

## **Dr Danilo Türk, Former President of the Republic of Slovenia**



*Photo: Rok Tržan*

Dr Danilo Türk was born on 19 February 1952 in Maribor, Slovenia. He studied at the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, where he obtained his law degree (1975). In 1978 he obtained his Masters degree in law from Belgrade University and started teaching International Law at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana. In 1982, he obtained his doctorate from the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana with the thesis on "The principle of non-intervention in international relations and in international law".

His academic career took place at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana where, in December 1982, he became assistant professor, then associate professor (1987) and finally tenured professor of international law (1995). In the period 1983-1992 Dr Türk headed the University's Institute of International Law and International Relations. In those years he devoted his energies to research and teaching, and to the efforts for the protection of human rights.

Since 1975 he has been actively involved with Amnesty International and has acted as adviser in many cases involving human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia. From 1984 to 1992 he was an independent expert - member of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. For the Sub-Commission he prepared a report on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and a series of reports on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. In 1991 he was the Chairman of the Sub-Commission.

In 1987 Dr Türk initiated and participated in the establishment of the Human Rights Council in Slovenia. The Council was established early in 1988. Dr Türk was the Vice-President of the Council.

After Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1991 Dr Türk took an active role in its diplomatic activity. In July and August 1991 – with the authorization of the Minister of Foreign Affairs – he informally represented the still unrecognized Slovenia in Geneva in contacts with representatives of the UN, the CSCE and the Council of Europe. From September 1991 to August 1992 he was a member of the Slovene delegation at the Conference on Yugoslavia. On behalf of Slovenia Dr Türk prepared a number of draft memoranda for the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia (the Badinter Commission). The first memorandum, written in November 1991, was the key document on which the Commission founded its statement that Yugoslavia had dissolved and that all the successor states were equal in status.

In August 1992 Dr Türk assumed the position of Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations. He led Slovenia's campaign for election to the UN Security Council in 1997. During his term on the Security Council (1998 – 1999) he dealt with the issues of Kosovo, Iraq, Libya, East Timor, Congo among others. He was President of the UN Security Council in August 1998 and in November 1999.

Following the successful conclusion of Slovenia's term as non-permanent member of the Security Council, Mr Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization, appointed Dr Türk as Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. For more than five years his tasks at the headquarters of the UN in New York included analytical and advisory activity relating to the crisis situations of the time, such as the Balkans (in particular Kosovo and Macedonia), Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, North Korea, East Timor, Colombia, Haiti, Venezuela and others.

After 13 years in New York Dr Türk returned to Slovenia in the summer of 2005. He resumed teaching International Law and related subjects at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana. From May 2006 to December 2007 he served as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law. In his academic work Dr Türk published over 100 articles in various law journals and tree books. The latest among the "The Foundations in International Law" was published in 2007 and has been translated into Hungarian, Czech and Russian.

On 11 November 2007 he was elected President of the Republic of Slovenia and was inaugurated on 22 December 2008. His term of office ended after five years – on 22 December 2012. At present he has the status of Former President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Dr Danilo Türk is married and has one daughter.