

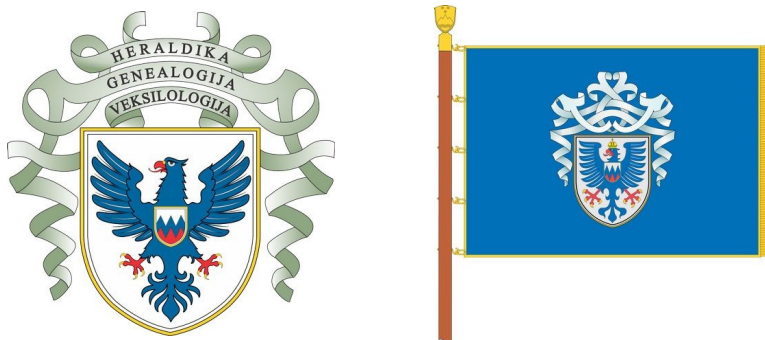
The new Association Flag and the flags of the officers

*Aleksander Hribovšek
Heraldica Slovenica*

Abstract

Until recently Heraldica Slovenica (the Heraldry Society of Slovenia) had no official flag and was represented by a blue banner that contained the logo of the society in the form of a coat of arms with decorations. Although the association had since 2001 a direction in its ordinance that allowed the creation of a flag in the three Slovenian colours (white, blue, and red), this did not happen until early 2017. Even though the project appeared simple at first, the selection of the eight flag designs that were put to public vote at the end of 2016 was actually a very complex endeavour. Vexillologists had an opportunity to vote on social networks, where we received 176 responses. Although it was an advisory vote, the majority opinion favoured a flag consisting of a white saltire that divides the field into alternating blue and red areas. The centre of the saltire merges into a white disc, on which there is the blue eagle of the association. The flag is in a ratio of 3:5. In addition to its new flag, the Society also received a new effigy of its coat of arms and a brand new personal flag system for its officials, in the form of two standards for the President and Vice-President, and flags for the Secretary, Treasurer, Chair of the Supervisory Board, and Chair of the Council of Experts. The two standards summarise the historical tradition of the 1:1 ratio, however, the rest of the flags have a ratio of 4:5 (1:1½), as was traditional for the military rank flags of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

The Heraldry Society of Slovenia was established in 1991 and joined FIAV in 1993. The Society set up its corporate emblems from the very start, but it did not create a corporate flag until 2017. Until then, the Society used a blue banner with the badge of the Society in its centre, a shield with the blue eagle and an additional ornament.



Heraldica Slovenica (HS): left, former logo; right, former banner

The statutes of the Heraldry Society of Slovenia always permitted the use of a corporate flag, which had to be in the Slovenian national colours (white, blue,

and red), yet it was only in 2017 that the Society created it.

The principal emblem of the Society is its coat of arms, which was remodelled during the process of designing the corporate flag. A coat of arms is composed of two main elements: a shield and an achievement, the latter comprising a helmet, mantling, a crest and a wreath or coronet.

The shield and its charge are the basis and main element of any coat of arms. In the context of civic heraldry, the shield alone could be used. However, the arms of the Society fall into the category of corporate heraldry and therefore use the full achievement.



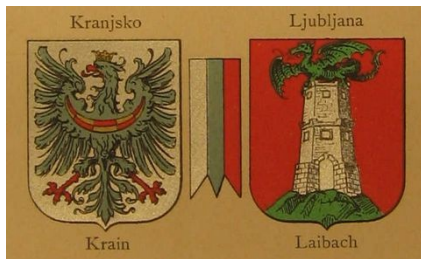
The new HS coat of arms

According to the rules of heraldry, redesigning even the slightest part of the charge or its colour produces a new, unique coat of arms. The armorial design of the Society resembles the coat of arms of the former Duchy of Carniola, the central Slovenian historical territory, which gave the Slovenian flag her colours.

However, changing the motif by adding a shield to the eagle's chest and removing its crown (a privilege of the Austro-Hungarian 'crownland' of Carniola) made the Society's coat of arms unique. The Heraldry Society of Slovenia therefore does not use the coat of arms of Carniola but deliberately reminds us of it. In the silver shield is a blue eagle, with an added escutcheon on its chest with the motif of the highest Slovenian mountain, Mt Triglav, depicted in white, blue, and red. The same eagle reappears in the crest.



*Left, decree of Emperor Frederick III, 1463; right, detail.
Arhiv RS – SI AS 1063, Zbirka listin, št. 716*

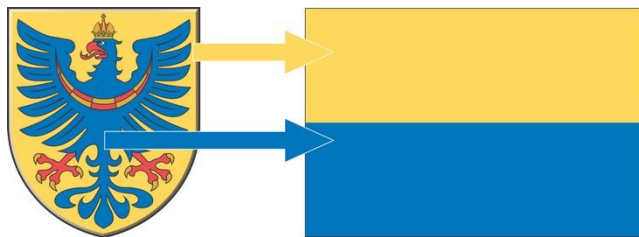


Coat of arms of Carniola (Kranjsko / Krain). Karl Lind, Städte-Wappen von Österreich-Ungarn nebst den Landeswappen und Landesfarben (1885)

The search for a suitable corporate flag seemed quite simple at first but we opted for seven proposals and decided to put them to a vote. We were interested in how a flag should be designed to properly represent the Society and, at the same time, include our national elements.

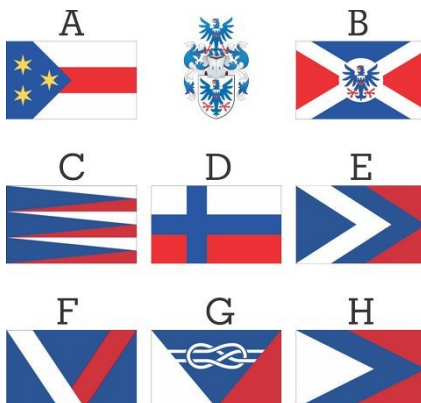
Our Society subscribes mainly to the Central European (Austro-Hungarian or German) classical approach to flag design, with horizontal stripes in the colours of the related coat of arms. However, we agreed to abandon this approach as we found it too restrictive.

Following a conversation with a Slovenian flag-manufacturer, also a member of the Society, I added another proposal, which I designed partly as a jest. The joke did not last long as that very proposal won the most votes.

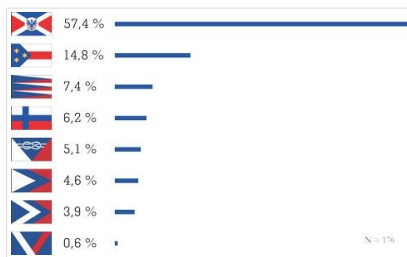


Austro-Hungarian or German classical approach to flag design in the 19th century. Aleksander Hribovšek

To get a notion of their popularity, we put the eight proposals to vote on the Facebook and Twitter social networks. A total of 176 people from around the globe cast their votes. Allow me to present one comment. Ralph Kelly, organiser of ICV26 (Sydney, 2015) wrote: '[Flag] B – it's for a heraldic association with interest in flags. Eagle in style of Duchy of Carniola is an effective heraldic charge on a flag in Slovenian national colours.'



Eight shortlisted designs were put to a vote



Graph of votes cast in the poll

In this graph of the votes cast: B stands for the winning proposal, which won 57.4 per cent, almost three fifths, of all votes. If I had hesitated earlier about including that proposal, the votes and Kelly's comment confirmed that my proposal was as the corporate flag should be – proper. The board of the Society accepted the result of the poll and defined the flag in the 3:5 ratio, with a colour scale of Pantone Blue 287 and Pantone Red 186. We acknowledged the Central European custom of flying flags vertically; therefore a vertical version was also defined to prevent any misalignment of colours.



*Above, the new HS flag;
right, its vertical variant*



The redesigned coat of arms and the new flag were followed by the introduction of distinguishing flags for the Society's officials. Two standards were created, for the President and the Vice-President, and four distinguishing flags – for the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Supervisory Board, and the Chair of the Council of Experts.



*Left, Local flags and colours in Austria-Hungary.
Hugo Gerhard Ströhl, Oesterreichisch-Ungarische Wappenrolle
(Vienna: Anton Schrol & Co., 1900)*

*Right, Austro-Hungarian regimental colour until 1918.
Aleksander Hribovšek from an original by Hugo Gerhard Ströhl*

The standards were modelled on the standard of the Emperor of Austria as used until 1894. We used the Austro-Hungarian system because of its thoroughness, and because Slovenian territories in that period were part of Inner Austria and also hereditary territories of the Habsburg dynasty.

The centre of the standard is occupied by the corporate eagle, while the border carries flammulets in the colours of the banner and the eagle. The President's standard is yellow, while the Vice-President's is white: both are in the 1:1 ratio. The definition of the Emperor's standard used above applies to the period before 1894, when the flammulets were redesigned as triangles, the new form continuing in use until 1918. The flammulets, however, remained in the regimental colours of the Austro-Hungarian military until the end of the First World War.



Two HS standards: left, President; right, Vice-President

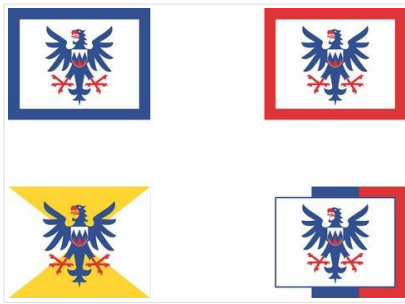
The distinguishing flags of the other officials also bear the corporate eagle in their centre. Their ratio, however, is 4:5, which corresponds with the distinguishing colours of Austro-Hungarian admirals and generals until 1918.



*Austria-Hungary distinguishing flags.
Ströhl, Oesterreichisch-Ungarische
Wappenrolle*

The Secretary, the Treasurer and the Chair of the Council of Experts are identified by the colour of their banner's border: that of the Secretary is blue; that of the Treasurer is red; that of the Chair of the Council of Experts carries a combination of colours from the vertical Slovenian tricolour. All present the eagle on a field of white.

The Chair of the Supervisory Board is distinguished from the above by a banner without border and the eagle on a field quarterly per saltire in yellow and white.



*HS positional flags:
top left, Secretary; top right,
Treasurer; bottom left, Chair of the
Supervisory Board; bottom right, Chair
of the Council of Experts*

The distinguishing colours are still to be manufactured and used, but the corporate flag was introduced to the public at the Slovenian Flag Day, 2017. This annual event is held at the geographical centre of Slovenia on the first Sunday following 7 April and is organised by our Society. The flag received a lot of favourable feedback and it looked dashing hoisted next to the flag of Slovenia.



*The new HS flag, Slovenian Flag Day, 9 April 2017.
Image, Uroš Žižmund*

At the Heraldry Society of Slovenia, we are happy with our flag and proud of the results of the project but we also welcome feedback from flag experts.

We look to the FIAV delegates.



Author biography

After secondary school became involved in history at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of History and employed at the City Museum of Ljubljana. A founder and creator in 2007 of 'Slovenska heraldika' – a web-based resource on Slovenian heraldry and vexillology; member of the Commission for Public Symbols within the department of the State Archives, 2008-9; member (2010-12), secretary (2012-16) and president (2016-) of the Heraldry Society of Slovenia (Heraldica Slovenica).