

Invitation to a lecture by dr. Matevž (Matt) Raškovič

**“THE KIWI X-FACTOR: THE ROLE OF NATION BRANDING AND STORYTELLING
IN NEW ZEALAND’S SOFT POWER”**

**organised by the Centre of International Relations (CIR) and the Student Association for
International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
(Globalis)**

When? 12 June 2023, 15.00–17.00 CET

Where? Grand Hall of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana (Kardeljeva
ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia)

What? Aotearoa New Zealand is small open economy (SMOPEC) which punches well above its weight internationally according to former US Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton. New Zealand exporters, either MNEs or SMEs, make good use of the so-called Kiwi halo effect in overseas markets. New Zealand’s soft power on the world stage got a significant boost during the Covid-19 pandemic and the popularity of the former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who has been internationally praised for her unique style of political leadership. The Kiwi halo effect relies on a mixture of actual and fabricated authenticity, tapping into utopian imageries going back to colonial times and indigenous ‘Kaupapa Kōrero’ storytelling traditions predating colonialism. In a 2021 *Nation Brands survey*, New Zealand ranked among the top 10 strongest nation brands in the world. It also ranked #16 in terms of soft power index in 2021 and #21 in 2022. There is a well-crafted nation brand behind the Kiwi X-Factor which relies heavily on storytelling and can serve as a powerful asset in international relations, tourism and/or export promotion. The presentation will provide answers to the following questions:

1. Why is New Zealand’s nation brand so powerful on the international stage and what role does storytelling play in New Zealand’s nation branding?
2. Why does New Zealand have a national storytelling agency and what role does this agency play in New Zealand’s soft power?
3. New Zealand’s nation brand relies on a mixture of real and ‘manufactured’ authenticity. What can other small states learn from New Zealand, and what are the dangers of idealistic notions of New Zealand as a South Pacific utopia?

The presentation will be followed by a discussion with **Mr. Andrej Božič**, the Honorary Consul of New Zealand to Slovenia.

The talks will be held **in English**.

Speakers' Bios:



Matevž (Matt) Raškovič is an Associate Professor of International Business & Strategy at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, as well as a Full Professor of International Business at the University of Ljubljana (Adjust position) and visiting professor at Zhejiang University School of Management in China. Matt is currently Vice-President Administration at the Academy of International Business (AIB) and was Vice-President Marketing at the Australia and New Zealand International Business Academy (ANZIBA). Matt was also a Fulbright scholar at

Harvard University, FAS Sociology and is an economic sociologist exploring international business phenomena at the intersection of global business, societal challenges and policymaking.



Andrej Božič is a partner at BB Consulting and the Honorary Consul of New Zealand in Slovenia. He is also a past President of the Managers Association of Slovenia and an Honorary Member Beta Gamma Sigma Club. He has over 30 years of managerial experience.

Organisers:

CIR: The Centre of International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (CIR) conducts interdisciplinary research in the fields of international relations, international economics and international business, politics of international law, diplomacy and human rights, international organisations, and European integration. Connect with CIR on [LinkedIn](#) or follow its activities on its [website](#).

Globallis: The Student Association for International Relations Globallis is a student community that aims to contribute to the development of International Relations culture and science in Slovenia. Connect with Globallis on [LinkedIn](#) or follow its activities on its [website](#).