-balanced. If anyone tries it, years us know how it turns out – maybe we'll gather a few more quick and tasty ideas for weekday meals!

For the next Culinary Gem, I'm nominating **Iva Kovačič**, as I'm quite sure she'll shine in her chef's apron.



RECIPE INGREDIENTS (FOR 2 PEOPLE):

- 300 g rigatoni (or any other short pasta)
- 1 burrata (approx. 200 g)
- 40 g pistachio pesto
- 6–8 cherry tomatoes
- 4 slices of prosciutto
- 1 clove of garlic
- Olive oil
- Grated lemon zest (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- A few fresh basil leaves (if you have them – optional)


 ■ IVAN KODBA MIKRO+POLO SARAJEVO

CINEPHILE IVAN RECOMMENDS

NOT SO FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIR / HAPPY CITIES



NOT SO FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIR (2021)

IMD rating: 7,7
Directors: Danis Tanović
Country: BIH
Year: 2021
Genre: komedija, drama
Starring: Branko Đurić Đuro, Izudin Bajrović, Helena Vuković

The comedy by award-winning Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanović premiered in 2021 at the 27th Sarajevo Film Festival.

The story takes place in Sarajevo in May 2021. Bašćaršija, the city's historic center, is trying to recover after a long and difficult year. The pandemic is still ongoing, but summer is approaching — bringing with it a sense of hope that things might, at least for a while, get better.

In Tanović's comedy-drama, a Zagreb-based influencer unintentionally sparks a city-wide feud.

"I heard you have the best ćevapi in town," says the influencer to Enis, the owner of one of Sarajevo's most popular ćevabdžinicas (grill houses). Her remark compearsely confuses him — and sets off a fierce rivalry between two old friends, their families, and eventually everyone in Sarajevo who cares deeply about one thing: ćevapi.

The film stars Branko Đurić and Izudin Bajrović as the owners of the two rival ćevabdžinicas. They are joined by Anja Matković as the Zagreb influencer, Helena Vuković as the daughter of one of the grill masters, and Goran Navojec as a high-strung waiter. The cast is further enriched by special appearances from Goran Bregović and Halid Bešlić.



HAPPY CITIES (Sretni gradovi) (2023-)

IMD rating: 9,4
Directors: Dubravko Prugovečki
Country: -
Year: 2023 -
Genre: dokumentarna serija
Author, screenwriter, and editor: Martina Validžić

There are cities that are said to be happier than others — at least according to numerous studies on quality of life and happiness indexes in urban environments.

Where do people live who gladly pay taxes, ride bicycles instead of driving cars, spend weekends in nature, don't lose patience with tourists, and know how to enjoy life despite everyday challenges?

In her documentary travel series "Happy Cities", Martina Validžić visits Copenhagen, Reykjavik, Vienna, Ljubljana, Lisbon, and Rome to discover what makes the residents of these cities truly happy.

In the fourth episode, Martina didn't have to travel far — just an hour and a half — to reach Ljubljana, the greenest, calmest, cleanest, and most livable city! Why are students in Ljubljana treated as first-class citizens? How strong is the city's environmental awareness? How did Ljubljana blossom on the European gastronomic scene? And why do its residents prefer spending weekends in nature, outside the city, rather than in shopping malls?

In the next issue, years Amina Klarić tell us about a film or series that particularly moved her.

ULTIMATE SUDOKU CHALLENGE

TEST YOUR SKILLS

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