

# International ADR Development Service: Slovenia



In anticipation of Slovenia's accession to the European Union and to meet the requirements of the EU and Council of Europe draft standards of court annexed mediation, the Slovenian Ministry of Justice and District Court of Ljubljana sought to introduce a sustainable national mediation policy framework and reform the [then] current administration of justice.

Central to the reform process were legislative changes and general awareness and mediation training programmes. Design and implementation of an effective court-annexed mediation scheme for the District Court of Ljubljana to reduce the current backlog of court cases formed a central part of the programme. This offered a credible and effective alternative method for citizens to resolve disputes.

ADR Group was invited to deliver an inaugural lecture in November 2001 and following this a series of meetings, awareness and educational programmes were planned and delivered during 2002. Inputs focused on designing, establishing and implementing effective change management strategies, developing a strong administration framework, and developing and implementing mechanisms to facilitate integration of ADR processes into the existing Court procedures.

ADR Group delivered specialised mediator training to various groups of Slovenian Judges, lawyers and social workers in civil, commercial and family law disciplines. ADR Group also identified and trained a smaller group of leading Slovenian Judges as lawyers as mediation trainers (Train the Trainers). Continuing education programmes have taken place in 2005 through to 2007 which have been central to the ongoing success of the scheme and maintaining the quality of the mediation service available through the Court. Expansions to other Court centres in Slovenia have subsequently occurred.

In furtherance of the Slovenian Ministry of Justice and the District Ljubljana Court's EU accession programme on the reform of the Court service, ADR Group was invited to jointly organise the 1<sup>st</sup> Southeast European Regional Conference on Alternative Dispute Resolution. The central theme was the use of ADR in the region, the role of the Courts and court annexed mediation programmes. ADR Group worked closely with the District Court of Ljubljana in agreeing the format, content, and sponsorship of the Conference. Key stakeholders were consulted and experts from around the world were invited to participate. Delegates from Government, Judicial, Legal and commercial sectors were invited as participants. In total over 230 delegates from 14 countries attended the conference which was held in Ljubljana on 5-7 November 2002.

Continued success was marked by the District Court of Ljubljana receiving special recognition from the Council of Europe and the European Commission for the initiative on mediation. Statistics confirm the successful incorporation of mediation in Slovenia in real terms: in 2007 mediation successfully resolved (71.4%) in family disputes and 54.4% of all commercial disputes.

In 2008 we have seen a further growth of 5.1% of family disputes being mediated on the previous year and an additional growth of 8.3% of commercial mediations being mediated since 2007. Following ADR Group's comprehensive mediation training programme there has been a year on year growth of approximately 30% of disputes coming to mediation.

ADR Group continues to play a supportive role in the development of Slovenia's mediation culture and recently delivered a talk about online and web based technologies and how these can assist with further integration and expansion. These ideas, alongside many more, were fielded at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual EU Law Conference held in Kransjka Gora, Slovenia on 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008, which was fully attended and widely supported by members of the Slovenian judicial system.

If you would like more information about ADR Group's work in Slovenia or have an interest in ADR Group delivering Mediation Development in your country, please contact Michael Lind, Managing Director of ADR Group on [\*\*mike.lind@adrgroup.co.uk\*\*](mailto:mike.lind@adrgroup.co.uk) or on +44 (0) 117 946 7180.