

# editorial

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The capacity of some communities and territories to reinvent themselves is an unending source of fascination. Take Slovenia, which this summer celebrated fifteen years of independence. Even as recently as the late nineteen eighties, then still part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia was often dismissed as a backwater on the edge of the Balkans. Today, it is a model of stability and economic success that must surely be the envy of many of its neighbours. Piran, the amiable coastal town where we write this editorial, seems to sum up Slovenia: a place that is unashamedly forward looking, yet happily reconciled with its past.

In this issue of *hidden europe*, we touch down in another community that has come to terms with its past and now looks ahead to a new future. Haidemühl in Lower Lusatia is a town that has moved lock, stock and barrel to a new location. It is an intriguing tale. Find out why an entire town decided to relocate.

Shades of the past colour several articles in this issue as we explore abandoned synagogues in over a dozen countries, visit a few extraordinary cemeteries, check out what has happened to all those Lenin museums of yesteryear and discover an interesting new use for some disused railway lines.

Enjoy a typical *hidden europe* geographical roller-coaster as we sample Thai curry in Spitsbergen, Japanese sushi in Nagorno-Karabagh, visit Europe's largest summer rock festival in Poland and find North Frisian villages on the island of Sylt where it is easier to buy a gold watch than a litre of milk. As usual, we unravel some of the more peculiar aspects of European life — as we encounter devotees of a pastime called tri-pointing. These are eccentric but harmless souls who like nothing better than to be able to stand at the very point where three countries converge.

We welcome a new guest contributor to this issue. In his essay *Prague's Men in Black*, Adam Daniel Mezei introduces us to the Czech capital by night. Our thanks to Adam, and to the many others who helped us along the road to bring this issue to fruition. Further acknowledgements are recorded on the inside back cover. All unattributed texts are researched and written by *hidden europe*.

Nicky SC Gardner & Susanne Kries  
EDITORS

PIRAN, SLOVENIA  
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front cover: farm near Rouen, France (photo by Mervyn Benford)

left (from top to bottom): harvest fruit (© Leonid Nyshko); onions in Varnja, Estonia; windows behind a picket fence, Spitsbergen (© Anthony Hathaway)

above right: Prague (© Tyler Olson)

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