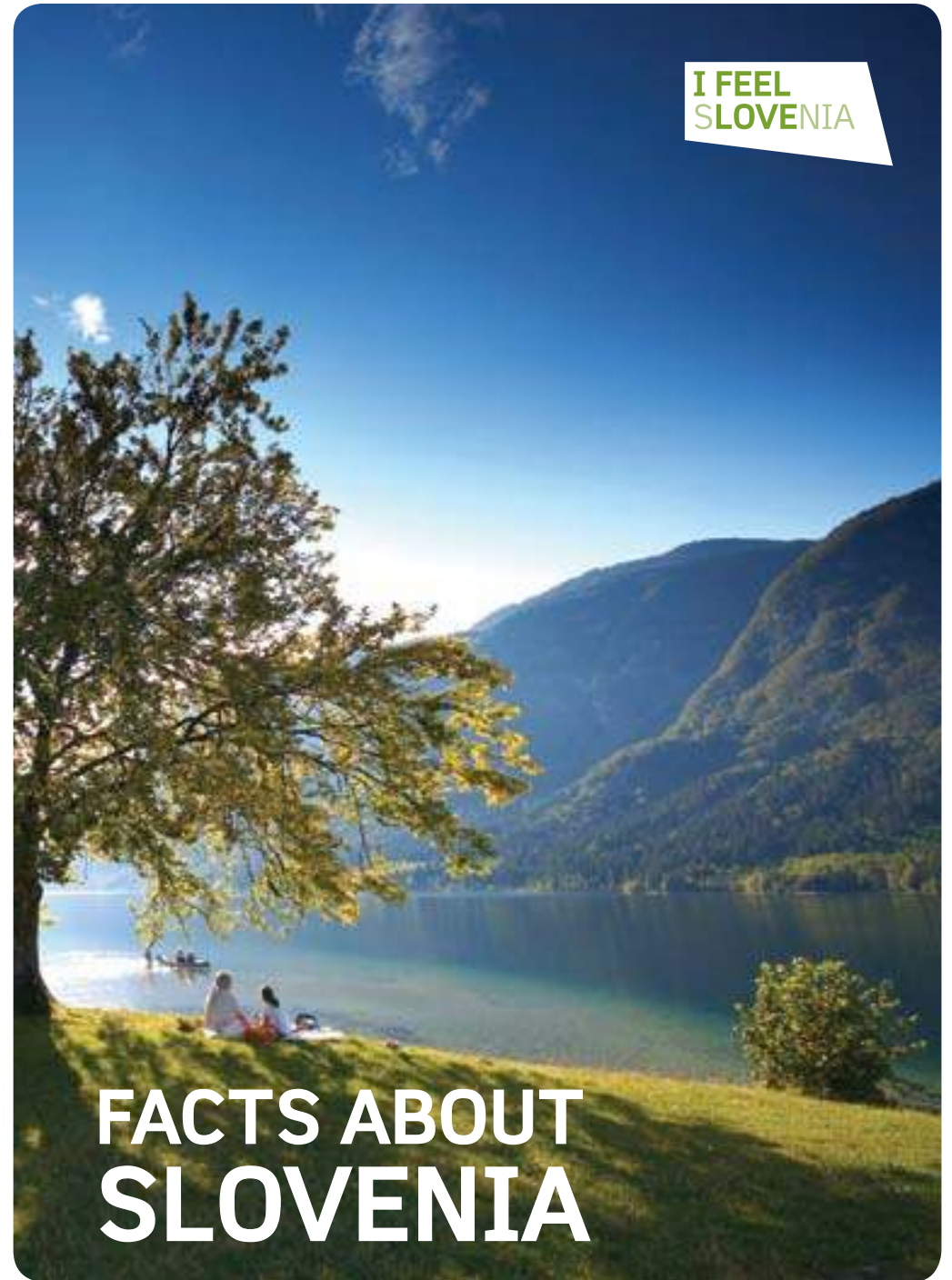




FACTS ABOUT SLOVENIA



I FEEL  
SLOVENIA

FACTS ABOUT  
SLOVENIA

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## Slovenia on the Internet

### **www.gov.si**

State portal of the Republic of Slovenia

### **www.slovenia.si**

Gateway to information on Slovenia

### **www.vlada.si**

Government of the Republic of Slovenia

### **www.up-rs.si**

President of the Republic of Slovenia

### **www.ukom.gov.si**

Government Communication Office

### **www.mzz.gov.si**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **www.twenty.si**

Twenty years of independence

### **www.eu2008.si**

Slovenian EU Presidency

### **www.svez.gov.si**

Government Office for European Affairs

### **www.umar.gov.si**

Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development

### **www.slovenia.info**

Slovenian Tourist Board

### **www.gzs.si**

Chamber of Commerce and Industry

### **www.investslovenia.org**

Invest in Slovenia

### **www.dz-rs.si**

National Assembly

### **www.stat.si**

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

### **www.ljse-si**

Ljubljana Stock Exchange

### **www.uni-lj.si**

University of Ljubljana

### **www.uni-mb.si**

University of Maribor

### **www.upr.si**

University of Primorska

### **www.p-ng.si**

University of Nova Gorica



Slovenian national flag.



Slovenian coat of arms.

Prešeren's manuscript of Zdravljica from 1844.



## Slovenia at a glance

### Republic of Slovenia

**State** / Democratic parliamentary republic since 25 June 1991

Member of the European Union since 1 May 2004

**Capital** / Ljubljana, 260,000 inhabitants

**National flag** / Horizontal stripes in white, blue and red with Slovenian coat of arms on its left upper side

**Coat of arms** / Three six-pointed yellow stars are symbols of the Counts of Celje with Triglav as a symbol of Slovenehood and underlying two wavy lines symbolizing Slovenian rivers and the sea

**Anthem** / The seventh stanza of Zdravljica, a poem by France Prešeren, set to music by Stanko Premrl

**State holidays** / June 25 - Statehood Day, December 26 - Independence and Unity Day

**Official Language** / Slovene, in some nationally mixed border areas also Italian and Hungarian

**Currency** / EUR 1= 100 cents

**Phone dial code** / +386

*God's blessing on all nations,  
Who long and work for that bright day,  
When o'er earth's habitations  
No war, no strife shall hold its sway;  
Who long to see  
That all men free  
No more shall foes, but neighbours be.*

Text of the Slovenian national anthem  
(7th stanza of Zdravljica - A Toast by France Prešeren)

## Geography

**Size** / 20,273 km<sup>2</sup>

**Length of borders / 1,370 km:** with Austria 318 km, with Italy 280 km, with Hungary 102 km, with Croatia 670 km

**Length of coastline** / 46.6 km

**Neighbouring states** / Austria, Italy, Hungary, Croatia

**Largest towns** / Ljubljana (261,700), Maribor (108,600), Kranj (39,400), Celje (38,400)

**Highest mountain** / Triglav 2,864 m

**Longest river** / Sava 221 km

**Landscape** / The territory of Slovenia is geographically divided into four basic types of landscape - Alpine in the north, Mediterranean in the south-west, Dinaric in the south and Pannonian in the east.

**Climate** / There are three different types of climate in Slovenia: continental in the central part, Alpine in the north-west and sub-Mediterranean along the coast and its hinterland.

Mt Triglav



## Population

**Inhabitants** / 2,046,976 (1 January 2010) /

**Population density**/ 101.1 inhabitants per square kilometre

**Nationalities (2002 census)**/ Slovenian 83%; Italian 0,1%; Hungarian 0,3%; Croat 1,8%; Serbian 2,0%; Muslim (including Bosniacs) 1,6%; others 2,2%; unknown: 8,9%

**Births** / On average 1,5 children per woman (2010)

**Life expectancy** / 75,8 for men and 82.3 for women (born in 2009)

**Urbanization** / Approximately one third of the population live in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, the rest live in nearly six thousand smaller towns and villages.

**Religions** / According to the 2002 census the most of population (58 %) are Catholics. Together there are 43 religious communities registered in Slovenia. Among the oldest is the Evangelical Church, most widely spread in the northeastern part of Slovenia.





## Political system

**Legislation** / Under the Constitution, Slovenia is a democratic republic and a social state governed by law. The state's authority is based on the principle of the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, with a parliamentary system of government. The highest legislative authority is the National Assembly (90 deputies), which has the right to enact laws. Elections to the National Assembly are held every four years.

**Suffrage** / According to the Constitution, the right to vote is universal and equal. Every citizen who has attained the age of eighteen years has the right to vote and stand for office.

**President** / Dr Danilo Türk since 2007

**Prime Minister** / Borut Pahor (SD) since 2008

### Parties represented in the National Assembly, elected on 21 September 2008

Social Democrats (SD), Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), ZARES – nova politika, Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS), Slovenian National Party (SNS), Slovenian People's Party and Youth Party of Slovenia (SLS+SMS), Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS), one representative each of the Hungarian and the Italian national communities.

## Economy

### Macroeconomic indices for Slovenia in 2009

Real GDP growth (real growth rate in %)	<b>-8,1</b>
GDP per capita in EUR	<b>17,331</b>
Rate of unemployment by ILO in %	<b>5.9</b>
Labour productivity (real growth rate in %)	<b>0.9</b>
Inflation (annual average)	<b>0.9</b>

# History

**250,000 BC:** The first evidence of human habitation on the territory of the present-day Slovenia  
**120,000 to 33,000 BC:** Remains from the early Stone Age - the Palaeolithic; among them the oldest musical instrument in the world, found in Slovenia  
**5,000 BC:** Remains found as evidence of a hunting and gathering way of life  
**3,900 BC:** Pile dwellings on the Ljubljana Marshes  
**1,300 BC:** Urnfield culture  
**8th to 7th century BC:** Bronze and Iron Age fortifications  
**4th and 3rd century BC:** The arrival of Celts; the Noricum kingdom  
**around 10 BC:** The Roman Empire; the appearance of the first towns  
**5th and 6th century AD:** Invasions by the Huns and Germanic tribes  
**after 568:** Dominance of Slavonic people on the territory of Slovenia  
**7th to 11th century:** The Duchy of Carantania, the oldest known independent Slavonic tribal union in this area  
**8th century:** The start of the conversion to Christianity  
**9th century:** The spread of the Frankish feudal system and the beginning of the formation of the Slovenian nation  
**10th century:** The appearance of the Freising Manuscripts, the earliest known text written in Slovene  
**11th century:** The beginning of the development of the Carniola, Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia regions, and intensive German colonisation  
**11th to 14th centuries:** The development of medieval towns in Slovenia  
**14th to 15th centuries:** Most of the territory of Slovenia including all its hereditary estates are taken over by the Habsburgs; in 1456, the Counts of Celje become extinct - this was the last feudal dynasty on Slovenian territory  
**15th century:** Turkish invasions begin  
**15th to 17th centuries:** Peasant revolts  
**1550:** Protestantism; the first book written in Slovene  
**18th century:** Enlightenment and compulsory universal education  
**1809-1813:** Napoleonic conquest - Illyrian Provinces  
**1848:** Unified Slovenia, the first Slovenian political programme  
**1918:** The State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs; the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, renamed Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929  
**1941-1945:** Dismemberment of Yugoslavia by Axis Powers  
**1945:** The formation of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and the People's Republic of Slovenia as one of its 6 federal entities  
**1990:** Plebiscite on independence  
**25 June 1991:** Proclamation of the independent Republic of Slovenia  
**1 May 2004:** EU membership  
**1 January 2007:** Slovenia introduces euro  
**1st half of 2008:** Slovenia's EU Presidency



Vaška Situla, an ornamented bronze vessel from the first half of the 5th century BC, found in Vače near Ljubljana. The Situla is kept by the National Museum of Ljubljana.

## Earliest traces

The oldest proof of human habitation on the territory of Slovenia are two implements made of stone from the Jama cave in the Loza wood near Orehek, which are around 250,000 years old. From the Wurm glacial age, when Neanderthals inhabited the area, the most important find is the flute found in Divje babe, above the Idrija valley. In the late Stone and Bronze Ages, the inhabitants of the area were engaged in livestock rearing and farming. During the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age, the Urnfield culture existed in this area. Typical of the Hallstatt period were fortified hilltop settlements called *gradišče* (Most na Soči, Vače, Rifnik, St. Vid near Stična) and beautifully crafted iron objects and weapons. The ethnicity of the inhabitants of these settlements cannot be determined.

## The Celtic kingdom and the Roman Empire

In the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, the territory of the present-day Slovenia was occupied by Celtic tribes, which formed the



A Neanderthal flute, at least 45,000 years old, found at the Divje babe archaeological site in 1995, is probably the oldest musical instrument in the world. The flute is kept by the National Museum of Ljubljana.

first state called Noricum. The names of many present places (Bohinj, Tuhinj) date from this time, as well as the names of rivers (the Sava, the Savinja, the Drava). Around 10 BC, Noricum was annexed by the Roman Empire and Roman cities started to appear, among them Emona (Ljubljana), Celeia (Celje) and Poetovia (Ptuj). Well-constructed trade and military roads ran across Slovenian territory from Italy to Pannonia. Under the Roman Empire, the population became romanised and Christianity began to assert itself.

## The first independent duchy

In the 5th and 6th centuries, the area was exposed to invasions by the Huns and Germanic tribes during their incursions into Italy. After the departure of the last Germanic tribe - the Langobards - to Italy in 568, Slavs began to dominate the area, but it is not quite clear as to exactly when they first arrived here. After the resistance against the nomadic Asian Avars (from 623 to 626), this Slavonic people united with King Samo's tribal confederation, which had its centre in the present Czech Republic. The confederation fell apart in 658 and the Slav people on the territory of the present-day Carinthia formed the independent duchy of Carantania, with its centre at Krn Castle, north of today's Klagenfurt. From this period onwards, until 1414, a special ceremony of the enthronement of princes, conducted in Slovene, took place.

## Under the Franks and Christianity

In the middle of the 8th century, Carantania became a vassal duchy under the rule of the Bavarians, who began to spread Christianity. In 788, Carantanians together with Bavarians came under Frankish rule. At the beginning of the 9th century, the Franks removed the Carantanian princes because of rebellions, replacing them with their own border dukes. The Frankish feudal system started spreading to Slovenian territory. At the end of the 9th century, Magyars invaded the Pannonian Plain. They intruded into Slovenian territory and cut it off from the other western Slavs.

Thus the isolated Slavs of Carantania and of Carniola to the south, started developing into an independent nation of Slovenes. After the victory of Emperor Otto I over the Magyars in 955, Slovenian territory became divided into a number of border regions of the Holy Roman Empire, the most important

of which, Carantania was in 976 elevated into the duchy of Great Carantania. The Freising Manuscripts date from this period - a few prayers written in the Slovene language of the time. In the late Middle Ages, the historic states of Štajerska (Styria), Koroška (Carinthia), Kranjska (Carniola), Gorizia, Trieste and Istria were formed from the border regions and included in the medieval German state.

## 600 years under the Habsburgs

In the 14th century, most of the territory of Slovenia was taken over by the Habsburgs. Their powerful competitors were for some time the Counts of Celje, a feudal family from this area, which in 1436 acquired the title of state counts. This large dynasty, important at the European political level, which had its seat on Slovenian territory, died off in 1456, and its numerous large estates became the property of the Habsburgs, who retained control of the area right up to the end of the First World War. Intensive German colonisation between the 11th and the 15th centuries narrowed Slovenian lands to an area only a little bigger than the present-day Slovenian ethnic territory. At the end of the Middle Ages, in the 15th and the 16th centuries, life in this area was marked by Turkish incursions. Dissatisfaction with the ineffective feudal defences against the Turks and the introduction of new taxes, particularly tribute, as well as bonded labour, brought about peasant revolts. The biggest revolt in 1515 took place across nearly the whole Slovenian territory. From 1572 to 1573, Slovenian and Croatian peasants organised a joint revolt. Uprisings, which met with some short-lived victories and eventual defeats, continued right up until the first half of the 18th century.

## A time of revival

In the middle of the 16th century, the Reformation, mainly Lutheranism, spread across Slovenian territory, helping to create the foundations of the Slovene literary language.



Primož Trubar, wood engraving by Jacob Lederlein, 1578.

In 1550, Primož Trubar published the first two books in Slovene, *Katekizem* and *Abecednik* (Catechism and Abecedar). The Protestants published altogether over 50 book titles in Slovene, among them the first Slovenian grammar and Dalmatin's translation of the entire Bible (in 1584).

Primož Trubar is one of the most important pillars of Slovenia's cultural and national identity, and thus a figure



The Protestant writer and theologian Jurij Dalmatin (around 1547-1589) published the first Slovenian translation of the entire Bible in 1584.

who has inspired the following generations to take an active stand in preserving and promoting Slovenian language. The year 2008 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Primož Trubar (1508-1586), a Protestant reformer and the consolidator of the Slovenian literary language. At the beginning of the 17th century, princely absolutism and the Catholic Church suppressed Protestantism, thereby hindering for a long period the development of literature in Slovene. The Enlightenment in Central Europe, particularly under the Habsburg monarchy, was a positive period for the Slovenian people. It speeded up economic development and facilitated the appearance of a Slovenian middle class.

The reign of Emperor Joseph II (1765-1790) which saw, among other things, the introduction of compulsory education and primary education conducted in Slovene (1774), together with the start of cultural-linguistic activities by Slovenian intellectuals, was a time of Slovenian national revival and of the birth of the Slovenian nation in the modern sense of the word. Before the Napoleonic Wars, Slovenes acquired some secular literature, the first historical study based on the ethnic principle (by Anton Tomaž Linhart) and the first comprehensive grammar (by Jernej Kopitar). During the Napoleonic Wars, Napoleon captured southeastern Slovenian regions and on the territory of Upper Carinthia, Carniola, Gorizia, Trieste, Istria, Dalmatia and Croatia south of the Sava river, created the Illyrian Provinces (1809-1813) adjoined to the French state, with Ljubljana as the capital. The short-lived French rule changed the taxation system and improved the position of the Slovene language in schools; it did not, however, abolish feudalism.

## The Austro-Hungarian monarchy

In the pre-March period modernisation of villages and the first industrialisation started. The most important Slovenian poet, France Prešeren, made his contribution to overcoming language regionalism: he asserted the right to a unified written language for all Slovenes and defended it against attempts to blend it into an artificial Illyrian Yugoslav language.

The first Slovenian political programme, called 'Unified Slovenia' emerged during the European 'Spring of Nations' in March and April of 1848, demanding that all the lands inhabited by Slovenes should be united into one province, called Slovenia. In this province, Slovene would be made the official language. It would be an autonomous province, with its own provincial assembly within the framework of the Habsburg monarchy.

In 1867, Slovenian representatives received a majority of votes in the provincial elections. In the same year, the Austrian Empire was transformed into the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Most of the territory of present-day Slovenia remained in the Austrian part of the monarchy, Pomurje was in the Hungarian part, whilst the Slovenes in Veneto had already decided in 1866 that they wished to join Italy. The idea of a unified Slovenia remained the central theme of the national-political efforts of the Slovenian nation within the Habsburg monarchy for the next 60 years.

By the end of the 19th century, industry had developed considerably in Slovenia and the Slovenian people were similarly socially differentiated as in all the other developed European nations.

## The state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs

During the World War I, which brought heavy human casualties to Slovenia, and devastated its western regions along the

The memorial church of the Holy Spirit at Javorca above Tolmin, designed by the Viennese artist Remigius Geyling, was built in 1916 by Austro-Hungarian soldiers to commemorate the victims of the First World War battlefield on the River Soča. The church has been recently awarded with the European Heritage label.



bloody Soča front, and with the imperialistic policies of the superpowers, which threatened to split Slovenian territory among a number of states (the London Pact of 1915), Slovenes tried to arrange a unified common state of Slovenes, Croats and those Serbs living within the Habsburg monarchy. This demand, known as the May Declaration, was made by the Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian representatives in the Vienna parliament in the spring of 1917.

The ruling circles of the Habsburg monarchy rejected this demand, even though it was supported by a strong Slovenian national pro-declaration movement. After Austro-Hungarian defeat, the Croatian assembly in Zagreb and a national gathering in Ljubljana on 29 October 1918 declared national freedom and the formation of an independent state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, with its capital in Zagreb. The danger from Italy, which had occupied Primorska and Istria as well as some parts of Dalmatia, and the pressures from the Serbs for unification into a common state, forced the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, on 1 December 1918, to unite with the Kingdom of Serbia into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was in 1929 renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Following a plebiscite in 1920, most of the Slovenian part of Carinthia was annexed to Austria. Thus, a unified Slovenia never became a reality. The majority of the Slovenian nation in Yugoslavia, which was completely centralised, had no constitutional or legal autonomy, but because of its ethnic compactness and because of the domination of the Slovenian People's Party (SLS), which strove for autonomy, the nation actually lived a fairly autonomous existence, which even the centralised Belgrade legislation could not spoil. Slovenia managed to develop both economically and culturally. But on its domestic political stage there was an intense struggle between the conservative-Christian SLS and the Liberal Party.

## The appearance of federal Yugoslavia

During the Second World War, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia disintegrated, and Slovenian territory was divided between Germany, Italy and Hungary. In 1941, the Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation was founded in Ljubljana and

began armed resistance against the occupying forces. The Communist Party soon adopted the leading role within the Liberation Front, gradually redirecting the liberation fight into a socialist revolution and taking total control. At the end of the war, the partisan army liberated the whole of ethnic Slovenia. The assembly of representatives of the Slovenian nation in October 1943 in Kočevje decided to include Slovenia in the new Yugoslavia, which was formed at the AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) meeting in Jajce in 1943 and two years later, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) was declared. Slovenia, as its constituent part, was renamed the People's Republic of Slovenia. By 1947, all private property had been nationalised. After the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia began introducing a milder version of socialism, based on common ownership and self-management. In 1963, the FLRY was renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and Slovenia was since then called the Socialist Republic of Slovenia.

Slovenia's economy developed rapidly, particularly in the fifties, when it was strongly industrialised. After the economic reform and further economic decentralisation of Yugoslavia in 1965 and 1966, of the six republics, Slovenia was the one most rapidly approaching a market economy.

In spite of restrictive economic and social legislation determined mainly by the largest - Serbian - nation, which based its centralist strategy on the less-developed republics, Slovenia managed to preserve a higher level of economic development, had a higher than average skilled workforce and better working discipline and organisation.

Slovenia's domestic product was 2.5 times the state average, which strengthened national confidence among the Slovenes. This confidence showed in both the economic and cultural areas.

## The independent state of Slovenia

After the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the economic and political situation started to become very strained and this ultimately led, ten years later to the end of the SFRY. The first clear demand for Slovenian independence was made in 1987 by a group of intellectuals in the 57th edition of the magazine Nova revija. Demands for democratisation and resistance

against the centralised Yugoslavia were sparked off by the arrest of three journalists from the political weekly Mladina and a non-commissioned officer of the Yugoslav Army.

In April 1990, the first democratic elections in Slovenia took place and were won by DEMOS, the united opposition movement, led by Jože Pučnik. In the same year more than 88% of the electorate voted for a sovereign and independent Slovenia. The declaration of independence followed on 25 June 1991.

Strong civil society movements in the eighties ended with the proclamation of independence of Slovenia in 1991.

In 1988 and 1989 the first political opposition parties emerged, which in the 1989 May Declaration demanded a sovereign state for the Slovenian nation. The next day, the Yugoslav Army attacked the newly-formed state. After a ten-day war, a truce was called and in October 1991 the last soldiers of the Yugoslav Army left Slovenia. The European



Union recognised Slovenia in the middle of January 1992, and the UN accorded its membership in May 1992.

## Twenty years of the independent Republic of Slovenia

In December 1991 the independent Republic of Slovenia adopted its constitution, which is based on the rights of free citizens. In its general provisions, the constitution defines Slovenia as a democratic republic, governed by the rule of law, and a social state. The adoption of the constitution formally ended the former communist system. To some members of Demos and outsiders, this and international recognition provided the basis for the argument that Demos had done its job and could be dissolved. In December 1992 at new elections under a new, more democratic law, the strongest force in the single chamber parliament became the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) led by Dr Janez Drnovšek with 23 per cent of the vote, which balanced the Slovenian political arena by forming a coalition with one left-wing (reformed communists) and one right-wing party (Christian Democrats).

With a similar coalition the LDS was able to govern for twelve years, with only one interruption in the second half of 2000. It managed to establish a liberal political culture by passing numerous fundamental laws, for example with regard to education, and to carry out a social and economic transition into a social market economy with private initiative. In comparison with other post-communist countries it managed to prevent excessive social differentiation. The economic sector, even though still largely owned by the state, successfully adapted to the world market and recorded significant growth. In 2004 Slovenia joined the EU, with considerable popular support, and NATO. At the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2004 the Slovenian Democratic Party won and formed a centre-right government, headed by the leader of the Slovenian Democratic Party Janez Janša. The Government continued a successful economic policy with 5 per cent economic growth and reforms of the tax and salary systems. It succeeded in meeting the Maastricht criteria and Slovenia joined the Eurozone (the first transition country to do so) on 1 January 2007. Slovenia is also the first new Member State to assume the Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2008. At the elections in 2008 the Social Democrats won the elections and formed a centre-left government, headed by the leader of the Social Democrats Borut Pahor.



On 25 June 1991 the people of Slovenia celebrated the declaration of an independent state, following an 88.2 % plebiscite vote in 1990.

## Political system

**President of the Republic:** Dr Danilo Türk since 2007

**Prime Minister:** Borut Pahor (SD) since 2008

**Government:** Prime Minister, 15 ministers, 3 ministers without portfolio

**National Assembly:** 90 deputies (88 elected representatives of the parliamentary parties and one representative each from the Italian and Hungarian national communities).

**National Council:** 40 elected representatives of employers, employees, farmers, tradesmen and the self-employed, as well as from the non-economic sector and local interest groups.

The Republic of Slovenia is a parliamentary representative democratic republic, which came into existence after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. As a political entity within Yugoslavia, Slovenia had different constitutional statuses, from being part of a unitary state in the aftermath of the Second World War to having a status strongly resembling a confederal unit, based on the 1974 constitution. In 1989, amendments were made to the Slovenian constitution, followed by further amendments in 1990, which provided the legal basis for the first multi-party elections in 1990 and the passage into a multiparty system.

The present Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia was adopted on 23 December 1991, following the results of the plebiscite on the sovereignty and independence of Slovenia on 23 December 1990, when Slovenes overwhelmingly voted for independence.

## The Constitution

Under the Constitution, Slovenia is a democratic republic and a social state governed by law. The state's authority is based on the principle of the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, with a parliamentary system of government. Power is held by the people and they exercise this power directly (through referendums and popular initiatives) and through elections. The highest legislative authority is the National Assembly (90 deputies), which has the right to enact laws.

According to the Constitution, "Slovenia is a state of all its citizens and is founded on the permanent and inalienable right of the Slovenian nation to self-determination". It lays the foundations for the legal system, which is based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, on the principle of a legal and socially just state, on a parliamentary form of state authority, and on the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers. The Constitution also contains special rights for the Hungarian, Italian and Roma ethnic communities. The Constitution, as the state's supreme law, can be amended following a proposal made by twenty National Assembly deputies, by the Government, or by at least 30,000 voters. Such proposals are decided by the National Assembly with a two-thirds majority vote of deputies, and a two-thirds majority vote is needed for the passage of amendments to the Constitution. The National Assembly is required to submit a proposed constitutional amendment to a referendum, if so required by at least 30 deputies.

## The electoral system of the Republic of Slovenia

The deputies of the National Assembly, with the exception of the two representatives of minorities, are elected by means of proportional representation, with a four per cent electoral threshold required at the national level. The country is divided into eight territorial constituencies, each represented by eleven elected deputies. For the elections of the representatives of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities, two special constituencies are formed, one for each minority. The deputies representing the minorities are elected on the basis of the majority principle. A special right to vote in these constituencies is accorded solely to members of the indigenous minorities. Members of the National Council who represent social, economic, professional and local interests are elected indirectly.

The President of the Republic and Mayors are elected in direct elections on the basis of an absolute majority. The candidate who receives a majority of valid votes cast is elected President. If no candidate receives an outright majority in the first round of voting, there is a second round for the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round.

According to the Constitution, the right to vote is universal and equal. Every citizen who has attained the age of eighteen years has the right to vote and stand for office. Voting is not compulsory and abstention is not sanctioned. In 1992, the turnout in the legislative elections was 85.6%, followed by 73.7% in 1996, 70.14% in 2000, and 63.10% in 2008. The voting trends correspond to those in most Western democracies, with the number of voters declining with each successive election. The greatest number of citizens takes part in legislative elections, and the smallest number in elections to local authorities.

## The National Assembly

Slovenia is a parliamentary democratic republic. The bicameral Slovenian Parliament is composed of the National Assembly and the National Council. The specific social structure and historical development of Slovenia have prompted the creation of a bicameral system comprising the representation of political parties in the National Assembly and the representation of organised social interests and local authorities in the State Council. The Slovenian Parliament is characterized by an asymmetric duality, as the Constitution does not accord equal powers to both chambers.

The National Assembly is composed of ninety deputies, with one representative of each of the Hungarian and Italian minorities. The deputies are elected for a four-year term; they represent all the people of Slovenia and are "not bound by any instructions" (Article 82 of the Constitution).

If a deputy becomes a minister, a seat in the National Assembly becomes available to the candidate with the most votes among those members of the same party who had originally not qualified for the National Assembly.

The National Assembly exercises legislative, voting and monitoring functions. As a legislative authority, it enacts

Dr Pavel Gantar, speaker of the Parliament



## Parties in the Slovenian National Assembly elected on 21 September 2008

Social Democrats: 29 seats

Slovenian Democratic Party: 28 seats

ZARES – nova politika: 9 seats

Democratic Party of Slovenian Pensioners: 7 seats

Slovenian National Party: 5 seats

Slovenian People's Party (SLS) and Youth Party of Slovenia (SMS): 5 seats

Liberal Democracy of Slovenia: 5 seats

1 representative each of the Hungarian and Italian national communities: 2 seats



The parliament building on Šubičeva Street in Ljubljana houses the National Assembly and the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia.

## The largest political parties in Slovenia:



Social Democrats  
(SD, leader Borut Pahor)



Slovenian Democratic Party  
(SDS, leader Janez Janša)



ZARES – nova politika  
(leader Gregor Golobič)



Democratic Party of Pensioners  
of Slovenia  
(DeSUS, leader Karl Erjavec)



Slovenian National Party  
(SNS, leader Zmago Jelinčič  
Plemeniti)



Slovenian People's Party  
(SLS, leader Radovan Žerjav)



Liberal Democracy of Slovenia  
(LDS, leader Katarina Kresal)

constitutional amendments, laws, national programmes, resolutions, etc. It also creates its own internal rules, ratifies the state budget and treaties, and calls referendums.

As a voting body, it elects the Prime Minister and other ministers, the President of the National Assembly and up to three Vice-Presidents. On the proposal of the President of the Republic, it also elects judges to the Constitutional Court, the Governor of the Bank of Slovenia, the Ombudsman, etc. Compared to other bicameral systems, the voting power of the Slovenian lower house is exercised over a wider range of issues.

The monitoring function of the National Assembly includes the setting up of parliamentary enquiries, votes of no confidence in the government or ministers, and constitutional proceedings against the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister or ministers in the Constitutional Court. In order to maintain the stable functioning of the executive branch, a so-called 'constructive vote of no confidence' has been introduced, which means that a government can only be ejected when a new one has been elected. The National Assembly acts through committees, which perform tasks typical of permanent parliamentary bodies; and through commissions established for special tasks. Deputy groups also operate within the National Assembly. They must consist of a minimum of three members and enjoy special rights in the activities of the National Assembly.

## The National Council

The National Council is the representative body for social, economic, professional, and local interests. It consists of forty members: twenty-two represent local authorities; four represent employers and another four represent employees; two represent farmers; crafts and trades, universities and higher education institutions, researchers, health care, social security, culture and sports, and independent professions each have one representative. Members of the National Council are elected for five years.

The competences of the National Council are not on the equal footing with those of the National Assembly. The National Council participates at the legislative process. It may propose to the National Assembly the passing of laws, convey to the National Assembly its opinion on all matters

within the competence of the National Assembly, require the National Assembly to decide again on a given law prior to its promulgation, require the calling of legislative referendum, require inquiries on matters of public importance, require the commencement of proceedings to assess the constitutionality and legality of regulations, require the initiation of the procedure for the review of the constitutionality and legality of regulations.

## The President of the Republic

The President of the Republic represents the Republic of Slovenia and is the commander-in-chief of its armed forces. The President calls the legislative elections, promulgates laws, proposes a candidate for Prime Minister to the National Assembly following talks with the leaders of deputy groups, proposes candidates for judges of the Constitutional Court and members of the Court of Audit, appoints and recalls ambassadors, accepts the credentials of foreign diplomats, grants clemencies, etc.

The President has no influence over the composition of the government, which is the task of the Prime Minister and the National Assembly. The President of the Republic may dissolve the National Assembly, if, after two successive proposals of a candidate (the second proposal may come from the National Assembly), it fails to appoint a Prime Minister. Should the National Assembly be unable to convene due to a state of emergency or war, the President may, on the proposal of the government, issue decrees, which have the force of law. The President of the Republic is elected for a five-year term in direct, general elections by secret ballot. The candidate receiving a majority of the valid votes cast is elected President of the Republic. If no candidate receives an outright, the top leading candidates compete in a runoff election. A President may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Since the office of Vice-President does not exist in the Slovenian political system, in the event of the prolonged absence of the President, the President of the National Assembly temporarily performs the duties of the President.



Dr Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, elected on 11 November 2007.

### Presidents of the Republic of Slovenia

	Terms of Office
Milan Kučan	1992 - 2002
Dr Janez Drnovšek	2002 -2007
Dr Danilo Türk	since 2007

## The Government

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia is a body with executive power and the highest body of the state administration. It determines, guides, and coordinates the implementation of state policies in accordance with the Constitution and with laws and other general acts passed by the National Assembly.

As the highest body of the state administration, it passes regulations and adopts legal, political, economic, financial, organisational and similar measures for regulating areas within the state's jurisdiction. Its function in the area of legislative initiatives includes proposing laws to be passed by the National Assembly, the state budget, national programmes and other acts with which political directions for individual areas within the state's competence are determined. With regard to the EU, the Government represents the Republic of Slovenia and makes submissions to EU institutions.

The Government functions as a cabinet led by a Prime Minister. It consists of the Prime Minister and ministers. Ministers head ministries and determine political guidelines for their operation. The number of ministers is not determined in advance, and every government coalition decides on the number according to its needs and political goals.

Government session.



The current Government of Slovenia led by the Prime Minister Borut Pahor (elected on 21 November 2008) has 19 members – the Prime Minister and 15 ministers who lead the following ministries: Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Economy; Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Health; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Public Administration; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Transport; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food; Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education and Sport and Ministry of Defence.

There are also three ministers without portfolio: responsible for local self-government and regional development; responsible for development and European affairs; and responsible for Slovenes abroad.

The present Government was appointed on 21 November 2008. It was formed on the basis of a coalition agreement signed on 14 November 2008 between the Social Democrats (SD), ZARES – nova politika, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) and the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS).

The Prime Minister-elect is proposed to the National Assembly by the President of the Republic after discussions with representatives of the parliamentary deputy groups. If his proposal is not elected in the first ballot, the President can nominate the same candidate again or a new one, while the Prime Minister-elect can also be proposed by deputy groups or at least ten deputies. The Prime Minister-elect then puts forward nominations to the Government, and ministerial candidates are required to present themselves to the relevant Committees in the National Assembly, which then vote on their suitability. The National Assembly then approves the ministers with a simple majority.



Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia since 21 November 2008.

### The Prime Ministers of the Republic of Slovenia

	Terms of Office
Lojze Peterle (SKD)	1990 - 1992
Dr Janez Drnovšek (LDS)	1992 - 2000
Dr Andrej Bajuk (SLS+SKD Slovenian People's Party)	2000
Dr Janez Drnovšek (LDS)	2000 - 2002
Anton Rop (LDS)	2002 - 2004
Janez Janša (SDS)	2004 - 2008
Borut Pahor (SD)	since 2008

## The judicial system

The judicial system is the third branch of government. The task of the judiciary is to decide on the rights and duties of citizens, and charges brought against them. All courts in the Republic of Slovenia are regular courts, and act in accordance with the principles of constitutionality, independence and the rule of law.

The unified system of courts consists of courts with general and specialised jurisdiction. Courts with general jurisdiction include 44 district, 11 regional, and 4 higher courts, and the Supreme Court, while specialised courts comprise 4 labour courts and a social court (they rule on labour-related and social insurance disputes), and the Administrative Court, which provides legal protection in administrative affairs and has the status of a higher court.

The state prosecution holds a special place in the justice system, as it is an independent state authority, but part of the executive branch of power. The General State Prosecutor is appointed by the National Assembly.

## The Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court is the highest body of judicial authority with regard to the protection of constitutionality, legality, human rights and basic freedoms. It may act as a negative legislature and abrogate an act or part of an act. Constitutional Judges are appointed by the National Assembly following the proposal of the President of the Republic. Nine judges are elected for a period of nine years, with no possibility of a further term. The office of a constitutional judge and judges of specialised and general courts is incompatible with other offices in state bodies.



The judges of the Constitutional Court.

## Local self-government

Slovenia has a long tradition of regionalism and local self-government. The Local Self-Government Act stipulates that a municipality is the basic self-governing local community, with at least 5,000 inhabitants; an urban municipality has at least 20,000 inhabitants. The National Assembly decides on the boundary of a municipality on the basis of a non-binding referendum of the inhabitants, usually acting in accordance with the outcome.

Following the last referendum in April 2006, there are now 210 municipalities in Slovenia. Among other things, municipalities have the authority to manage the municipality's assets, facilitate conditions for economic development, plan spatial development, create conditions for building dwellings, manage local public services, establish primary and nursery schools, and build and maintain local roads.

The authorities of a municipality comprise a mayor, a municipal council and a supervisory committee, with the municipal council being the highest decision-making body. The mayor, who is a directly elected official, represents and acts on behalf of the municipality, and presides over the municipal or city council. The supervisory committee supervises the disposal of municipal property and public expenditure. The constitutional changes of June 2006 introduced provinces to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. The provinces' tasks will include economic, social and cultural development, spatial development and environmental protection, traffic and transport links within the province, and providing public utilities of provincial significance.

## Court of Audit

The Court of Audit is the highest body for supervising state accounts, the state budget and all public spending. The organisation and powers of the Court of Audit are provided by law. It is independent in the performance of its duties and bound by the Constitution and relevant legislation. Its members are appointed by the National Assembly at the proposal of the President of the Republic.

## Bank of Slovenia

The Bank of Slovenia is the central bank of the Republic of Slovenia. It was established in June 1991 within the package of legislation for independence. One of its first tasks was overseeing the transition to a new currency, the Slovenian



Slovenian euro coins.

tolar (SIT), which was the legal tender until January 2007, when Slovenia adopted the euro and became the 13th member of Eurozone. Even prior to the adoption of the euro the Bank's primary task was maintaining the stability of prices. By managing monetary and foreign exchange policies it ensured a stable rate, the liquidity of the banking system and the requirements for currency withdrawal. The function of the Bank of Slovenia changed with the introduction of the euro and membership of the Eurozone. Since that day the Bank uses the Statute of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and of the European Central Bank (ECB) in carrying out its role. Its key tasks as a member of the ESCB are to define and implement Eurozone monetary policy, to conduct foreign exchange operations, to hold and manage the official foreign reserves of Member States, and to promote the smooth operation of payment systems. The national central banks operate as an intermediary between the Community's monetary policy and national economic policies. The Bank is an independent institution under public law, owned by the state. It has managerial and financial autonomy, which means the members of its operational bodies are not bound to any decision made by any government bodies, or even turn to them for guidance or advice.

## Human Rights Ombudsman

Under the Constitution, the Republic of Slovenia has an Ombudsman whose responsibility is the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in relation to state authorities, local authorities, and persons in public office. The Ombudsman is proposed by the President of the Republic and elected by the National Assembly with a two-thirds majority vote for a period of six years, and the possibility of another term. A two-thirds majority vote gives the Ombudsman the necessary legitimacy imperative for his/her work. The Ombudsman reports to the National Assembly annually. The annual reports have become an important reflection of the situation regarding basic human rights and freedoms in Slovenia. The law allows the Ombudsman or anyone else to initiate proceedings against violations of human rights.

## The Information Commissioner

Information Commissioner is an autonomous and independent body, established on 31 December 2005 with the Information Commissioner Act, which supervises the protection of

personal data and the access to public information. The Commissioner is appointed by the National Assembly at the proposal of the President of the Republic.

## Interest groups and social partners

Slovenia has a rich tradition of people organising themselves into interest groups. Today there are over 18,000 different organisations and associations registered in Slovenia, most of them for sports, culture and fire fighting. Some interests are represented in particular: either within the scope of functional representation in the National Assembly or the scope of social partnership. Within the scope of social partnership the interests of employers and employees are particularly organised. Only representative unions are included in negotiations between the employers and the state. At the government level there is an Economic and Social Council of Slovenia, comprised of five representatives from the government, employers, and employees, respectively. In Council meetings and negotiations the members advance their views on social, economic and budgetary policies, particularly dealing with issues such as social agreements, social rights and compulsory insurance, employment problems, prices and taxes, the wages system, wages policy, employee co-management etc. It has mainly informal powers, as it is not a part of the formal institution structure of the RS. Decisions are reached through consensus; each representative group must then implement the decisions. The Council has greatly contributed to the enhancement of the social-economic development of Slovenian society.

## The Slovenian Armed Forces

With democratic changes and the independence of Slovenia, the Territorial Defence Forces of Slovenia were transformed into the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF). The SAF's most important duties include the defence of the Republic of Slovenia, fulfilling international defence, military and other commitments taken on by the Republic of Slovenia, cooperating in tasks related to protection, salvage and aid, and in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. Until 2002, the SAF was a conscript force, but it is now being transformed into a professional force. The process will be concluded in 2010. During this time, Slovenia will establish a professional army with a voluntary reserve. The reasons for this are changes in the international situation and the need for a smaller, but better equipped and trained professional army.

**Facts** About Slovenia



**www.vlada.si**

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia

**www.ukom.gov.si**

Government Communication Office

**www.dz-rs.si**

National Assembly

**www.ds-rs.si**

The National Council

**www.us-rs.si/en**

The Constitutional Court

**www.bsi.si**

Bank of Slovenia

**www.rs-rs.si**

Court of Audit

**www.varuh-rs.si**

Human Rights Ombudsman

**www.ip-rs.si**

Information Commissioner



On 1 May 2004 Slovenia became a member of the European Union.

# 03

## Slovenia in the world

### Slovenia's membership of international organisations and regional initiatives

United Nations (UN), 1992  
 Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 1992  
 Central European Initiative (CEI), 1992  
 World Health Organisation (WHO), 1992  
 International Labour Organisation (ILO), 1992  
 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 1992  
 Council of Europe (CE), 1993  
 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 1993  
 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), 1993  
 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 1993  
 World Trade Organisation (WTO), 1995  
 Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA), 1996  
 Quadilateral Initiative, 1996  
 Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), 1997  
 Human Security Network, 1998  
 Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 1999  
 Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), 2000  
 Regional Partnership, 2001  
 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), 2004  
 European Union (EU), 2004  
 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2010

### The basic goals of Slovenia's foreign policy

On 25 June 1991 Slovenia became a state in its own right. After the new state was founded the big challenge ahead was still to be accomplished: Slovenia needed to gain international recognition and establish itself as a player on the world stage. One of the first important goals of Slovenian foreign policy was to join the international organizations and alliances, such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, NATO, and many other international arrangements. Slovenia

not only quickly became a member of such international groupings, but has already presided over several of them (OSCE Presidency in 2005). In 2010 Slovenia became member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

An important aspect of a successful state is also its relationship with its neighbours. Slovenia maintains open and friendly relations with Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia. It also pays special attention to the position of the Hungarian and Italian minorities in Slovenia and to the Slovenian minorities living in neighbouring countries.

Slovenia co-operates with its neighbours via quadripartite projects and initiatives; it also works alongside other Central European states within the Central European Initiative (CEI) and Regional Partnership and contributes to the stabilisation of South Eastern Europe within the Stability Pact.

## Membership in the EU

Geographically, historically and culturally, Slovenia has always been a European country. But the post Second World War ideological divide between communist and non-communist Europe created a wall that would only disintegrate with the fall of communism. However, throughout the tumultuous 20th century, Slovenes maintained their political, economic, and above all, human contacts with the non-communist parts of Europe that were gradually moving towards closer integration. Following that, it was only a matter of practical arrangements before the newly independent Slovenia could join the EU and end its political and ideological separation from Europe.

It is not surprising that after independence the new Slovenian Government recognised EU membership as one of the country's immediate priorities. The Europe Agreement, signed in 1996, came into force on 1 February 1999. Membership negotiations began in March 1998 and were concluded in December 2002.



United in the European Union.

On 23 March 2003 a referendum on accession to the EU was held in Slovenia. The turnout at the referendum was 60.4%, and 89.6% of votes cast were in favour of accession. The Accession Treaty was signed in Athens on 16 April 2003, and on 28 January 2004 it was ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. Slovenia, together with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Slovakia became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004.

Besides the historical urgency, there were also many practical reasons for such eagerness to join the Union. Slovenia expected important economic benefits, such as macro-

economic stability, lower inflation, speedier restructuring and modernisation of companies, a stable and more efficient economic environment, a boost in foreign investments, better opportunities to access new technologies and knowledge, and greater consumer choice.

In the political sense EU membership meant greater security and stability for a small country, as well as a stronger position in the international community, enabling it to take part in European policy making and formulating Europe's future image. Another important aspect of EU membership was the expectation of greater recognition, better opportunities in education, training and employment throughout the EU, and cultural enrichment.

On 1 January 2007 Slovenia became the 13th member of the Eurozone (the first in the 2004 enlargement wave).

On 21 December 2008 Slovenia together with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia entered the Schengen area of free circulation – its border with Croatia thus becoming the external EU border. In the air traffic the border controls within the Schengen area were abolished on 30 March 2008.



Celebrating the EU membership.

## Slovenes in EU institutions

Slovenia has 4 of the 345 votes in the Council of the European Union, and since the elections of June 2009, it has had 7 of a total of 751 representatives at the European Parliament. European Commissioner from Slovenia is Janez Potočnik, responsible for the environment. There are numerous other Slovenes working at EU institutions, many of them in senior positions, including Verica Trstenjak, Advocate-General, and Marko Ilešič as a judge both at the Court of Justice in Luxembourg and many others.

## Slovenia's EU Presidency in the first half of 2008

In the first half of 2008 Slovenia assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Slovenia was the first of the EU Member States which joined in 2004 and the first Slavic country ever to be entrusted with such responsibility.

The EU Presidency was a very demanding project for national administration in terms of content, organisation and allocation of funds. It required cooperation of the entire state administration,

as well as the Slovenian economy, science and culture sector and after all civil society. Altogether, Slovenia's EU Council Presidency involved 2,720 Slovenian civil servants, 133 independent experts and 245 students. In 2006 Slovenia, together with Germany and Portugal and in close cooperation with European institutions, prepared a joint 18-month Programme. Within the programme, the Slovenian Presidency focused on five major issues: the future of EU/Lisbon Treaty, climate-energy issues, the Lisbon Strategy, the Western Balkans and intercultural dialogue.

At the spring meeting of the European Council 2008, we successfully launched the second three-year period of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for 2008-2010 with the introduction of the "fifth freedom - free movement of knowledge". Especially successful was the compromise of the Member States regarding the necessity to continue the reform process after 2010. With the beginning of the new cycle came new opportunities for increasing the competitiveness of enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. Much attention was also devoted to strengthening the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy.

A step forward was taken in the process of resolving climate-energy issues. We reached an agreement on key principles and a timeframe for adopting the EU climate-energy legislative package. The greatest achievement in the energy sector during Slovenia's Presidency was agreement on the third legislative package concerning liberalisation of the internal natural gas and electricity market.

During the Slovenian Presidency, the network of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the Western Balkan countries was completed and a series of sectoral incentives was launched, the most important of which was the beginning of dialogue on visa liberalisation. Even with regard to the Lisbon Treaty, the Slovenian Presidency did everything in its power, as the ratification of the treaty is the sole responsibility of the Member States. As the presiding state, Slovenia set an example for others by being the second Member State to ratify the treaty.

All the above mentioned was achieved through formal and informal work. In total, more than 8,000 events were held during the Slovenian EU Council Presidency: 283 events took place in Slovenia, 3,285 in Brussels and 4,242 elsewhere in the world. Besides the two European Council meetings, four other events at the highest level were organised under the Slovenian Presidency: summits between the EU and Japan, Latin American and Caribbean countries, the United States and the Russian Federation.



Soldiers of the Slovenian Armed Forces.

Slovenia has been actively participating in international peacekeeping operations since 1997.



## Participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) in international operations and missions

In 1997, the SAF deployed its first troops to the humanitarian operation ALBA in Albania. Ever since then, the SAF has been contributing troops to international operations and missions under the auspices of NATO, the UN, and the EU.

### Participation in NATO operations

On 29 March 2004 Slovenia became a NATO member. Nevertheless, it has participated in NATO operations since January 2000, when the first SAF troops were deployed to Kosovo Force (KFOR). Until 2007, they operated as part of other armed forces, but in February 2007, the first Slovenian battalion-level unit was deployed. The battalion took over its own area of responsibility and was for the first time in command of the troops of another NATO country. In the same period, civil-military cooperation experts were also deployed to Kosovo carrying out several high-profile projects regarding the assistance for the local population. (kfor)

In December 2003, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision on the participation in the peace support operation in Afghanistan and in March 2004, Slovenian troops were first deployed to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Currently, the tasks of the ISAF contingent include mentoring of an Afghan infantry battalion and a combat-support battalion; combat support and protection of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT); provision of national logistic support; and work within ISAF Commands and a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) of the Regional Command West.

SAF members also perform duties in NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo and Skopje.

### Participation in EU and UN operations

With the stabilisation of security conditions in the Western Balkans, in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and with the EU taking over the leadership of the peacekeeping mission ALTHEA at the end of 2004, Slovenia gradually withdrew troops from the country. Currently, Slovenian officers and non-commissioned officers work at the EUFOR Command as well as in the National Support Element, which provides administrative and logistic support for the members of the

Slovenian Armed Forces. Another EU-led operation, which includes SAF members, is the maritime military operation 'EU NAVFOR Somalia' taking place off the coast of Somalia. In this way, the Republic of Slovenia, as a maritime country, joins the EU's efforts to protect sea routes and vessels delivering humanitarian aid to displaced persons in Somalia within the UN World Food Programme.

Since December 2006, Slovenian Armed Forces has also actively participated in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and since 1998, in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) operation in the Middle East.

## An active member of the UN

Slovenia became a member of the United Nations on 22 May 1992. With membership of this universal international organisation, it gained the opportunity to directly express its policy on key issues facing the international community and to affirm itself politically as a subject of international law. In 1996, Slovenia joined the East European elective group, and in October 1997 it became a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a period of two years. During this time it also twice presided over the Security Council. On 17 May 2007 the Republic of Slovenia was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the period between June 2007 and June 2010.

## Human Security Network

Slovenia is also an active member of an informal group of countries that was formed in 1998 to work towards resolving outstanding humanitarian issues directly affecting security. Slovenia was invited into the group in 1998 on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Session, and presided over the group in 2006/2007. The HSN's functioning is based on cooperation with like-minded countries and international and non-governmental organisations in carrying out activities and launching initiatives aimed at consolidating and encouraging political and legal mechanisms relating to security.

## International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance

In 1998, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia founded the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) as a non-profit, humanitarian organisation,



with the initial mission of raising donor funds and organising demining activities, as well as the rehabilitation of mine victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Later, other mine-affected countries in South Eastern Europe (Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) were included, and the Fund began to widen its activities to include Cyprus, Afghanistan and the Trans-Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan

The ITF has carried out over 2,490 action projects and cleared over 104 million square metres of mine-polluted areas in South Eastern Europe and another 2 million square meters in Trans-Caucasus. The Fund has also contributed to the physical rehabilitation of over 1040 mine victims, which is roughly 15 per cent of all surviving victims in South Eastern Europe.

and Georgia). The ITF's vision is to free the countries of South Eastern Europe from the impact of mines by the end of 2009 and to actively contribute to resolving this problem in other mine-affected regions.

Over 82 thousand children and adults from mine-affected communities directly participated in programmes to raise awareness of the mine problem. The ITF has educated over 800 experts in the field of humanitarian demining, rehabilitation and mine action management, and supported the activities of national mine action centres in all the mine-affected countries of South Eastern Europe.

The Slovenian Government is therefore justifiably proud of this endeavour, and grateful to over 100 donors, including 28 states, the European Commission and the UNDP, numerous local communities, organisations, companies, and individuals who have entrusted over \$305.7 million to the ITF since 1998 and made its work possible.

## Membership of the Council of Europe

Slovenia became a full member of the Council of Europe on 14 May 1993. Its participation in the Council of Europe activities takes place at inter-governmental, parliamentary and local levels. Slovenia's permanent representative in the Council of Europe regularly takes part in sessions of the Committee of Ministers' Deputies, and the Foreign Minister or his deputy participates in sessions of the Committee of Ministers.

Representatives of Slovenian ministries and government offices are involved in the working bodies of the Council of Europe, dealing with various issues, such as human rights, the

Narcissi on Mt Golica.



judiciary, health, policies relating to the family, young people and children, social care, media, sport, culture, education and local government. A judge from Slovenia works at the European Court of Human Rights, founded in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. Slovenia plays an active part in the North-South Centre which, within a Central European context, encourages participation between north and south, as well as in the Central European Development Bank, which provides loans for social projects. Slovenia was presiding the Council of Europe between 12 May and 18 November 2009.

## Environmental protection

In November 2005, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the new National Environment Protection Programme (NEPP) for the period up to 2012, whose main objective is the general improvement of the environment and the quality of life, and the protection of natural sources. It is a starting point for the environmental dimension of Slovenia's Development Strategy, determining the vision of Slovenia's future, and giving the orientation and measures for its realisation. The basic aim of the environmental protection policy is to ensure sustainable development. In the environmental field this means the organisation of the economy, infrastructure, settlement, and way of life in view of the carrying capacity of the environment and natural resources, and the promotion of the integration of environmental issues with other sectorial policies in line with the principle of integration.

The basic aims of the NEPP in particular fields are:

- Setting out climatic change as an important challenge in the years ahead, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thus contributing to the long-term stabilisation of the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, as well as reducing the emission of substances causing ozone layer degradation.
- Protecting and preserving all natural systems, habitats, free-living animal and plant species, with the aim of preventing the loss of biotic diversity, genetic variety and further soil degradation.
- Contributing to the high quality of life and social welfare of citizens by ensuring an environment in which the level of pollution does not harmfully affect people's health and by encouraging sustainable development in cities, and above all ensuring the measures for establishing good water quality.
- Handling waste and using renewable and non-renewable natural resources that enable sustainable production and consumption, contribute to reducing environmental pollution and energy use so that the latter does not exceed the environment's carrying capacity.



In the forests, covering almost 58% of the Slovenia territory, a wide variety of vegetation and wildlife has been preserved.



**www.mzz.gov.si**  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**www.eu2008.si**  
Slovenian EU Presidency

**www.mors.si**  
Ministry of Defence

**www.itf-fund.si**  
International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance

**www.mop.gov.si**  
Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning

**www.europa.eu**  
Gateway to the European Union

# Economy

## Macroeconomic indices for Slovenia in 2008

Real GDP growth (real growth rate in %)	-8,1
GDP per capita in EUR	17,331
Rate of unemployment by ILO in %	5,9
Labour productivity (real growth rate in %)	0,9
Inflation (annual average)	0,9

## GDP per capita according to purchasing power in PPS\*, EU-25 = 100

	2007
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>100</b>
Luxembourg (Grand-Duchy)	266
Ireland	150
Netherlands	131
Austria	124
Sweden	122
Denmark	120
United Kingdom	119
Belgium	118
Finland	116
Germany	115
France	109
Spain	105
Italy	101
Greece	95
Cyprus	91
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>89</b>
Czech Republic	80
Malta	78
Portugal	76
Estonia	68
Slovakia	67
Hungary	63
Lithuania	60
Latvia	58
Poland	54
Romania	42
Bulgaria	37

Source: Eurostat

Note: \* PPS - Purchasing Power Standard

## Development trends

Since independence in 1991, Slovenia's economic development has been very successful, making it one of the most thriving countries in transition. Especially during the period 1995–2008, economic growth in Slovenia was stable, reaching an average slightly above 4%. The Slovenian economy is open, and levels of internationalisation, measured by the average share of exports and imports in gross domestic product (GDP), have increased from 52% to 70% from 1995 to 2008. Economic growth was further enhanced by buoyant growth of private consumption and investment spending, which was most prominent in the year 1999. Higher economic growth compared to the EU average has enabled a gradual decrease in Slovenia's development lag. Thus in 2007, Slovenia reached 89.2% of the average GDP of the EU-27 per capita, expressed in terms of purchasing power, which corresponds to an increase of 14.8 percentage points compared to 1995. This placed Slovenia in 16th place in the EU.

Following economic growth, there was also an increase in employment, which is above the European average since 2000 (in 2007, employment rate in Slovenia was 67.8%, as against 65.4% in the EU). Compared to the EU average,

Slovenia also has a considerably high employment rate of women (62.6% in 2007). The employment rate of older workers remains low (33.5% in 2007), but the situation is improving. For several years, the unemployment has been lower than the EU average (in 2008, 4.4% in Slovenia, as against 7.0% in the EU). Long-term unemployment is also lower than the EU average (in 2007, 2.2% in Slovenia, 3.0% in the EU). The wages policy ensures a sound increase in wages in relation to growth in labour productivity. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the average monthly net wage in December 2008 was EUR 938,7.

<b>Real GDP growth (in %)</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>EU 27</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Belgium	3.0	2.8	1.2
Bulgaria	6.3	6.2	6.0
Czech Republic	6.8	6.0	4,4 <sup>f</sup>
Denmark	3.3	1.6	-1.1
Germany	3.0	2.5	1.3
Estonia	10.4	6.3	-3.6
Ireland	5.7	6.0	-2.3
Greece	4.5	4.0	2.9
Spain	3.9	3.7	1.2
France	2.2	2.2	na
Italy	2.0	1.6	-1.0
Cyprus	4.1	4.4	3.7
Latvia	12.2	10.0	-4.6
Lithuania	7.8	8.9	3.0
Luxembourg	6.4	5.2	2,5 <sup>f</sup>
Hungary	4.1	1.1	0.5
Malta	3.2	3.6	1.6
Netherlands	3.4	3.5	2.1
Austria	3.4	3.1	1.8
Poland	6.2	6.6	4.8
Portugal	1.4	1.9	-0.0
Romania	7.9	6.2	7.1
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Slovakia	8.5	10.4	6,4 <sup>f</sup>
Finland	4.9	4.2	0.9
Sweden	4.2	2.6	-0.2
United Kingdom	2.8	3.0	0.7

Source: Eurostat  
Note: f Forecast, na=Not available.

On 1 January 2007, Slovenia became the first new EU member to adopt the euro, after the European Commission and the European Central Bank made favourable assessments of Slovenia's readiness for the introduction of the common European currency and following a recommendation for Slovenia's inclusion in the EMU.

<b>Important macroeconomic indices for Slovenia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>6,8</b>	<b>3,5</b>
Structure in value added in %			
Agriculture, forestry, fishing (A+B)	2.4	2.4	2.3
Industry and construction (C+D+E+F)	34.4	34.4	34.0
Industry (C+D+E)	27.1	26.4	25.1
Construction F	7.3	8.0	8.9
Services (G...P)	63.3	63.3	63.7
GDP per capita in EUR	15,446	17,076	18,204
GDP per capita in US\$	19,373	23,403	26,578
Rate of unemployment by ILO in %	6.0	4.9	4.4
Labour productivity (GDP per employee)	4.3	3.7	0.6
Gross wage per employee (real growth in %)	2.2	2.2	2.5
Inflation (average in %)	2.5	3.6	5.7
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE -</b>			
<b>BALANCE OF PAYMENTS STATISTICS</b>			
Exports of goods and services- real <sup>1</sup>	12.5	13.8	3.3
Imports of goods and services- real <sup>1</sup>	12.2	15.7	3.5
Current account balance in EUR m	-771	-1,455	-2,180
External debt in EUR m	24,067	34,752	39,096
<b>FINAL DOMESTIC DEMAND -</b>			
<b>NATIONAL ACCOUNTS</b>			
<b>STATISTICS (share in GDP, in %)</b>			
Private consumption	53.0	52.2	52.7
Government consumption	18.8	17.7	17.9
Gross fixed capital formation	26.3	27.5	28.0

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Bank of Slovenia; Spring Forecast of Economic Trends 2008, IMAD.  
Note 1) Balance of payments statistics (import F.O.B., export F.O.B.); changes in exchange rates and prices in foreign markets eliminated by the calculation of real rates.

## The labour market

Labour market trends follow the economic growth with some delay. In 2008, employment growth remained high while productivity growth was the lowest since Slovenia's independence. The greatest increase in employment was seen in construction, partly because of increased residential and highway construction. On the other hand, the number of workers employed in manufacturing started to decrease in the second quarter of 2008 as the economy has been strained of global financial crisis.

### Number of employees per sector in 2008

	In thousands	Structure in %
Farming, hunting, forestry, fisheries	86	8.6
Mining, manufacturing, energy	252	25.5
Construction	90	9.1
Trade and repair services, tourism, traffic and communications	219	22.1
Financial intermediation, real estate, business services	141	14.2
Other service activities	203	20.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

## Knowledge for development

Slovenia is strengthening the factors, which support a knowledge-based society. In late 2005, the Resolution on the National Research and Development Programme for the Period 2006-2010 was adopted as the central development document for research and development. In the 2008 Reform programme for achieving Lisbon Strategy goals the Government extended the objective of reaching 3% of GDP of total investment in R&D of and the increase of public funds from the national budget for research from 2010 to 2013. According to data published in the European Innovation Scoreboard 2008 (EIS), Slovenia made progress in the field of innovation, innovativeness and patent applications in 2006/2007 and is third among new EU members (and 14th overall among EU countries) in relation to scores on the summary innovation index. In 2005, Slovenia filed 32.2 patent applications per million residents (the EU average was 105.7).

Measures in industrial policy for the stimulation of cooperation between R&D activities and the business sector are included in the Programme of Measures to Promote Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness for the Period 2007-2013.

The Young Basic Researchers for Business and Industry Programme stimulates a flow of knowledge into the business sector, as it stipulates the funding of basic research projects of young researchers from companies.

The measures for the stimulation of new innovative companies include establishing an infrastructure for economic developmental logistic platforms, which will create an environment favourable for newly created spin-off companies and other new, innovative companies, as well as a number of financial measures for the support of young innovative companies.

## Transport infrastructure

In 2007, the state road network included almost 6,500 km of state roads, among which were more than 500 km of motorways. The construction of motorways continued in 2008 as total of 94 km of new sections were put into operation while 65 km of sections were under construction with the aim of completing the main motorway cross on the European Corridors V and X. Slovenia has rail links with all neighbouring countries. In the area of rail infrastructure, action is being undertaken to invest in the renovation and modernisation of the rail infrastructure on corridors V and X. The Port of Koper, which in the last few years has seen an increase of cargo and passenger traffic, has good links with Central and Eastern Europe. Slovenia has three international



Koper is an important port for Austria, southern Germany and the Central European states.

airports. In the renovation of the Ljubljana Airport, the reconstruction of the old passenger terminal and the building of a new terminal was concluded in 2007.

## The most important economic activities

Slovenia is increasingly becoming a service economy. In the period 1995-2008, the structure of the Slovenian economy was marked by the growing importance of the service sector, which in 2008 created 63.7% of added value, an increase of 3.3 percentage points compared to 1995. A relatively high rate of added value is also created by the industrial sector (25.1% in 2008), the most important being manufacturing (22.1%). Agriculture, which declined considerably as an element in the economic structure, accounted for a mere 2.3% of added value (it was 4.4% in 1995).

The structural shifts in services indicate an increase in the importance of knowledge-based services (telecommunications, business and financial services). These services, which, according to OECD classifications, include telecommunications, business and financial services were the fastest growing market services of the past decade. In 2008, they represented around 17% of the added value of the Slovenian economy. Important market services reaching above average growth rates in the past ten years were certain so-called traditional services, such as land transportation (chiefly road haulage), agency services and wholesaling.

In the manufacturing sector, technology-intensive production activities are becoming more and more important. The combined shares of the chemical, electrical equipment, machinery and transport industries, which, according to OECD classifications, qualify as highly and moderately technology-intensive activities, have risen from 33.7 in 1995 to 42.2% of added value in the manufacturing sector. With the exception of motor vehicle and vessel manufacturing, these activities, together with the metal products industry, represent the four most prominent activities in the Slovenian manufacturing sector. Among other activities which are less technology-intensive, fast growth has been achieved since 1995 in the aforementioned metal products industry (especially steel) and rubber manufacturing. Another major activity is the food industry, although its added value share has been gradually decreasing since 2000.



In the shopping centres of Mercator and Merkur.



## The five leading Slovenian companies in terms of net profit in 2009

1. Krka, d.d. Novo mesto
2. Knauf Insulation, d.o.o. Škofja Loka
3. Holding Slovenske elektrarne, d.d. Ljubljana
4. Telekom Slovenije, d.d. Ljubljana
5. Lek, d.d. Ljubljana

Source: Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (Ajpes)

## Tourism in Slovenia

Tourism presents an important development and business opportunity for Slovenia. Given the current level of development and existing potential, tourism could become one of the leading sectors of the Slovenian economy in the next few years, thus significantly contributing to Slovenia's development goals, and particularly the economic objectives, stipulated in Slovenia's Development Strategy 2007-2013.

Tourism sector has been witness to numerous changes in the market: increasingly intense global competition, demographic changes and climate change, the rapid development of information and communication technologies, and a period of economic crisis. Changes in the tourism market, as a result of which tourist behavior also changes, also dictate the changes in the focus and activities for the development of Slovenian tourism. The aim is to guarantee premium experiences for tourists and to stimulate the development and marketing of sustainable/green tourism, which is something that tourists are increasingly demanding. Given the current level of development and existing potential, tourism could become one of the leading

Bled is world famous for its glacial lake, its island with the church and the castle.





Velika Planina with its unique shepherds' huts architecture.

sectors of the Slovenian economy (in 2010 the contribution of Travel & Tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 12,1% (Source: WTTC 2010)) in the next few years, thus significantly contributing to Slovenia's development goals.

In 2009, tourist accommodation facilities in Slovenia recorded 2,984,828 arrivals and 9,013,773 overnight stays. In comparison to 2008 the number of overnight stay by both domestic and foreign tourists decreased by 3%. In 2009, foreign guests accounted for 55% of all overnight stays, of which more than 60% came from seven countries: Italy (20%), Austria (13%), Germany (12%), Croatia (6%), Netherlands (5%), United Kingdom (5%) and the Russian Federation (3%). According to the Bank of Slovenia, consumption of foreign tourists in 2009 decreased for 6% which is result of economic crises and lower consumption of tourists.

On the European and global scale, Slovenia tourism is becoming increasingly more competitive, which was confirmed by 35th place on the 2009 World Economic Forum's list of countries (36th place in 2008 and 44th place in 2007) in terms of travel and tourism competitiveness. The report, The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, which included 130 countries in 2009, was based on 14 factors of tourism competitiveness. The vision of Slovenian tourism is to develop a tourist destination with a diverse and high quality tourist offer specialising in short-term stays, while at the same time offering appealing and diverse integrated tourist products that can

**I FEEL  
SLOVENIA**

### Cultural and sport events

Ljubljana and Maribor are important European festival cities, which have built their reputation on events such as the International Biennial of Graphic Arts, the International Summer Festival, the International Jazz Festival, *Druga godba* (a world music festival), the LIFFE Film Festival (all in Ljubljana), and the Lent Multicultural Festival (in Maribor).

As a host country for important sporting events, Slovenia is best known among Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and ski-jumping enthusiasts. Kranjska Gora and Pohorje host Alpine Skiing World Cup races. Planica, on the other hand, is the cradle of ski-jumping, and has become a traditional venue for world-class ski-jumping competitions. Each year, the best competitors in cross-country skiing and the biathlon come to the Pokljuka Plateau looking for World Cup points.

render Slovenia a popular destination for longer stays. After all, Slovenia is one of the relatively undiscovered European destinations – pristine, authentic and traditional, while at the same time modern, innovative and easily negotiable, due to its size, offering unique cosiness and comfort, unspoilt nature, rich cultural heritage, and plenty of opportunities to enjoy active and relaxing holidays.

Tradition and the modern spirit of Slovenian tourism are embraced in the new slogan and logo i.e. the new trademark of Slovenia's tourism. **I FEEL SLOVENIA** is a slogan that reflects the essence of Slovenia: everyone who visits it, falls in love with it.

### The role of small and medium-sized companies

In the business environment, small and medium-sized companies or enterprises (SME) are key elements in a successful and dynamic economy, primarily due to their ability to react promptly to new business opportunities and their timely transformation of innovative ideas into new products. In Slovenia, MMEs play a key role in creating new jobs, contributing to a more competitive environment and generating considerable income and added value for the whole of the economy. They account for the largest share of the service sector, where they ensure the most jobs. Before Slovenia's independence, the driving power of the country's economic development lay in large companies. However, the development of the economy and society after 1991 allowed for the release of entrepreneurial initiative, which in turn enabled an increase in the number of companies and a shift in their size structure in favour of small businesses. In the period 1990-1994, the number of companies increased by almost two thirds, and, following a period of stagnation, the trend has continued in the past few years. In the period 2003-2008, the number of companies increased by 20% to 112,026, on average by 4% per year. Most new companies

In Slovenia, SMEs play a key role in creating new jobs, contributing to a more competitive environment and generating considerable income and added value for the whole of the economy. They have the largest share of the service sector, where they ensure the most jobs.

were created in the manufacturing and business services sectors. In the past few years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of small enterprises; the increase in the number of medium-sized companies is moderate, while

the number of large companies is decreasing. Also, new jobs are created mainly in small and medium-sized companies, and the importance of small businesses is growing in terms of revenues and added value. In 2008, the share of SMEs in employment amounted to 66.4%.

## Slovenia in the globalised world

Globalisation offers Slovenia an opportunity to develop an active strategy to draw profit from its advantages and at the same time to share responsibility for the control of globalisation-related risks at the international level. In the preparatory phase of the strategy addressing globalisation-related challenges, it is a sensible approach for small countries to give priority to joining regional organisations and use them as a vehicle for joining global production systems, as well as world trade and finance.

Regional integration allows for more intensive cooperation in the fields of manufacturing and trade, which are not subject to globalisation to the same extent as science or technology.

Regional integration also creates a temporary shield from certain negative effects of globalisation, as joint measures enable more efficient adaptation to the challenges of globalisation. Slovenia can achieve this by being a member of the EU.

## External trade

The rate of internationalisation of the Slovenian economy, measured by the average export and import share in GDP, is relatively high, as characteristic of small countries, and is increasing. In the period 1995-2008, it increased from 52% to 70% of GDP, while the EU average for the same period hovered between 30% and 40%. The rate of internationalisation is mainly increasing because of the greater integration of trade in goods in international trade flows, while the share of trade in services in GDP has remained relatively low. In merchandise exports, the share of high and medium technology industries recorded the strongest growth, while the share of low technology goods has fallen. This reflects development trends in the Slovenian economy, and corresponds to the strategic orientation of the country's economy to strengthen technology-intensive activities. In the export of services, the share of exports of knowledge-based services (computing,

finance, telecommunications, insurances and other business services) increased most. Linked to merchandise exports, the share of transport services also increased, while the share of travel services declined. In the merchandise export structure, the biggest share was in machinery and equipment, followed by manufactures, classified by material (the greatest share was in metals and metal products, as well as in rubber and paper products), chemicals and miscellaneous manufactured articles (an important share was in furniture, clothes and various instruments). In the import of goods, these product groups have the highest shares, but also important are food products and energy products.

According to data from the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in 2006 the most important Slovenian exporting companies were: Revoz, Gorenje, Krka, Lek, Impol, Sava Tyres, Cimos, Prevent Global, and Adria Mobil.

The regional structure of Slovenian merchandise exports indicates that most Slovenian goods are exported to EU countries. The restructuring of Slovenian foreign trade in the direction of strengthening trade with the EU started in the early 1990's, when Slovenia lost markets in the former Yugoslavia. The share of trade between Slovenia and the EU in total foreign merchandise trade reached relatively high levels even prior to Slovenia's EU membership (in the period 1996-2004, average exports of 69%, imports of 79%). Slovenia's membership with the EU has further accelerated trade growth. EU membership in 2004 brought changes to foreign trade policy, as the Slovenian market became part of the internal EU market, while Slovenia adopted common EU trade policies.

**The regional structure of Slovenia's merchandise trade in the years 2005-2008; the most important foreign trade partners (in %)**

	EXPORT				IMPORT			
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU countries	67.9	68.4	70.6	69.0	80.9	80.2	78.9	77.8
EFTA countries	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.0	0.9
USA	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.4	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.8
Countries of Former Yugoslavia	17.2	16.3	16.0	17.2	6.5	7.4	7.5	7.0
Russian Federation	3.2	3.6	3.6	4.0	2.1	1.9	2.3	1.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

For Slovenia, the adoption of EU foreign trade policy meant not only that Slovenia had accepted the common customs tariff and that trade in sensitive products became free, but also that border controls and procedures were abolished, which in turn lowered costs.

More favourable trade conditions due to the abolition of border controls and the fact that Slovenia became better known in the countries, with which the volume of trade had previously been relatively low, thus had a positive effect on the strengthening of trade with the EU. The increase in exports was especially accelerated in relation to certain EU members, which had not been traditional trade partners in the past (such as Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, and Portugal). On a limited scale, the abolition of other free trade arrangements following Slovenia's EU membership had a negative effect on the increase of exports to the markets of the former Yugoslavia. Against the background of withering foreign demand in 2008, however, export of goods slowed considerably, especially at the end of the year.

## Foreign investments

The business and investment environment in Slovenia is gradually improving. Apart from a well-educated labour force, Slovenia has in recent years increased investment in the improvement of industrial zones, and systematically eliminated administrative obstacles relating business and investments, which is reflected by a slight increase in inward and outward direct investment. At the beginning of August 2005, the Government adopted a programme for the stimulation of direct foreign investment for the period 2005-2009. Important indicator of how the Slovenian economy is integrated into the international business environment is the direct investment by foreign investors in Slovenia (inward investment) and of Slovenian investors in foreign countries (outward investment). In the period 2000-2007, the share of inward investment as a percentage of GDP increased from 14.8% to 27.7%, while the share of outward investment went from 3.9% to 14.2%. The record year for inward investment was 2002, largely because of the partial privatisation of the Nova Ljubljanska banka bank and the take-over of the Lek pharmaceutical company. The inflow of foreign investment in the following years was relatively lower. Since 2000, outward investment has been constantly and rapidly increasing until 2007, and, to a large extent, focusing on the countries of the former Yugoslavia, new EU members and Russia. EU membership and particularly the adoption of the

## Direct foreign investments (as of 31 December 2007)

### INWARD

(total value: 9,6541.9 million euros)

Countries	%
Austria	5 4
Switzerland	11
Netherlands	8
France	7
Germany	7
Italy	5
Luxembourg	4
Croatia	3
Belgium	3
Czech Republic	1
United Kingdom	1

### OUTWARD

(total value: 4,888.8 million euros)

Countries	%
Serbia	29
Croatia	22
Bosnia in Herzegovina	12
Russian Federation	5
Netherlands	4
FYR Macedonia	4
Montenegro	3
Germany	3
Austria	3
Poland	2

Source: Bank of Slovenia: Direct Investment 2007, December 2008

common currency offer opportunities for an increase in foreign investment, as business risks are reduced and new investment opportunities arise. With the improvement in conditions for investment, the business environment and the implementation of the policy for the stimulation of foreign investment, Slovenia is becoming a more attractive destination for investors. In 2008, a net capital inflow from direct investment was recorded for the first time since 2004. Slovenia's direct investment abroad declined and its structure changed, with equity capital rising to two-thirds from around one half in 2007. Liabilities to affiliated enterprises constituted the bulk of the inflow from direct foreign investment.

## Economic and tax reforms

In June 2005, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Slovenia's Development Strategy. Its main objectives include exceeding the average level of the EU's economic development and increasing employment in line with the Lisbon Strategy goals in the next ten years; improving the quality of living and the welfare of each individual, measured by the indicators of human development, health, social risks and social cohesion; enforcing the sustainability principle as the fundamental quality criterion in all areas of development, including the goal of sustained population growth; and developing into a globally recognisable and renowned country through a characteristic development pattern, cultural identity and active engagement in the international community.

The Strategy gives priority status to five tasks in order to meet the above goals: a competitive economy and faster economic growth; effective generation, two-way flow and application of the knowledge needed for economic development and quality jobs; an efficient and less costly state; a modern social state and higher employment, integration of measures to achieve sustainable development. Concrete measures designed to achieve the Strategy's goals were presented in the Framework of Economic and Social Reforms for Increasing Welfare in Slovenia. The implementation of the reforms will raise the potential GDP growth rate above 5%. This presents a key contribution to the fulfilment of the objectives set by the Development Strategy, which, as a consequence, will also have a positive effect on the long-term sustainability of public finances.

In the first year after the adoption of the Development Strategy, important measures were taken to increase competitiveness of the economy. An important measure in the area of fiscal policy has been the gradual abolition of the payroll tax which began in 2006 and should be completed in 2009. It has proven to have a positive

effect particularly on business investment and employment. The tax laws, passed in the autumn of 2006, allow for a simplified tax system, a reduced progressivity in personal income tax and a gradual decrease in the corporate income tax rate. This has helped in improving conditions for employment of the highly qualified labour force and created opportunities for technological enterprises to excel on a global scale. The positive effects of the tax reform on employment are further supported by legislative changes in the labour market, which will also positively affect the willingness to accept jobs offered, and by changes in the coordination of social transfers, which will provide additional motivation to work among less qualified persons. The measures to promote higher employment among older workers (the strategy of active ageing) will contribute to improving the long-term sustainability of public finances. The Government also gave priority to an active employment policy. Besides an increase in employment, the long-term objectives of the policy also include improving the education and qualifications of the active population and reducing the number of long-term unemployed persons, unemployed persons with no vocational education, and young unemployed persons.

Economic growth is supported by measures in the micro-economic field. The government has endeavoured to create a more supportive business environment for enterprises, as well as a friendlier and more cost-effective public administration. A programme to eliminate administrative obstacles was adopted and progress has been made in reducing court backlogs. 'One-stop-shop' system has been introduced to ease conditions for sole entrepreneurs and enterprises and to shorten the time needed for establishing a business to just a few days. In 2006, considerable advances were made in improving the operating conditions of the financial market, which is a key element for success within the monetary union. In network industries, the strengthening of competition has been particularly evident in the area of telecommunications, while the liberalisation of the electricity market in 2007 caused no major price leaps in the initial period. In order to increase economic growth, it is important to make investments in transport infrastructure, especially the rail network, as well as investments in the education and information infrastructure. Challenges remain in the face of the global crisis, which has affected Slovenia mainly through trade due to a sharp fall in foreign demand. At the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009 the Government adopted two packages of measures to alleviate the consequences of the financial and economic crisis. A considerable amount of funds aims at boosting the lending activities of banks to improve liquidity and enhance lending to enterprises, while some of the funds are intended for development-oriented measures.



**www.mg.gov.si**  
Ministry of the Economy

**www.umar.gov.si**  
Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development

**www.gzs.si**  
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

**www.stat.si**  
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**www.investslovenia.org**  
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**www.sloveniapartner.com**  
Gateway to Slovenian business

**www.gzs.si/sloexport**  
Sloexport

**www.sycp.si**  
Slovenia Your Cooperation Partner

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Slovenian Tourist Board



The compulsory basic education lasts for nine years.

## Education

### School year 2008/2009

Number of elementary schools	791
Number of pupils in elementary schools	161,887
Number of pupils per teacher	12.4
Number of secondary schools	129
Number of pupils at secondary schools	87,501
Number of tertiary education establishments	89
Number of all students in tertiary education	114,391
Number of graduates in tertiary education (2008)	16,995
Number of students enrolled for postgraduate study	11,531

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport

### The reformed school system

The Slovenian school system has seen a number of changes in recent years which are intended to ensure that as many people as possible realise their right to education, thus achieving a higher educational level. The framework has been established (9-year basic education, higher vocational education), and the basic premises are known; however, the programme of reform continues in terms of implementation at the levels of secondary and higher vocational education (the introduction of the credit system, connecting subjects, integration of theory and practice, open curriculum).

The share of financial resources for education in 1992 amounted to 4.76% of GDP, and since 1998 it has been around 6%, which is the average for the OECD countries. Education's share of total public expenditure was between 12 and 13% during the nineties. Expenditure per full-time undergraduate student in public establishments in the first half of the nineties was between US\$ 4,300 and 4,900.

The education system in Slovenia is almost fully financed from the state budget; a small share of the finance is also contributed by local authorities.

Public expenditure on education includes expenditure on basic compulsory, secondary and tertiary institutions, as well as the running costs of pre-school education, post-graduate studies and expenditures related to boarding at some secondary schools and in university students' accommodation. Included are both state schools and accredited private schools and, to the extent determined by law, also other private schools.

## More secondary school pupils, more students

The educational structure of the population is improving. The percentage of young people aged 20-24 years who attained at least upper secondary education in 2003 was 90.7%. The percentage of the adult population (25-64 years old) that completed at least upper secondary education was 76.8% in 2003, and it is growing. Women are better educated than men and have, by and large, an education better suited to the requirements of the work they do.

The best educated are those employed in the area of education and public administration, while the unemployed are still less educated than those in employment. More than 17% of persons aged 25 to 64 were in some form of education or training in 2005.

Altogether, 98% of primary school leavers decide to continue their education immediately after primary education, and 84% of secondary school leavers go on to tertiary education. With regard to secondary education, more and more pupils are opting for four-year secondary school programmes. There are twice as many students in higher education as there were at the beginning of the nineties. Life-long learning is also increasing. Adults attend open universities, educational and study centres, schools and higher education establishments, as well as courses organised by companies, administrative bodies, organisations and societies. Adult programmes are organised within schools and outside them, education can be formal or informal, and there is also organised self-learning. A new act introducing a certification system was passed in 2000. It enables the assessment and verification of vocation-related knowledge, skills and experience acquired out of school. It thus makes it possible for individuals to obtain a vocational qualification in ways other than through formal



The first day at school.

schooling. Candidates undergo a knowledge assessment procedure by a special commission to obtain a state-approved certificate attesting to their competence in performing certain vocational tasks. Vocational qualifications obtained in this way can be used by their holders to find a job or, in further training, demonstrating that part of an education programme has already been mastered.

## Compulsory basic education

The nine-year basic education is divided into 3 three-year cycles (the first six years as primary education, the final 3 years as lower secondary education). Elementary schools provide a compulsory and extended curriculum. The compulsory curriculum must be provided by schools and studied by all pupils. It consists of compulsory subjects, electives, home room periods and activity days (culture, science, sports, technology). School must provide the optional elementary school curriculum, but pupils are free to decide whether they will participate. It includes educational assistance for children with special needs, remedial classes, additional classes, after-school care and other forms of care for pupils, interest activities and out-of-school classes. Children aged six-and-a-half, or in exceptional cases six, enrol in year one.

## Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education includes vocational and technical programmes preparing students predominantly for labour, and general secondary programmes (called *gimnazija*) preparing students predominantly for further studies. Programmes in secondary education vary in content, duration and goals.

## General secondary education

General secondary programmes (*gimnazija*) prepare students for further studies and are divided into two groups: 'general' (which also includes classical *gimnazija*) and professionally oriented (technical, economical and art *gimnazija*). They last four years and end with an external examination called the matura examination. Those *gimnazija* students who for various reasons do not wish to continue their education can enter the labour market by attending a vocational course and gaining a vocational qualification at the level of corresponding secondary vocational and technical programmes. On the other hand, students with completed vocational and technical programmes can enrol in a matura course and take the matura

examination. Vocational courses and matura course as such provide a bridge between general and vocational education.

### Secondary vocational and technical education

The planning, programming and provision of vocational and technical education are the joint responsibility of social partners (employers and trade unions) and the state. The common aims and goals of secondary vocational and technical education were defined in a common curricular document. This document stresses attainment targets in interdisciplinary fields and interest activities. Short-term vocational programmes should last a year and a half for students that have completed their basic education, and two and a half years for those without this. The programmes end in a final examination. The final examination certificate enables students to enter the labour market or to enter the first year at any other (upper) secondary vocational programme.

Pupils who have successfully completed elementary school can enrol in 3-year secondary vocational programmes. Until recently vocational education programmes were offered in the dual, that is the apprenticeship system, and/or in the school-based system. A new act on vocational and technical education has abolished the dual system as a separate path, since the new vocational and technical programmes integrate both practical training in the company and practical training provided by schools and/or inter-company centres as practical instruction. The final examination certificate enables students to enter the labour market or to continue education in two-year vocational-technical programmes which have been developed as an upgrade of vocational education. The aims of vocational-technical programmes are the same as those of technical education programmes and lead to educational qualifications at the level of secondary technical programmes, also called a technical qualification, in a specific field.

On the other hand, graduates who find a job immediately after completing a three-year vocational programme can re-enter education after at least three years of employment to obtain a qualification at the level of a secondary technical school by passing examinations. If they additionally pass examinations in the general subjects of the *poklicna matura* examination, they can continue their studies in tertiary vocational education.

### Upper secondary education 2007/2008

Type of upper secondary education	Number of students	
	(full time)	%
General education programmes ( <i>gimnazija</i> )	36,651	39.9
Short-term vocational programmes	1,320	1.4
Vocational programmes	14,318	15.7
Technical programmes	31,300	34.1
Vocational-technical programmes	6,564	7.4
Vocational courses	376	0.4
<i>Matura</i> course	1,257	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,849</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport

Technical education is designed primarily as preparation for vocational and professional colleges, although it also leads to jobs with a broad profile. Secondary technical programmes last four years and end with the *poklicna matura* examination. The certificate of the *poklicna matura* enables students to enter the labour market or to continue education at vocational colleges or professionally oriented higher education programmes. There is also an option to take additional subject from the *matura* examination and qualify to enrol in academic higher education programmes.

Children of foreign residents are also appropriately provided for in Slovenia. They can receive an education at all levels: they can enter elementary school at any time, because all children living in the Republic of Slovenia have a right to compulsory basic education under the same conditions as its citizens. At other educational levels, they have to obtain official recognition for certificates documenting their prior education - for secondary schools at the Ministry of Education and Sport, and for further and higher education directly at one of the universities - before they enrol.

### Post-secondary vocational education and higher education

#### The development of higher education

Over the last fifteen years higher education in Slovenia has undergone several legislative and structural changes, rapid institutional development, and a significant increase in student numbers.

In the academic year 2008/2009 there were 86,997 undergraduate students in Slovenia.



The first higher education act in independent Slovenia passed in 1993 served as a basis for restructuring universities, the establishment of the non-university sector (single higher education institutions), and of private higher education institutions. In the following years higher education legislation has been amended several times, the most important changes being introduced in 2004 (supplemented in 2006), in accordance with the Bologna principles.

With only two public universities in 1993 the institutional landscape has expanded to fifteen higher education institutions which cover all fields of study: three public universities (incorporating forty-one faculties, three art academies and four professional colleges) and twelve private higher education institutions (one university, five faculties and six professional colleges). Under certain conditions, private higher education institutions can also offer state recognised and co-financed courses.

The number of students has more than doubled since 1991. The share of higher education students per thousand inhabitants has risen from 19.1% in 1991 to 41.1% in 2005.

#### Number of students

Academic year	Students		Total
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	
1991/92	36,504	1,647	<b>38,151</b>
2008/09	86,597	11,531	<b>98,128</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

### Post-secondary vocational education

Vocational colleges (*višje strokovne šole*) were introduced in 1996 and are institutionally separate from higher education. In the academic year 2006/2007 there were 51 vocational colleges, with 16,490 students. Post-secondary vocational education lasts two years, ending with a diploma examination. Since the 1998/1999 academic year, vocational college graduates have been able to enrol in the second year of professionally oriented higher education programmes if the higher education institution permits such arrangements.

### Higher education institutions

Higher education institutions are universities, faculties, art academies and professional colleges. Public faculties, professional colleges and art academies can only be founded as members of public universities. Private (single) higher



The University of Ljubljana has, since its beginnings in 1919, had its main seat at the former provincial mansion, built in 1902.

education institutions can be established as universities or single faculties, art academies and professional colleges. Higher education institutions can be established by Slovenian or foreign natural or legal entities. They can offer accredited higher education programmes when they are entered into the register of higher education institutions of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

While faculties and art academies can offer both academic and professional courses, professional colleges can offer only professional study programmes. After legislative changes in 2004, professional colleges may be accredited also for second-cycle study programmes, provided they meet academic standards regarding staff and equipment.

Courses are adopted by the senate of higher education institutions. With the expert approval of the Council for Higher Education new study programmes become state approved. The completion of such programmes leads to a state approved diploma. All programmes accredited after April 2004 are measured in credit points according to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). One credit point represents 25-30 student working hours; one academic year can last from 1,500 to 1,800 student working hours. In addition to teaching, higher education institutions also carry out research and art activities.

### The Bologna reform

Slovenia joined the Bologna process with the signing of the Bologna declaration in 1999. A degree system based on three main cycles has existed in the Slovenian higher education system since the 1960s, but the length and the structure of studies did not correspond to the Bologna guidelines, so in 2004 a new structure of higher education studies was introduced.

Like some other EU countries Slovenia opted for a gradual implementation of the Bologna reform, so that by the academic year 2009/10, only so-called 'post-reform' programmes will be offered. Until then Slovenian higher education institutions will offer both 'pre- and post-reform' programmes.

The last time students will be able to enrol in 'pre-reform' programmes is in the academic year 2008/09, and they will have to complete their studies by 2015/16 at the latest. Once new programmes are adopted, they gradually replace

the existing 'pre-reform' ones. The first new programmes began in the academic year 2005/06.

### The pre-Bologna degree structure

The 'pre-reform' higher education system introduced in 1994 consists of undergraduate studies followed by postgraduate studies:

- Undergraduate studies consisting of professional courses (3-4 years) and university (academic) courses (4-6 years) – graduates obtain the title '*univerzitetni diplomirani ...*', '*diplomirani ...*'.
- Postgraduate studies leading to a 'Specialist' (1-2 years of professional studies), '*Magister znanosti*' (2 years of research-oriented master of science) and '*Doktor znanosti*' degrees (4 years of doctoral studies or 2 years for graduates with '*Magister znanosti*').

### The post-Bologna degree structure

The higher education reform in 2004 introduced a three-cycle structure according to the Bologna process guidelines. The duration of courses is limited in credit points (CP). One CP stands for 25-30 hours of student work. 60 CP represent one academic year.

- The first-cycle has a binary system of academic and professional study programmes (180-240 CP; 3-4 years) leading to the first-cycle degree ('*diplomirani ... UN*', '*diplomirani ... VS*').
  - The second-cycle offers masters' courses (60-120 CP; 1-2 years) leading to the '*Magister ...*' degree. The new '*Magister ...*' differs from the old '*Magister znanosti*' in content and the academic title awarded upon completion. The new '*Magister ...*' is no longer a first phase of doctoral studies, but is part of the pre-doctoral study structure.
  - The third-cycle comprises doctoral studies (180 CP; 3 years) leading to the '*Doktor znanosti*' degree.
- Long non-structured masters' programmes are allowed as an exception (for example, EU regulated professions).

### Enrolment

The general admission criteria for access to higher education are defined by law, while the specific access requirements are defined in a study programme. The admission requirements are: a general '*matura*' certificate (an external examination

Secondary school graduates dancing a quadrille in the streets of Ljubljana.



taken at the end of a 4-year secondary school programme) or a vocational '*matura*' examination plus an additional exam for university first-cycle study programmes; a vocational '*matura*' or a general '*matura*' certificate for professional first cycle programmes; a first-cycle degree from corresponding field of studies (and additional exams in other cases) for masters' studies; a second-cycle degree for doctoral studies; the results of additional tests, if special abilities (e.g. artistic talents, physical skills) are required for certain study programmes.

Student status is acquired by enrolment. The number of places available is fixed for all study programmes. The places available for new applicants are announced each year by higher education institutions in a pre-enrolment announcement separately for undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes (usually for undergraduate studies in January and for postgraduate studies in May).

For students from EU Member States, the enrolment procedures are the same as for Slovenian students. Places available for these students are included in the quota for Slovenian students.

For foreigners from non-EU countries the number of study places available is set additionally and must not exceed 5% of full-time or 50% of part-time study places in individual study programmes. Places offered by public universities must be approved by the Government. If the number of applicants exceeds the available number of places, numerus clausus applies and Slovenian applicants as well as applicants from EU member states are selected according to the same criteria and procedure. If places available for citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and EU member states remain vacant, foreigners from non-EU states can also register for those places.

### The organisation of studies

#### ACADEMIC YEAR

In Slovenia the academic year begins in October and lasts until the end of September in the following year. It is divided into two semesters: the winter semester usually runs from October to January, and the summer semester from February to the middle of July. The organisation of studies is defined with a study programme.

## FEES

In public higher education institutions students from EU member states, like Slovenian students, pay tuition fees for part-time studies, while full-time studies are free.

For postgraduate pre-reform and third-cycle post-reform studies tuition fees are paid. Under certain conditions these studies can be subsidised by public funds, thus the tuition fee is correspondingly lower.

Foreigners from non-EU member countries pay tuition fees regardless of the type of studies. Students in private higher education institutions also pay tuition fees.

## LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

Language of instruction is predominantly Slovene. Many higher education institutions also offer lectures (especially at postgraduate level) in English.

## TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

The rules and procedures of the examination policy are set out in detail by the constitution of higher education institutions. As a rule, subject courses end with examinations, which can be oral, written or both. Examinations are usually held at the end of each semester during the four-week examination period (January-February and June-July), and in September before the beginning of a new academic year.

## GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is unified: 10 = excellent, 9 = very good, 8 = very good, 7 = good, 6 = satisfactory (pass grade), 5-1 = fail.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE

Every higher educational institution that accepts foreign students has an International Relations Office or a person responsible for international relations. It is recommended that applicants contact this office before enrolment for detailed information on application procedures and other necessary information.



# 06

## Science and research



The research work in the pharmaceutical factory Lek.

**2008**

Expenditure on R&D as % of GDP	1.66
Number of research organisations	550
Number of R&D personnel	16,243
R&D personnel in FTE (full time equivalent)	10,396
R&D personnel (FTE) per 1,000 total employment	11.7
Researchers in head count	8,742
Researchers in FTE	7,032
Researchers (FTE) per 1,000 total employed	8.0

Source: Statistical Office of the RS

## Research and development

Slovenia is aware that the two pillars of its future development are knowledge and a sustainable development strategy. In 2008, there were 550 research organisations in the country, with a total of 16,243 R&D personnel, of whom 8,742 were researchers. Even though, due to Slovenia's small size, the total number of scientists amounts only to that in a reasonably sized research institute of a large international firm, Slovenia's R&D activities are exceptionally multi-faceted and, because of the maintenance of high quality standards, recognised worldwide.

The Young Researchers Programme, since its establishment in 1985, has made a significant contribution to lowering the average age of researchers in Slovenia.

Such an example of good practice was recently applied to the training of young economics researchers.

### W

**www.mss.gov.si**  
Ministry of Education and Sport

**www.mvzt.gov.si**  
Ministry of Higher Education,  
Science and Technology

**www.uni-lj.si**  
University of Ljubljana

**www.uni-mb.si**  
University of Maribor

**www.upr.si**  
University of Primorska

**www.p-ng.si**  
University of Nova Gorica

## National research and development programme

Slovenia's main development document relating to R&D is the National Research and Development Programme (NRDP) 2006-2010, which is a synthesis of the most general objectives and policies on R&D from national strategic documents.

The NRDP focuses on all key segments pertaining to the wider domain of research policy – from providing excellent science in public research institutes and universities as an indispensable long-term basis for innovation and thus the economy's competitiveness to integrating the public research sphere with the business sector, providing corporate incentives for strengthening investment in R&D and creating a favourable environment for entrepreneurship and innovations. From a total of 60 measures included in the NRDP, 41, i.e. two-thirds, relate to supporting technological development and the economy, and 14 or almost one-quarter of these are directly aimed at strengthening cooperation between the public research sphere and the business sector. Where reasonable and possible, the objectives of the NRDP are expressed as specific target values, while all measures include an indication of the responsible bodies and the deadlines for their implementation.

Significant sections of the NRDP are included in the plans and documents for the utilisation of EU structural funds under the new financial perspective. Furthermore, new forms of tax relief were introduced for enterprises investing in R&D, while a new law on risk capital companies is being drafted which aims to provide the missing legal basis for risk capital funds and public-private partnerships in this sphere.

### The stimulation of technological development and innovation

Along with the development of public scientific base, another task is to provide incentives for companies which take advantage of new knowledge and technologies. Among companies, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as important engines of economic growth with the highest expected potential should be engaged in research and technological development (RTD) activities, possibly in cooperation with other companies, technology centres, universities and public research institutions. The cooperation

should not be based solely on national forms, but also have an international dimension (Framework Programme, Eureka), where Slovenia compares well with other Member States. Slovenia is preparing a credit scheme for RTD projects of SMEs to be run through the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, thereby complementing the spectrum of available instruments for companies.

While preparing instruments for SMEs, large companies, which account for seventy per cent of all industrial RTD expenditure should nevertheless be overlooked. In order to support both SMEs and large companies in their RTD endeavour in Slovenia tax allowances were introduced in 2006. The aim of this instrument was to streamline the RTD expenditure by not offering only the form of subsidies obtained through calls for proposals. The latter require a great deal of preparatory work, while the total cost of the project had to be kept as low as possible due to the limited financial resources available, and the results were difficult to predict. Tax allowances offer a somewhat lower level of state aid, which covers all RTD expenditures, not only those that would otherwise be comprised within individual projects.

In 2006, the government approved the working programme of the Slovenian Technology Agency (TIA). The TIA's main task is to foster technological development, innovation and technological entrepreneurship. The agency supports and stimulates the developmental endeavours of the business sector through financial aid for the technological developmental programmes of firms, particularly those resulting from the clustering of companies and their cooperation and knowledge exchange with research institutions, both nationally and abroad.

### The Slovenian Research Agency

The Slovenian Research Agency carries out professional, development and executive tasks relating to the National Research and Development Programme at every level, as well as other work to promote research and development activities. The Agency carries out its legally determined duties in the public interest, providing permanent, professional and independent decision-making on the selection of programmes and projects financed from the state budget and other financial sources. The Agency is an indirect user of the state budget in terms of the legal provisions that govern public finances and public agencies.

## The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) with its present structure was founded in 1938; nonetheless it has a reputable tradition. In 1693, the Academia Operosorum was founded in Ljubljana, a predecessor of the Academy; the ranks of this society comprised the most eminent Carniolan churchmen and lay intellectuals, noblemen and bourgeoisie. Its activities ended around 1725; more than half a century later, in 1779, it was revived, but it was active only a short time. From the end of the 18th century onwards, Slovenes had no academy, although the idea of it never disappeared. In the second half of the 19th century, serious efforts were made to establish the Academy, but it materialised only in 1938 with the nomination of the first eighteen ordinary members.

Today, the SASA is the supreme national institution of sciences and arts, uniting scientists and artists who were elected to this institution for their particular achievements in the area of science and art.

The SASA has a maximum of 60 full and 30 associate members. The limitation refers to members under 75 years of age. SASA also has a maximum of 90 corresponding members from abroad. At present there are 71 full and 28 associate members, as well as 81 corresponding members from scientific organisations abroad.

## International links

Slovenia emphasises the importance of bilateral cooperation, which until recently has entailed mobility of researchers. Currently, a higher level of institutionalised bilateral cooperation with states which are considered as Slovenia's most important partners is being striven for, as well as the redirection of the cooperation towards multilateral or regional joint R&D projects contributing to the European Research Area (ERA). This is seen as especially important with the neighbouring regions of the Western Balkans.

Slovenia is an active participant in research programmes coordinated and co-financed by the EU; it also participates in other European research and development programmes. It joined these programmes in 1991, following international recognition of the Republic of Slovenia; Slovenia has so far participated in over a thousand European projects.



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Ministry of Higher Education,  
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**www.arrs.gov.si**  
Slovenian Research Agency

**www.tia.si**  
Slovenian Technology Agency

**www.ijs.si**  
Jožef Stefan Institute

**www.sazu.si**  
Slovenian Academy of Sciences  
and Arts

**www.izum.si**  
Institute of Information Science

## Slovenian society



Buying books in the open air.

**Inhabitants** 2,046,976 (1 January 2010)

**Population density:** 101.1 inhabitants per square kilometre

**Urbanization:** Approximately one third of the population live in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, the rest live in nearly six thousand smaller towns and villages

**Nationalities** (2002 census):

Slovenian 83%;

Italian 0,1%; Hungarian 0,3%;

Croat 1,8%; Serbian 2,0%;

Muslim (including Bosniacs) 1,6%;

others 2,2%; unknown: 8,9%

**Births** On average 1,5 children per woman (2010)

**Life expectancy** (2009): 75.8 for men and 82.3 for women

**Religions:** According to the 2002 census the most of population (58 %) are Catholics

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Slovenia has a population of two million people, who are well educated and also have good employment opportunities. Similarly to other modern societies, the country has been facing demographic issues, such as ageing, and low birth rate. The family, as the basic unit in society, has been changing, while the average number of household members has been in decline.

## Population

Slovenia's population is slowly declining. Families used to be quite large, but have been growing smaller over recent decades. Both birth and mortality rates have decreased, and there has been growing concern about lower birth rates. The year 1993 was the first to see a negative demographic trend.

Since 1993 the population of Slovenia has been increasing only due to immigration, while the birth rate has been negative since 1993. In 2008, 21,817 children were born (1.53 children per woman), and 18,308 persons died. Fortunately, the mortality rate among infants is low (2.4 per 1,000 live births in 2008). The average age of a woman giving birth to her first child has been rising (28.4 in 2008). The average age of brides (30.2 in 2008) and bridegrooms (33.2 in 2008) has been rising as well; however, it is notable that many children in Slovenia are born outside wedlock – some to single mothers, and others to unmarried couples. With regard to the status of such couples and their offspring, no particular distinctions apply.

#### Families by type (%) (2002 census)

<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Married couples and unmarried partners without children	23.0
Married couples and unmarried partners with children	58.3
Mothers with children	16.1
Fathers with children	2.6

Source: The Statistical Office of the RS

The age structure is changing not only because of the decreased birth rate, but also due to longer life. In 2008, life expectancy in Slovenia was 82.3 years for women and 75.4 years for men. Like in other developed countries, Slovenia's population is ageing. In the beginning of the 1950s the median age in Slovenia was around 30, surging to 41.2 years at the end of 2004. In the 1953 census, the ratio between persons younger than 15 and persons aged 65 or over was 27.6 per cent vs. 7.6 per cent in favour of the young, while in 2004 it was 14.4 per cent vs. 15.3 per cent in favour of persons aged 65 or over.

#### Average annual household expenditure in 2008 (in %)

Transport	13,9
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	15,4
Residence	27,9
Recreation and culture	8,8
Clothing and footwear	6,7

Source: The Statistical Office of the RS



The realisation of women's rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, is monitored by the Government Office for Equal Opportunities.

## Policy on women

In Slovenia, women make up almost a half of the work force and usually work full-time, like men. Despite the fact that women are on average better qualified than men, it is more difficult for them to find work, they register as sole traders less often, are in more junior positions, often have lower career prospects than men, and are not paid as much with regard to their qualifications. Legal protection from employment discrimination is exemplary; however, it needs to be implemented.

With regard to the percentage of the total population women are not appropriately represented at all political levels, despite having the same political rights as men. In the National Assembly, women currently comprise only 12 per cent of MPs, and only three government departments are headed by women.

## Freedom of belief

Along with the guaranteed right of the preservation of national identity, the people of Slovenia have a right to their own religious beliefs. As the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia states that nobody is obliged to declare their religious or other beliefs, there are no exact figures on numbers within various religious groups.

According to public surveys, most Slovenes are Catholic (around 60%) and the Roman Catholic Church is definitely the biggest and most active in public life.

All together there are 43 religious communities, spiritual groups, societies and associations registered in Slovenia. Among the oldest is the Evangelical Church, which has its roots in the Reformation and is most widely spread in the northeastern part of Slovenia.

## Urban areas and the countryside

The majority of Slovenes live in their own flats or houses. This is partly the case of pursuing one's dreams of owning property, while it is also due to the transition process, which made such housing affordable. In general, households are not big – a third of the population lives in four-person households, and a fraction over a fifth of the population in three-person households. Lately, there has been an increase of people

living with a partner or alone. However, there is a shortage of flats intended for young families, while property prices (particularly in Ljubljana) have surged. Just over a third of people live in urban areas with a population of over 10,000, while the remainder live in the countryside.

Since Slovenia does not have an urban metropolis, it is safe to say that almost all its inhabitants live a mere stone's throw from a meadow or a forest, so that they can enjoy the advantages of both rural and city life.

According to the findings of researchers monitoring human development across the world and translating the data into the Human Development Index, Slovenia is a very successful country, judging by its level of development. In 2009, Slovenia ranked 29<sup>th</sup> among 182 countries assessed, meaning that it has been effectively coordinating both social and economic factors.

## Health care system

The Health Care and Health Insurance Act, adopted in 1992 and later also amended, includes a number of measures aimed at improving general public health, promoting preventive medicine, the early discovery of diseases and their prompt treatment, the care and rehabilitation of the sick and injured, and regulating the rights relating to compulsory and voluntary health insurance, which ensures social security in case of illness, injury, childbirth or death.

The Act stipulates that the state has to prevent and address social problems of individuals, families and population groups. Social security rights are protected through measures and services for preventing and mitigating of social hardship, and providing contributions for individuals who do not have sufficient means due to circumstances beyond their influence. The compulsory health insurance scheme covers the whole population, either on the basis of employment and self-employment or residence (insured persons and their family members).

The right to health care services comprises services at the primary health care level, including dentistry, health care services in certain types of social care institutions, specialist outpatient services, hospital and tertiary level services. It also includes the right to health resort treatment, rehabilitation treatment, transport by ambulance and other vehicles, medicine, and technical aids.



The picturesque village of Komenda in the Gorenjska region.

Under the compulsory health insurance scheme, the insured persons are also entitled to different financial benefits (compensation of salary during temporary absence from work, reimbursement of travel costs etc.). In 2007, the share of GDP spent on health was 5.9%.

In addition to the public network of health institutions in Slovenia, private health care is also developing. Its share of the total health care services is around 10%. But the majority of the private health sector remains incorporated into public health insurance schemes.

Private health care is not permitted in some areas, such as blood supply, organ transplantation and pathology, whilst in other areas (for example, pharmacy, hospital health care, etc.) a concession is needed in order to be able to practise privately.

Health awareness in Slovenia is relatively high. Many people have given up smoking, lowering the percentage of smokers to less than 30. Sadly, many young people still continue to practice this unhealthy habit. Since August 2007 smoking in all indoor public and working places has been prohibited in Slovenia.

## Social security

The state ensures the functioning of social care institutes, creates the conditions for private social work activities, and stimulates and supports the development of self-help, charity work, programmes enabling a more independent life for the disabled, and voluntary work. Rights to social care services and contributions are determined according to the principles of equal availability and free choice for all those entitled.

The state works towards preventing social exclusion, particularly by influencing the social position of the population in the areas of taxation, employment and work, and through grants, housing policy, family policy, health care, education and other policy areas.

In 2004, a new kind of employment subsidy for long-term social assistance beneficiaries was introduced. Its aim is to encourage the employment of people who depend on social assistance and to increase their income. The state also particularly promotes the training and employment of the disabled, and the care for people with mental or physical disabilities.

University Medical Centre in Ljubljana



In 2004, 12.1% of Slovenia's population lived below the poverty threshold (compared to 16% in the EU), and their equivalent income was lower than EUR440 per month.

## Pension system reform

Before 2000, Slovenia had one of the lowest retirement ages in Europe (56 years and 6 months). Since January 2000, higher retirement age (63 for men and 61 for women) has been gradually introduced to prolong working life. Pensioners accounted for 26.5% of the country's population in 2005, 0.3 percentage points more than in 2004.

The new Pension and Disability Insurance Act stipulates a number of special conditions in which it is possible to retire early (e.g. because of children, or employment before the age of 18), and introduces a new pension scheme – state pension.

## Free time and recreation

Slovenes have always loved riding bicycles and walking. While they used to do both out of necessity, as other, more comfortable ways of travel were not available to them, they now cycle and walk for exercise and to move faster through the congested traffic. Increasingly, people want to stay fit, and out of all outdoor activities, walking is the easiest to organise, so it is very popular. Every Slovenian town has its 'home summit', which is usually a small mountain, popular with the locals, who climb it in great numbers at weekends. The inhabitants of Ljubljana go to Šmarna gora on the outskirts of the city, which looks like a pilgrimage centre at weekends. Hiking and mountaineering are also popular. Even the less ambitious enthusiasts believe it is almost a 'moral' responsibility that every Slovene ascends Mt Triglav (2,864 m) once in their life.

One of the most popular sports in Slovenia is skiing. Sometimes Slovenian skiers win international medals. When thinking about the two best Slovenian athletes, one cannot avoid the impression that they tell us something about Slovenes – the female athlete of 2010 was Tina Maze, an alpine skier, while the title of male athlete of 2010 went to Dejan Zavec, current IBF (International Boxing Federation) World Champion. In a way, they symbolise Slovenia: a country, which is young, but not shy of success.



Riding bicycles is very popular in Slovenia.



[www.mddsz.gov.si](http://www.mddsz.gov.si)

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

[www.zpiz.si](http://www.zpiz.si)

Institute of Pension and Disability Insurance of Slovenia

[www.zzzs.si](http://www.zzzs.si)

Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia

[www.ess.gov.si](http://www.ess.gov.si)

Employment Service of Slovenia

[www.stat.si](http://www.stat.si)

Statistical Office of the RS

# Culture

Public libraries (2008)	59
Professional theatres (2008)	32
Professional orchestras (2008)	20
Museums (2008)	117
Galleries and exhibition grounds (2008)	136
National budget for culture as % of GDP (2009)	1.8

Source: Ministry of Culture

## Cultural development and the role of language

Slovenes have one of the most persistent national histories in Europe. More than anything, the present-day national state was shaped by their headstrong persistence with the national language. A nation without monarchs, and mainly with foreign feudal overlords, the Slovenes entered the modern industrial age without a financially strong Slovenian bourgeoisie, were subordinate to the Habsburg monarchy, and divided into poorly connected regions and administrative units. It is logical that in such adverse circumstances an awareness of belonging to a single nation could only develop on a single basis, language, even though it was very diverse, with very different dialects in regions, covering a much greater territory than present-day Slovenia.

With the exception of liturgical texts from the end of the 10th century (Brižinski spomeniki – the Freising Manuscripts), which illustrate the nature of Slovene when it had already broken away from the common Proto-Slavic language, the first happy moment for Slovene came in the second half of the 16th century. It is closely related to the rise of Protestantism, which spread from Germanic regions to the central part of present-day Slovenian territory (including Ljubljana), where the gentry and most of the bourgeoisie were German, while the peasantry was Slovene, before 1550, but had to give ground

Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana is the largest cultural and conference centre in Slovenia. Many international performances and festivals take place here.



to the Catholic Counter-Reformation after 1598. However, in these fifty years the first two books in Slovene appeared - Catechism and Abecedary (by Primož Trubar in 1550), the first translation of the Bible and the first grammar (in 1584), followed by about fifty other publications, which were used in the Protestant liturgy. The Slovenes had thus acquired a literary language and joined those European nations which already had it. The leader of the Slovenian Reformation, who had to spend the majority of his life in Germany, was Primož Trubar (1508–1586).

After the re-establishment of Catholicism, this culturally rich period was followed by almost two centuries of stagnation. Slovene appeared in written form only in few liturgical publications or manuals. A literary culture, which would include fiction, did not exist, nor did other forms of high secular culture. Only towards the end of the 18th century, when the successful wave of the Enlightenment reached Ljubljana, did the situation begin to change, when the first literary works emerged (and were translated). But a few decades had to pass before Slovene could live the artistic life of a fully developed literary language. The external conditions were provided by European Romanticism, which addressed the issue of national languages, while the internal conditions were met when France Prešeren, a poetic genius emerged from this language.



France Prešeren (1800-1849),  
the greatest Slovenian poet.

The poet France Prešeren (1800-1849) created not only the first example of a highly developed literary language, but laid the spiritual foundations of modern Slovenian identity with his liberal world view. With Prešeren, Slovenes became an integral part of high European culture.

Even fifty years after his death Slovenian culture was almost exclusively literary. This was due to Prešeren's true literary power and because Slovenian intellectuals (most of them educated in Vienna) were too few to provide the background for other forms of art. The second half of the nineteenth century was generally marked by the non-literary (journalism) cultivation of the language, which was subordinate to German because of the Austro-Hungarian political hegemony until the end of the empire. Slovene only became an official language with the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918); a year later the first university was established, while 1938 saw the foundation of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. This provided the conditions for the institutional existence of the language, which had

been preserved and developed for a thousand years not only outside academic institutions, but also without continuous administrative support based on the principle of ethnic identity.

After the First World War other forms of art, which were not based on language, began to thrive. These activities were given institutional support immediately after the Second World War, when arts academies and production houses were established.

## Slovenian literature and publishing

In the introduction we emphasised the great significance of literary culture for the perseverance and development of Slovenian identity, and stated that the Protestant Primož Trubar created Slovenian literary language, while the poet France Prešeren in the first half of the 19th century, whose life embodies the myth of the Romantic artist, introduced high literary norms into Slovene. His Poems from 1846 unite the pain of personal existence and trials of a nation, the awareness of a small home and the big world, the spirit of modern individualism and adherence to humanism (the Slovenian national anthem includes his verses on freedom and co-existence between nations).



Later, Slovenian literature reached such a high artistic standard in different social and historic circumstances several times. First, at the beginning of the 20th century, when it intersected with the fin-de-siècle atmosphere and created a Slovenian version of Impressionism and Symbolism. The most important author of this period was the writer and playwright Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), who absorbed the spirit of modern art during his long stay in Vienna and left a rich body of prose works. Expressionism resonated most strongly in the young poet Srečko Kosovel, while the conflict between totalitarianism and individualism, so characteristic of the 20th century Europe, manifested itself most profoundly in the poet and narrator of the Slovenian internecine fighting of the Second World War, Edvard Kocbek. The second half of the twentieth century recorded at least three other literary greats: the poet Dane Zajc, the writer Lojze Kovačič, and the writer, playwright and essayist Drago Jančar. In all these authors history and intimacy amalgamate into a precious material, typical of all top-level literature. Jančar (b. 1948) made the most successful breakthrough onto the European scene, and his work, including his political essays, can be read in all major European languages.

The translation of Slovenian literature is an issue which was given a few boosts in the last decade, but it still relies mainly on personal contacts and not on systemic and state supported international publishing exchanges – this ‘exchange’ is now mainly one-way. More than 4,000 new titles are annually published in Slovenia (on a per capita basis it is among the highest in Europe), and ten per cent of these are works of fiction, of which more than half are translations. But the reading habits of Slovenes are not what they used to be, and consequently the print runs are very low (for fiction the average is less than 1,000 copies), while the prices of books are very high. Other characteristics of the Slovenian market are that there are many small publishers (around 150) and only three or four big ones.

The situation is more optimistic from the point of view of public libraries, which have been significantly modernised since independence. There are more than 60 public libraries, which successfully cover the whole country. The loan rate is high (Slovenia holds second place in the EU, after Denmark) and is approaching 20 million per year, which means an average Slovene borrows more than 10 items annually.



Drago Jančar, the most translated contemporary Slovenian writer and playwright.

## Theatre

The theatre is a place where language takes centre stage. This is why it has for a long time been a key factor in the cultural identity of the Slovenes. To this day, dramatic art remains one of the favourite forms of the nation's cultural life.

The date of birth of Slovenian theatre is 1789, when Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756-1795), the leading cultural figure of the Age of Enlightenment in Slovenia, premiered the first ever play in Slovene in Ljubljana.

Slovenian plays were performed alongside German plays throughout the 19th century, while the first Slovene language professional theatres appeared after the First World War. After the Second World War, there was at least one theatre in every major Slovenian town (including Trieste, which although now part of Italy, has an important Slovene population). Today, there are six national theatres outside Ljubljana, while the country's leading theatres remain the so-called Slovene National Theatre Drama (SNG Drama) companies with opera and ballet houses in Ljubljana and Maribor, respectively. There are a few dozen Slovenian theatre companies, both professional and amateur, including modern dance groups. In 2008, these groups offered their audiences 205 productions that premiered in the season. Some 4,160 performances were seen by 867,220 spectators.

Scene from the ballet Zorba the Greek, produced by SNG Maribor.



The creative approach of Slovenes to theatre, characterised by its innovative expression or even, at times, experimental audacity, was held in high esteem throughout the former Yugoslavia and beyond the Federal borders. Certain directors excelled at reinterpreting theatre classics (Mile Korun), while others created new trends in theatre, combining the skills of the playwright and director (Dušan Jovanović). Among the directors of the younger generation who in the past two decades have impressed domestic and foreign audiences alike with their (post)modern poetics, the most notable are Vito Taufer, Tomaž Pandur, and Matjaž Pograjc. In recent times, modern dance has attracted many young artists (predominantly female), but this is unfortunately the most overlooked of the performing arts in terms of national cultural policy. In spite of this, Iztok Kovač (b. 1962) and Matjaž Farič (b. 1965), both performers and choreographers, have won international recognition with their dance troupes.



The Ljubljana Opera house.



The mezzo-soprano  
Bernarda Fink.

## Music

In Slovenia, professional musicianship proper began in 1701 when the Philharmonic Society was founded in Ljubljana. However, the first Slovenian musician of European renown was Jakob Petelin (or Jacobus Gallus Carniolus), a composer of motets and madrigals, who lived in the second half of the 16th century. The first opera in Slovene was written in 1780, and in the second half of the 19th century began what could qualify as a continual musical tradition. After the Second World War, two symphonic orchestras were founded (one of which performs within the framework of the national broadcasting company), which are the main performers of Slovenian and foreign orchestral pieces. The concerts of the two orchestras attract more than 6,000 music lovers and concert season ticket holders per year.

One of the characteristics of the musical scene in Slovenia is the broad popularity of choir singing (even today): it is, among other things, a kind of popular, amateur musical activity.

After the Second World War, an instrumental variant of folk music went on to become a commercial phenomenon, a 'national' genre of music that is imbued with an Alpine flavour (the Avseniki polka and waltz band). Until the 20th century, there were no world-famous musicians from Slovenia. But the decades after the Second World War saw the rise to



prominence and international acclaim of several composers: Marjan Kozina, Lucijan Marija Škerjanec, Primož Ramovš and, more recently, Vinko Globokar, Janez Matičič, Uroš Rojko, and Aldo Kumar. Concert stages around the world play host to excellent Slovenian soloists: pianist Dubravka Tomšič, flautist Irena Grafenauer, tenor Janez Lotrič and the mezzo-sopranos Marjana Lipovšek and Bernarda Fink.

## Film

The date of birth of Slovenian cinema is 1905. After end of the First World War, the pioneering era of filmmaking evolved, and this period saw the production of two feature-length documentary films that also featured actors (1931/32), and around thirty short films. The filmmaker who left his mark on the period was Metod Badjura. In the aftermath of the Second World War, film production was politically motivated, and therefore the State provided it with the necessary financial support. The first sound film (*Na svoji zemlji* – *On Our Own Land*) was made in 1948, and until 1991, some one hundred films were produced. France Štiglic, Jože Gale, Matjaž Klopčič and Boštjan Hladnik are considered the greatest names of Slovenian film, while it was still part of Yugoslavian cinematography.

In 1994, the Slovenian Film Fund was founded and changed the conditions of film production, as since then, the government co-finances film projects by independent producers. This new system boosted considerably the creative dynamics, and with a new generation of young filmmakers coming to prominence, fifty new feature films have been made thus far.

Many of these young filmmakers have attracted attention at film festivals around the world and received awards, the most noteworthy being the film *Bread and Milk* by Jan Cvitkovič, who was awarded the Luigi De Laurentiis Award for a First Feature ('Lion of the Future') at the 2001 Venice Film Festival.

Metod Pevec, Damjan Kozole, Miha Hočevar and Janez Burger are among the other successful filmmakers. Unfortunately, the funds for film production are rather modest (three to four million euros) and do not suffice to cover all creative needs. On the other hand, it is true that the government has managed to finance the building of a modern film studio.

## Painting and architecture

In the early years of Slovenian painting, paintings were mainly featured in churches and given the poor development of the bourgeoisie, no significant fine arts evolved until the second half of the 19th century.

Painting with a high artistic value only began to blossom in the beginning of the 20th century and was linked to Impressionism: Ivan Grohar, Rihard Jakopič, Matej Sternen and Matija Jama presented works of Slovenian Impressionism at an acclaimed exhibition in Vienna in 1904; Rihard Jakopič (1869–1943) was considered the most prominent from this circle.

Before and particularly after the Second World War important painters emerged (Božidar Jakac, Veno Pilon, France Mihelič, Gabrijel Stupica, Jože Ciuha, Janez Bernik), including Zoran Mušič (1909–2005), who became famous in Europe. Also important was the Ljubljana Graphics School, which has grown together with the internationally acclaimed Biennial of Graphic Arts (from 1955). There are more than 50 permanent galleries in Slovenia (and 121 different museums, the most prominent being the national Museum of Slovenia), which stage 800 exhibitions annually. The most important are the National Museum of Slovenia and the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana, which is the central hub for contemporary art and the new media. It has established an ambitious collection called Arteast 2000+, which perhaps marks the beginning of a gallery and study centre for Eastern-European art. Many artists (Marjetica Potrč, Marina Gržinič, Marko Peljhan, Jože Barši, Tadej Pogačar) and collectives (particularly Irwin) present the Slovenian art scene at exhibitions abroad, including the Venice Biennial.

With reference to architecture, the Baroque period left the most traces (the architecture of the Ljubljana city centre is also mostly Baroque).

The famous architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) left a special mark on the capital. Previously working in Vienna (the Zacherl House, the Church of the Holy Spirit) and Prague (Hradčany Castle), Plečnik knew how to combine Classicism with Modernism. In Ljubljana he designed the National and University Library, the Three Bridges, the Žale Cemetery, the building of the Vzajemna insurance company, and other buildings, which gave the city a touch of classical and modernistic architecture.



Visiting an exhibition.



Entrance to Žale, Ljubljana's main cemetery, designed by architect Jože Plečnik. The complex consisting of a monumental gateway, an administration building and fourteen mortuaries is also on the list of European Heritage sites.

## State support for culture

When Slovenia became independent and established its administrative and state institutions, there was no doubt that culture should become a government department (the former administration managed this area at a lower administrative level), with its own budget. The Ministry of Culture, whose principle task is to protect the tangible and intangible culture of Slovenes and provide the conditions for its further development, oversees the following areas: art, heritage, media, European affairs and cultural development, the cultural rights of minorities, and developing cultural diversity, Slovene language, the promotion of Slovenian culture and international cooperation.

The commitment of the Ministry for Culture is regulated by the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act from 2002 and the Resolution on the National programme for Culture 2004–2007. The National Council for Culture, the members of which are appointed by the National Assembly, was established ten years ago; it is an independent body, which outlines the national cultural policy.

### A breakdown of the budget for culture in the year 2007

Cultural heritage	30,47
Music	14,95
Performing arts	13,37
Investments	7,62
Libraries	6,37
Visual arts	4,91
Film	3,63
Publishing	3,09
Media	3,08
Other	12,51

The reading room in the National and University Library in Ljubljana. The building, constructed in 1941, represents one of architect Jože Plečnik's most monumental works.



## Slovene outside Slovenia

Much has been done to promote Slovene at foreign universities, which since the independence has been in the domain of the Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language, an offshoot of the Department of Slovene at the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. Slovene is taught at various academic levels in more than fifty universities around the world (including Japan, the USA and Argentina), including nineteen establishments where students can obtain a degree in Slovene and study at post-graduate level (the number of departments for Slovene around the world is rising every year).

Interest in Slovene – particularly due to new economic links – is undoubtedly increasing: more than 1,500 students are studying Slovene abroad, while more and more students of other subjects are learning it on university language courses.

### W

- [www.mk.gov.si](http://www.mk.gov.si)**  
Ministry of Culture
- [www.cd-cc.si](http://www.cd-cc.si)**  
Cankarjev Dom, Cultural and Congress Centre
- [www.filharmonija.si](http://www.filharmonija.si)**  
Slovenian Philharmonic
- [www.mglc-lj.si](http://www.mglc-lj.si)**  
International Centre of Graphic Arts
- [www.kobariskimuzej.si](http://www.kobariskimuzej.si)**  
Museum in Kobarid
- [www.drugagodba.si](http://www.drugagodba.si)**  
Druga godba
- [www.film-sklad.si](http://www.film-sklad.si)**  
Slovenian Film Fund
- [www.nuk.uni-lj.si](http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si)**  
National and University Library (NUK)
- [www.ljubljanafestival.si](http://www.ljubljanafestival.si)**  
Festival Ljubljana



Petra Majdič, Slovenian woman of the year 2010.

Number of media entities, 2007	1,516
Number of print media, 2007	1,127
Number of daily newspapers, 2007	9
Number of television channels, 2007	64
Number of radio stations, 2007	104
Online media, 2007	217
Percentage of households connected to the Internet, 2006	52.5
Regular users of the Internet, 2006	824,000

Source: Mediana SM 2007

The Slovenian media scene is very diverse and heterogeneous. Its beginnings can be traced back to the 19th century, when print media, daily newspapers and periodicals in Slovene started being published in growing numbers. In the third decade of the previous century, radio was introduced, and thirty years later, television. The end of the century saw an unprecedented breakthrough of the Internet media. In this respect Slovenia did not fall far behind in introducing technical innovations from Europe and the USA. At the same time, Slovenian journalism was gradually developing and professionalising. Journalism has been a graduate course at one of the faculties of the University of Ljubljana for several decades. The evolution of the Slovenian media gained momentum in the last decade of the former century. With the political pressure off and market economy pressing in private incentive took over most of the segments of the media. This privatisation brought about certain positive and, of course, some negative consequences.

Since Slovenia has only two million inhabitants, the language remains the most limiting factor of Slovenian media, influencing its economic potential and the possibilities for its further expansion.



In Slovenia eight newspapers are published daily.

## Print media

In Slovenia, 8 daily newspapers are published, with a total print run of about 370,000; 45 weeklies and regional newspapers with a print run of 1.6 million; 33 fortnightly publications with a print run of 360,000; 41 occasional publications on current affairs, the economy and politics with a total print run of 612,000; 183 academic and professional journals; 33 cultural magazines, mainly monthlies, with a total print run of around 80,000; 48 entertainment tabloids and magazines with a total print run of around 500,000; as well as 8 foreign language magazines on Slovenia. The traditional dailies (Delo, Večer, Dnevnik), which began to be published

### Average print run of some of the most popular newspapers in Slovenia in 2009

<b>Dailies</b>	
Žurnal 24	117,600
Slovenske novice	95,700
Delo	62,340
Dnevnik	54,000
Večer	52,700
Primorske novice	23,000
Finance	17,000
Ekipa (sports)	16,000
<b>Weeklies</b>	
Nedeljski dnevnik	125,000
Lady	54,500
Nedelo	58,000
Družina (religious)	50,000
Jana	35,000
Kmečki glas	29,500
Mladina	21,300
Mag	16,450
Novi tednik	14,000
Demokracija	12,000

after the Second World War, have the largest number of regular subscribers. Regional weeklies with a similar tradition and a relatively large print run also have a high percentage of regular readers.

The main publisher of magazines in Slovenia remains Delo Revije with a number of highly-read magazines, mostly women and tabloid: Lady, Jana, Obrazi, Anja, Eva, Modna Jana, Ambient and Stop are just some of them. Another important publisher is Salomon, the publisher of the bi-weekly Salomon Oglasnik, the sports daily Ekipa, and some others.

There are also a number of licensed Slovenian editions of foreign titles, such as the men's magazine FHM, National Geographic, Geo and Reader's Digest, which are published by different local publishers. Since 1991 all the print media have been privatised by Slovenian companies. Some of the Slovenian newspapers and magazines are also partly owned by foreign investors, among them the Swedish corporation Bonnier AG, the Austrian Styria Verlag and Leykam and the German Burda should be mentioned.

## The broadcast media

### Television

Approximately 99 % of all Slovenian households (680,000 in total) have one or more television sets (AGB Nielsen Media Reserach).

There are five domestic public service broadcast channels (Slovenia 1, Slovenia 2, Slovenia 3, Television Koper and Television Maribor) and 35 domestic commercial television channels, owned by 31 television stations in Slovenia. There are six television channels, private and public, that can be seen by more than 75 % of the Slovene population: Pop TV, Slovenia 1, Kanal A, Slovenia 2, Slovenia 3 and TV 3. Other television programmes cover local and regional areas.

Unlike print media, foreign owners play an extremely important role in commercial television. Three of the largest commercial channels are owned by foreign companies: Pop TV and Kanal A are owned by the American Central European Media Enterprises (CME), while TV3 is owned by the Swedish company Modern Times Group (MTG).

The first channel of the national public television and the commercial channel Pop TV have the largest audience among all television broadcasters in Slovenia, both in general and during prime time. Foreign channels are available through cable and satellite; some, such as National Geographic, Discovery, Hallmark and HBO, broadcast their programmes with Slovene subtitles, as local affiliates of the transnational channels.

**RTV Slovenija** (RTV SLO) is a public service broadcaster with two national coverage television channels. There is also a regional television channel for the Italian minority broadcasting from a regional centre in Koper-Capodistia. At the end of September 2002 an additional regional television channel was launched from a regional centre in Maribor. The first channel SLO 1 started in 1958. There is a variety of programmes broadcast daily with a total duration of 24 hours; more than half of them are in-house productions. As part of its mission as a public service broadcaster SLO 1 offers a wide range of programming: children's programmes, serious programmes including documentaries, classical music, news, entertainment, series, movies and sports. The second channel SLO 2 remains the main sports broadcaster, covering all the major sporting events. SLO3 is a special television programme intended for broadcasts from the National Assembly of the RS and its working bodies



## Radio

The radio market in Slovenia is highly fragmented. After the liberalisation of the allocation of frequencies following Slovenian independence, the number of electronic media entities almost trebled. Private players are well established in this competitive market which makes it more difficult for the public channels to achieve high shares.

**RTV Slovenija (RTV SLO) is a public service broadcaster with three national radio programmes (Program A, Val 202, Program ARS), four regional programmes (one of them Radio Capodistria is designed for the Italian minority) and one local radio programme (MMR designed for the Hungarian minority).**

In addition to these public radio programmes, there are more than 75 regional and local commercial and noncommercial radio stations. According to the radio audience research Radiometrija/Media Pool, the most listened to public national programmes in 2009 are: Val 202 with a 13% and Programme ARS with an 11% audience share. At the top of popularity on the regional level were Radio City, Radio Hit and Radio Koper.



Najdi.si is a popular Slovenian search engine.

## Online media

According to the TGI research by Mediana for 2006 there were 618,000 daily, 788,000 weekly and 842,000 monthly users of the Internet (annual average) who accessed the world wide web with PC. Among the most popular domestic websites are the search engine [www.najdi.si](http://www.najdi.si) and the informative portals [www.24ur.com](http://www.24ur.com) and [www.rtv.slo.si](http://www.rtv.slo.si).

The largest mobile operator Mobitel also provides entertainment and news on its website [www.planet.si](http://www.planet.si). Most popular websites are: [google.com](http://google.com), [google.si](http://google.si), [najdi.si](http://najdi.si), [24ur.com](http://24ur.com), [siol.net](http://siol.net), [yahoo.net](http://yahoo.net), [mobisux.com](http://mobisux.com), [bolha.com](http://bolha.com), [msn.com](http://msn.com) and [youtube.com](http://youtube.com).

All Slovenian dailies as well as the two most important television channels RTV Slovenia and Pop TV have their websites that are all well visited. The public service broadcaster is expanding its online offer to include real time transmission of radio and television programmes and a range of additional services. RTV Slovenia and Pop TV short news is also available through mobile phones with WAP technology.

## News agency

There is only one main news agency in Slovenia, Slovenska tiskovna agencija (Slovenian Press Agency) or STA, which is an important source of information for smaller media, especially radio stations. The agency is almost completely, more than 95 per cent, owned by the state. As Slovenia is

such a small market, a press agency is not likely to become a profitable company and this is also the main reason why its previous private owners sold their shares back to the state.

## State support for the media

The Slovenian Constitution guarantees “freedom of expression of thought, freedom of speech and public appearance, of the press and other forms of public communications and expression”.

All Slovenian media, with the exception of the public institution Radio-Television Slovenia, are privately owned, and the state has no authority over them, nor does it have any responsibility for their work and existence.

Only public radio and television, which broadcast several channels, are guaranteed a basic financial support arising from subscription fees, which all owners of television and radio receivers are required to pay. All other media, printed or electronic, depend on their economic success. The print media depend on sales and advertising, while electronic media rely mostly on profits gained through advertising.

In spite of this, the Ministry of Culture, through securing appropriations by means of public competitions, contributes to the realisation of programmes and content of special significance; usually cultural, educational, minority-related and other within the scope of the general public interest. The Directorate for the Media within the Ministry of Culture is responsible for media policy. The Broadcasting Council as an independent expert body takes care of the broadcasting regulation.

In 2006, as a part of an effort to create greater media pluralisation, a self-standing Fund for the Pluralisation of Media was founded, which grants annual subsidies to media whose roles and importance are deemed indispensable, and which would hardly survive unaided in the marketplace.

### W

**www.mk.gov.si**

Ministry of Culture

**www.sta.si**

Slovenian Press Agency

**www.zurnal24.si**

Daily Žurnal 24

**www.delo.si**

Daily Delo

**www.finance.si**

Daily Finance

**www.dnevnik.si**

Daily Dnevnik

**www.vecer.si**

Daily Večer

**www.rtv slo.si**

Radio-Television Slovenia

# 10

## Regional diversity and creativity

Because Slovenia lies at the crossroads of the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pannonian Plain, and the Dinaric Mountain Range, through the centuries, the individual Slovenian regions have developed various forms of economic activity, ways of life and cultural creativity. Among the greatest treasures of these regions are the diversity of dialects of the Slovenian language, different lifestyles, gastronomic traditions, popular entertainment and other aspects of the everyday life of the local people. This diversity is best presented through the traditional regions of the country: Gorenjska (Upper Carniola), Dolenjska (Lower Carniola), Notranjska (Inner Carniola), Primorska (Littoral Region), Štajerska (Styria), Koroška (Carinthia) and Prekmurje (Over-Mura Region). Even though these units do not match the current administrative and geographical layout of the country, and the establishment of new regions is still under way, the names of these regions, based on national history, are universally accepted.

Ballooning.



## Ljubljana

The capital, Ljubljana, is the largest city, as well as the political, administrative, economic, educational and cultural centre of Slovenia.

Ljubljana's history goes back several thousand years. Archaeological findings from the Bronze Age are proof that as early as 2000 BC fishermen and hunters lived in pile-dwellings on the lake which once covered the Ljubljana basin. Prior to Roman colonisation, Roman legionaries erected fortresses alongside the River Ljubljanica which subsequently grew into the walled Roman settlement of Julia Emona. The city, with its castle originating in the 12th century and its old city centre, also boasts a rich medieval heritage, as well as numerous Renaissance, Baroque and Secessionist buildings. In the 20th century the works of the architect Jože Plečnik gave the city a new character. There are numerous museums, galleries, theatres and other cultural establishments in Ljubljana.

Aerial view of the old part of Ljubljana with the medieval castle.



The Triple Bridge, designed by the architect Jože Plečnik.

The river bank in the old part of Ljubljana.



The façade of the former Cooperative Bank on Miklošičeva cesta in Ljubljana, built in 1922. This art nouveau building was designed by the architect Ivan Vurnik.



## Notranjska

Among the Slovenian regions, Notranjska was arguably the first to have become more widely known in Europe, thanks to the Slovenian nobleman, castle-owner and polymath Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1641-1693), whose comprehensive opus, *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* describes the special natural and cultural characteristics of this part of Slovenia. His study of the intermittent Cerknica Lake earned him membership of the English academy of sciences – the Royal Society of London. Also to Valvasor's credit is the first mention of skiing tradition on the Bloke Plateau in Notranjska, which puts Slovenia alongside the Scandinavian countries as one of the cradles of European and world skiing. Besides Cerknica Lake, there are other Karst phenomena in Notranjska, such as the Rakov Škocjan Caves, the Postojna and Pivka Caves, and also the settlement of Predjama with Predjama Castle, and the picturesque Križna Cave with its small lakes. The centre of the region is the town of Postojna, which developed on the ancient route towards Trieste and became even more important from the 19th century due to the development of tourism at Postojna Cave.

The areas known as Rovtarsko, Idrijsko and Cerkljansko are notable because of the special Idrija-type bobbin lace. Idrija lace is one of the finest expressions of Slovenian handicraft traditions. The lace-making school at Idrija, a town also made famous by its former mercury mine, was founded in 1876 and is the oldest continually working school of its kind in Europe. As for the Idrija mine, now a museum, it should be noted that it gave rise to many technical inventions and machines, which constitute a valuable technical heritage.

The intermittent Lake Cerknica that can cover up to 26 km<sup>2</sup> of the Cerknica Polje at times of high water.



## Dolenjska and Bela Krajina

The countryside of Dolenjska is hilly and varied. A prominent feature of the region is the River Krka, from which the Slovenian pharmaceutical company based in the town of Novo mesto takes its name. Novo mesto is also the site of the Revoz Company, the only car manufacturer in Slovenia, which has for a number of years been the biggest Slovenian exporter. The now French-owned company manufactures the commercially successful Renault Clio II car. Since March 2007 Renault's new version of twingo has been produced exclusively by the Revoz Company in Novo mesto. The Slovenian company Adria Mobil d.o.o. from Novo mesto is a successful manufacturer and exporter of caravans and camper vans, known in Western markets under the brand names of ADRIA and ADRIATIK.

In the valley of the River Krka, many ancient castles can be found, most of which are now in ruins, the only beautifully preserved castle being at Otočec. The part of Dolenjska around the towns of Ribnica and Kočevje is home to traditional wooden ware, also known locally under the name of *suha roba* ('dry ware'), as well as pottery. The Kočevje area is covered by vast forests, the largest primeval woodland in Europe and a protected area since 1888, where many wild animals live, such as brown bears, wolves and lynxes.

Dolenjska is also famous for three important medieval monasteries: the Cistercian Abbey of Stična, which also houses the Slovenian Religious Museum; the Pleterje Charterhouse; and the remains of a Cistercian abbey at Kostanjevica, which currently serves as an art gallery. The park surrounding the abbey is a sculpture park known as Forma Viva, where numerous works by international artists are exhibited.

The region known as Bela krajina is isolated from the rest of Slovenia by the Gorjanci hills and is imbued with southern Pannonian traditions. Its isolation explains why it is considered one of the country's most romantic regions. It is known for its wine-producing slopes, and also for belokranjske pisanice, traditional beautifully decorated Easter eggs.



The Otočec castle.

The early Gothic (1260) cloister in the Stična monastery, the oldest and bestpreserved foundation of its kind in Slovenia, which is also famous for its illuminated manuscripts.



## Štajerska

Our journey through the regions of Slovenia now takes us towards the northeast, across the River Sava and on to Štajerska. First, we reach the areas known as Posavje and Bizeljsko. Near the town of Brežice lies the renowned Terme Čatež thermal spa and health resort, where the warm springs were discovered in 1797. In the immediate vicinity of the resort stands the 16th century Mokrice Castle, which now offers luxury tourist services, including a golf course and riding grounds.



Maribor, the capital of the Štajerska region.

Maribor and its surroundings, the Valley of the River Drava and Kozjak, constitute another fascinating area. Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia and the capital of the Štajerska region. The city lies between wine-producing hills and the forested slopes of the Pohorje Mountains. The symbiosis of the city and the vine is confirmed by the 400-year old vine of the local *žametovka* variety, which grows in the Lent Quarter of the town on the left bank of the River Drava. It is thought to be the oldest vine in the world. Maribor is also Slovenia's second largest university centre. In the winter, the hillsides of the picturesque Pohorje range become excellent ski slopes.

Slovenska Bistrica is the seat of the successful Impol Company, which is the largest exporter in the Podravje area, and specialises in semi-manufactured metal products. The second largest town in Štajerska is Celje, once the seat of the Counts of Celje, an influential aristocratic dynasty from the 15th century. The town's glorious past is reflected in the ruins of the mighty castle, once the largest in Slovenia. Today, Celje is one of Slovenia's most dynamic and quickly

**MOS**  
gorenje



Celje with the ruins of the castle, once the seat of the Counts of Celje.

developing towns, which hosts, among other events, an annual International Trade Fair (MOS), the largest business and trade fair in the southeast Europe. Celje is also a good starting point for a visit to the Šaleška and Savinjska Valleys. In the lower Savinjska Valley, hop cultivation has been one of the main agricultural activities since the 19th century, while the upper part of the Valley is particularly interesting as a developing tourist destination: it is the starting point for mountain hiking excursions in the Savinjska Alps. The Šaleška Valley is known for the Gorenje Company, which is based in the town of Velenje. The Gorenje Company manufactures top-quality washing machines and other home appliances and is one of the most internationally recognised Slovenian brands.

Kozjansko is one of the less developed parts of Slovenia. But nowadays, this can also be its advantage, as the unspoilt landscape offers quality produce, such as old apple varieties grown in orchards surrounded by meadowlands, characteristic sights in the Kozjansko Regional Park. Nearby, next to the small town of Podčetrtek, there is a thermal health and spa resort known as Terme Olimia.

Hilly Haloze is a fertile wine-producing area where, among other varieties, the *laški rizling* and *renski rizling* grapes are grown, producing top-quality wines. In the middle of the Ptujsko polje Plain, on the banks of the River Drava stands the town of Ptuj, formerly a Roman military outpost and one of Slovenia's oldest towns. The most prominent feature of the town is its medieval castle. Ptuj is famous for its carnival festival known as *Ptujsko kurentovanje*. The event is named after the most recognisable carnival figure of the Ptujsko polje, Haloze and Slovenske gorice areas: the *kurent* or *korant*. The town boasts a remarkable wine cellar in the 13th century Friars Minor Monastery.



*Kurenti*, the typical carnival figures of the Ptujsko polje.

This part of Slovenia is also known for the health resort town of Rogaška Slatina, with a mineral water therapy tradition spanning four hundred years. The health resort flourished in the second half of the 19th century, when it became one of the most eminent European health tourism destinations and was one of the key resorts contributing to the development of luxury tourism in Europe before the Second World War. Today, Rogaška Slatina is a modern health resort town, embodying fitness and health. The town also has a rich glassmaking

tradition, with the Steklarna Rogaška and Steklarska nova companies, a Glassmaking School, and certain smaller glassworks.

Prlekija and Slovenske gorice are known for their top-quality wines. The capital of Prlekija is Ljutomer, also a focal point for the breeding of the Standardbred trotters used for harness races. Slovenske gorice is a picturesque land of rolling hills and plains lying between the rivers Mura and Drava. Radenci is an important local centre due to its springs of Radenska mineral water and health and spa tourism.

## Prekmurje

From Prlekija, the path leads us to the River Mura. From the left riverbank to the Austrian and Hungarian border lies the region known as Prekmurje. We could say that the region is Slovenia's gateway to the great Pannonian Plain. Prekmurje is a flat land covered by cornfields, characterised by long roadside villages visited by storks, which return there each year. Prekmurje used to be an important centre for the potter's trade. In the village of Bogojina, a famous church was built between 1925 and 1927, designed by the architect Jože Plečnik, who decorated its interior with local pottery items. The Romanesque rotunda with interesting frescoes at Selo is another fascinating site. Of a number of floating mills that were once in use on the River Mura, the only operational mill is at Ižakovci.

## Koroška

Slovenj Gradec is the most important town in Koroška. It is a major business and cultural centre and is well known for a variety of fine arts events, as well as for organising biennial exhibitions of Slovenian traditional crafts and applied arts. The town is also proud of its Messenger of Peace status awarded by the United Nations Organisation. Slovenj Gradec is the seat of a successful business group, Prevent Global d.d., a leading European manufacturer of car seat covers, protective clothing, and accessories. The company has production facilities elsewhere in Slovenia and around the world. In the Mežica Valley lies the well-known Ravenska železarna ironworks. At Mežica, the disused lead mine has been preserved and converted into an exceptional museum, which is a cultural attraction popular with visitors.



Storks nesting in Prekmurje.



The 12th century Romanesque rotunda in Selo, Prekmurje.



## Gorenjska

The northwestern part of Slovenia is Alpine and is known as Gorenjska. For centuries, it has been the most developed Slovenian region, with the longest tradition in tourism. It boasts several towns with beautiful historic centres, such as Škofja Loka, Radovljica, Kranj, Kamnik and Tržič. Kropa and Kamna gorica are centres of iron forging, nail-making and blacksmithing, while the ironworks at Jesenice, the region's largest, date from more recent times. The town of Jesenice is also the cradle of Slovenian ice hockey. Gorenjska is synonymous with winter sports. Numerous ski resorts and the world-famous ski-jumping hills at Planica are all essential elements of the region's winter image. Bled, Bohinj and Kranjska Gora have for many years been among the most popular Slovenian tourist destinations. The town of Kranj, the industrial and business hub of Gorenjska, is the seat of the successful Sava Tyres Company, which combines the Slovenian rubber industry tradition which spans more than eighty years with the new opportunities provided by the business link with the Goodyear Corporation. The creative business image of Gorenjska is reflected in many other traditional and modern business activities, which include the Begunje-based sports equipment and ski manufacturer Elan, and the Seaway Company from the Bled area which builds top-class yachts and boats which have won many prestigious international awards.

The countryside in the Gorenjska region, with Kamnik-Savinja Alps in the background.



## Primorska

The area around the Soča Valley has been known as Posočje since the end of the Second World War. The River Soča, a true emerald-coloured gem in the heart of the mountains, is home to the Soča trout. At the same time, it is a very attractive river for white water sports such as kayaking, canoeing and rafting. A visit to the Valley must encompass the sites which bear witness to the fierce fighting on the Isonzo Front during the First World War, which is also documented at the Kobarid Museum. Up in the mountains, numerous strongholds, pillboxes and trenches have survived. Visitors seeking to know more about this historic battleground can visit the spectacular Kluže Fortress or take a tour of privately owned weapons collections.

On the right bank of the Soča, near Nova Gorica lies a wine-producing area known as Goriška Brda, a hilly and green land to the west of the Italian town of Gorizia, which at its southern end meets the Friulian Plain. Goriška Brda is one of the country's best-known wine regions, also renowned for cherry and olive trees. Nova Gorica is the youngest Slovenian university town. It is also known as an entertainment and casino centre, which attracts many guests. The Franciscan monastery at Kostanjevica houses the tomb of Charles X, the last Bourbon King of France who, when exiled from France, found refuge in Gorizia.

The influence of the Mediterranean climate reaches furthest inland in the Vipava Valley. The Valley lies between the Karst Plateau to the south, and the Trnovski gozd Plateau and Mt Nanos to the north. The small town of Ajdovščina is the seat of the Pipistrel Company, a manufacturer of top-quality, world-famous ultra-light aircraft.

The land between the Gulf of Trieste, the Brkini Hills and the Vipava Valley is known as Kras. Experts also refer to it as the original Karst, as the word karst and karstic refer to many specific geological processes and phenomena. This word was adopted by many languages around the world and also gave its name to karstology, a science specialising in exploring different aspects of these phenomena. The Karst is also home to white Lipizzaner horses, named after the village of Lipica, where they were first bred in 1580 by crossbreeding the original Karst horse with Spanish, Neapolitan and Arab



Rafting on the Soča river.

Lipicanci are Slovenian species of riding horse of world-wide renown, originating in the village of Lipica. When young, these horses are either black or grey and when they grow up, most become white.



breeds. The new breed was fast and perfectly suited to the needs of the Imperial court, the army and the Spanish Riding School in Vienna.

A typically transitional area between inland Slovenia and the lower-lying Mediterranean world are the Brkini Hills, with the cliffs of Kraški rob. The most interesting natural curiosity in the area, the picturesque Škocjan Caves, has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1986. The Caves form the central attraction of the Škocjan Caves Regional Park, which was established in 1996.

The term Slovenian Istria designates the northernmost and northwestern part of the Istrian Peninsula between the Kvarner Gulf and the Gulf of Trieste. It extends from the Adriatic Sea to the west towards Kraški rob and Bržanija to the east, and from the Italian border to the north towards the

The Škocjan Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1986.



River Dragonja or the Croatian border to the south. This is a very picturesque and varied area, characterised by vineyards, olive trees and Mediterranean fruit trees. On the coast, sea salt and fleur de sel are produced; the sea has fish in abundance; truffles can be found in the woods and meadows. There are also chestnut trees, herbs and spices aplenty, as well as a multitude of wild animals. The most important site in the region is the Romanesque church of the Holy Trinity in the village of Hrastovlje. The church dates back to the early 12th century and is famous for its wall frescoes, especially the depiction of the Dance of Death. Besides scenic stone villages, there are three famous ancient coastal towns in the region: Koper, Izola and Piran. Also of importance is the seaside resort of Portorož, with its lively tourist industry, which began in the early 1900's. The town of Koper has an important commercial port, Luka Koper. In 2003, Koper also became a university town. It is also the home of the successful Cimos d.d. Automobile Industry Company, which makes parts for international car manufacturers.

The medieval Piran, situated on the peninsula between the bays of Piran and Strunjan, is an attractive Adriatic seaside resort.



*Potica*, a yeast dough roll, filled with nuts.

## Slovenian cuisine

Slovenian cuisine is very diverse. It has emerged from centuries of creative traditions at the crossroads of the Alps, the Mediterranean, and the Pannonian Plain; and since the Second World War, it has also absorbed certain flavours from the Balkans. However, having been part of Central Europe for centuries, it has been most strongly influenced by the culinary arts typical of the Danube region. That is not to say that Slovenian cuisine has indiscriminately borrowed from other cultures, but above all it has created new dishes adapted to the natural conditions and local lifestyles, which today correspond to the country's twenty-four culinary regions.

The northeastern culinary regions depend heavily on locally grown cereals, and are the home of farinaceous dishes, cakes such as *prekmurska gibanica*, *ajdov krapec* and *preška gibanica*, and meat dishes with home-produced pork. An authentic Slovenian delicacy, which is also greatly appreciated abroad, is *kranjska klobasa* (Carniolan sausage). Other typical

dishes incorporate sauerkraut, turnips, legumes, potatoes, and there is a variety of vegetable and meat stews (or 'spoon dishes', as they are known). Among the farinaceous dishes, the most widespread are *štruklji* (rolled dough dumplings), which can be sweet or savoury, boiled or baked, and are made with different fillings e.g. cheese, eggs, fruit, vegetables and meat. The most popular Slovenian cake is *potica*, a yeast dough roll most typically filled with tarragon, while other variations include honey, crackling, bacon, walnuts and chives.

The culinary heritage of the Primorska region (the Mediterranean region of Slovenia) is best known for *kraški pršut* (dry-cured ham), olives and olive oil, sheep and goat cheese, omelettes with herbs, meat and vegetable stews, and seafood.

### Wines from Slovenia

Slovenia has three wine-producing regions: Primorska, Posavje, and Podravje. Each is divided into many wine-making districts, each having a selection of fine wines. Primorska produces several exceptional local wines. The most typical wine of the Slovenian Karst is *kraški teran* (Terrano Carsico), a red wine made from Refosco grapes. Its varietal, produced in the Koper district, is called *refošk*. The sun-bathed slopes of Koper district are also famous for *malvazija* (Malvasia) and other wines. The Vipava Valley is home to exquisite wines, such as *zelen*, *pinela*, *grganja* and *klarnica*, while Goriška Brda is most known for its rebula. The champion of Dolenjska in the Posavje wine-producing region is the ruby *cviček*, while Bela Krajina boasts *metliška črnina* and *modra frankinja*



Vineyards from the Štajerska region.



(Blue Franconian). The pride of the Bizeljско wine-growing district are the white and red *bizeljčan* blends. The Podravje region has the best *laški rizling* (Italian Riesling) and *renski rizling* (Rhine Riesling), while *šipon* (Furmint) is the most appreciated wine from Prlekija. Among all the wine-growing regions, Jeruzalem is the most famous one.

Slovenia also offers excellent mead, which is still fermented according to the oldest known recipe, from 1689. Many regions produce remarkable varieties of schnapps from fruit and berries, particularly blueberries. Bountiful orchards yield mouth-watering fruit, from which a range of natural fruit juices is produced, while from deep within the Earth, mineral waters spring to light, including the world-famous Radenska, Donat and Tempel from Rogaška Slatina.

### A land of thermal and mineral water springs

In Slovenia, there are currently fifteen health and tourist resorts, the best known being Čatež, Rogaška Slatina, Radenci and Podčetrtek. All of these resorts are certified natural health spas; but they also realised that providing water with healing properties and accommodation were simply not enough to please the customers of today. Therefore, besides modern swimming pools, hotel facilities and expert medical assistance, they also offer 'wellness' services for a healthier lifestyle. Traditional health resort services and established physiotherapy methods are thus complemented by different types of massage, beauty programmes, health diets, and weight-watching programmes.



The Rogaška Slatina Health Spa, with its over 400 - years old tradition of healing with mineral water, is also famous for its glassworks producing crystal glass.

## Nature parks

Slovenia offers an outstanding mosaic of biological, landscape and cultural diversity. So far 11.5% of the Slovenian countryside has been protected in various protection categories. Altogether there are forty-four protected areas or parks, including one national park, three regional parks and forty landscape parks.

The largest protected area in the country is the Triglav National Park, which encompasses nearly 4% of the territory of Slovenia (83,807 ha). The park's diverse configuration consists of mountain ridges, glacial valleys and lakes, surface and subterranean karst phenomena typical of high-lying areas, the sources of the Sava and the Soča rivers with numerous waterfalls and deep river beds. The vegetation in the park is mainly Alpine with numerous endemic species. Among the characteristic animal species of the area is the endemic Soča trout.



One of the seven Triglav lakes.



The Škocjan Caves Park.

In the area of the Sečovelje salt pans landscape park (864 ha), 45 endangered plant species can be found. The extensive marshland is an important nesting place for more than 80 bird species.

The three regional parks in Slovenia, encompassing large natural homogenous areas with both original and man-made features are Kozjansko, Notranjska and Škocjan Caves. The Škocjan Caves with the largest underground canyon have been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1986. The most attractive among the landscape parks are the Logarska dolina and the Sečovelje salt pans.



## Photographies

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A Neanderthal flute at least 45,000 years old, found in Slovenia, is the oldest musical instrument in the world.

The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola (1689) is an encyclopaedic work by renowned Slovene polymath Baron Janez Vajkard Valvasor and was the model for numerous European works on regional culture, history and life for over a century. Valvasor's description of the intermittent lake at Cerknica gained him membership of the prestigious Royal Society in London.

# DID YOU KNOW?

Slovenia is the home of the world-famous Lipizzaner, or Lipica horses.

Potica is typical Slovenian festive cake with dough and different types of fillings (walnut, tarragon, poppy seed, etc.) for celebrating holidays.

The Karst is a region of Mediterranean Slovenia in which the landscape is formed by the action of water seeping through limestone, which has created a range of special natural phenomena (e.g. karst caves, sinkholes, underground rivers, intermittent lakes, etc.).

