

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA



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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA

This year marks 25 years since Slovenia became an independent state. Slovenia can look back on the road it has travelled during this time with pride. Some things that seemed out of reach at the time have now been achieved; especially in the lives of individuals and the entire society, a lot has changed and also improved over the past 25 years.

After several years of economic and financial crisis and the poor management of banks, companies, and even the state, it is now time to look into the future with optimism.

It is good to be more frequently reminded about all the good things happening in the society we live in and about areas that are well managed as they can even serve as good examples to other developed countries. Among Slovenia's advantages, especially its high-quality healthcare, maternity protection, early education of children, kindergarten system, healthy environment and other things should be pointed out.

It can certainly be said that, after 25 years, Slovenia and its people have become more mature, confident, vibrant, modern, courageous, developed and optimistic.

LAYING DOWN FINANCIAL AND FISCAL FOUNDATIONS

After its declaration of independence, Slovenia became financially independent due to one of the quickest and most successful currency changeovers (in October 1991, with a 1:1 exchange rate within three days) and introduced a Slovenian currency – the tolar. At the time, the total foreign reserve assets of the Slovenian banking system amounted to \$170 million, which was approximately €150 million.

Important steps for establishing the essential public institutions were carried out in the field of finances (Tax Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, Customs Administration of the Republic of Slovenia), banking, the insurance industry and the securities market (Bank of Slovenia, Insurance Supervision Agency, and Securities Market Agency). Three supervisory bodies were established in Slovenia, each specialised for a specific financial market sector.

Slovenia joined the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and other important international financial institutions.

Furthermore, Slovenia successfully carried out the procedure for establishing a fiscal and customs system, including the abolishment of sales tax and introduction of VAT in July 1999.

In 25 years, Slovenia has built an independent public finance system. On 1st January 2007, as the first country following the “big bang” scenario, Slovenia adopted the euro currency by irrevocably fixing the exchange rate and, at the same time, introducing the euro bank notes and euro coins, while also complying with requirements of the common European currency.

Following the initial complex and time-consuming income tax filing methods, Slovenia introduced a simple, efficient, and citizen-friendly provisional personal income tax calculation system within the last few years. The first annual personal income tax assessment based on provisional personal income tax calculations was carried out in 2008: since then, over 98.5% of persons liable for tax no longer need to purchase or print personal income tax forms, fill them out by hand, and file them at offices or post offices because provisional calculations are delivered to their homes.

Moreover, an effective system has been set up for implementing cohesion policies, which en-

ables the absorption of European development funds. The progress achieved with the help of these funds can be observed in each and every municipality in Slovenia.

Slovenia was among the first states in Europe to introduce fully paperless procedures for submitting customs declarations. Slovenia introduced a fully electronic, paperless customs clearance system as early as 1996, which was initially only intended for major companies. However, in 2008 and 2009, the entirely paperless electronic customs clearance was introduced for all entities. Today, only electronic customs declarations are filed without any appendices. As a result, there is no need for archiving the files, which was previously done by the customs authority.

In 2014, Slovenia was the second state (right after the Netherlands) to start using simplified customs procedures in the EU.

By integrating the fiscal and customs administration into the Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, a large supervisory body was established, which enables and provides better services for persons liable for tax and also contributes to an even higher rate of voluntary obligation fulfilment.

Thanks to the great efforts made by the Government, Slovenia's general government deficit stood at 2.9% of GDP in late 2015. This is why the European Commission, after a seven-year procedure related to excessive deficit, proposed to the European Council to end the procedure and move Slovenia from the corrective to preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Slovenia, in the 2009–2013 period, experienced the second largest cumulative drop in GDP (by nearly 10 percentage points) right after Greece, which was due to the financial crisis, and suffered losses in the banking sector and general economy. However, its economic situation improved in 2016, which is evident from the nearly three percent economic growth recorded in 2015. The positive economic circumstances have an important effect on the increase in the number of available jobs as well as the general situation in the labour market and also in the entrepreneurial sector, while the banking system is once again sustainable. After quite some time, the level of social optimism is now on the rise in Slovenia.

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS



Financial independence

- Currency changeover within just 3 days following independence



Autonomous system of public finance

- Establishment of the tax and customs system
- Establishment of key institutions in the fields of banking, insurance and securities market



Common European currency

- Adoption of Euro on 1 January 2007



Effective and citizen-friendly system for informative personal income tax calculations

- Over 98.5% of persons liable for tax no longer need to purchase or print personal income tax forms



Effective implementation of Cohesion Policy

- Absorption of European development funds
- Progress is seen in every municipality in Slovenia



Reduction of general government deficit

- By the end of 2015, the general government deficit was brought under 3% of GDP

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GDP GROWTH

After becoming independent, Slovenia had to find a new position on global and European markets. It soon attracted foreign direct investments, which have since considerably stimulate the effectiveness and growth of Slovenia's economy, especially by providing access to new markets and additional resources in the form of capital, technology and knowledge in organisation, marketing and other fields.

From 1991 to 2015, the Slovenian gross domestic product (GDP) effectively increased by 75.2 percent and GDP per capita rose by 70.0 percent (in 1991, GDP per capita amounted to approximately €5,000 and in 2015 it exceeded €18,000).

In 1990, the number of companies began to grow rapidly. After Slovenia acquired its independence, companies quickly overcame the transformation-related crisis and successfully redirected their work to foreign markets after having lost the Yugoslavian one. This also contributed to maintaining national budgets close to balance and a sustainable balance of payments.

In 1991, there was no support environment for entrepreneurship yet in place, but as early as 1995 the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) and Small Business Development Network, which included local and regional

business centres, were founded. SBDC was later transformed into the Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (Javna agencija za podjetništvo in tuje investicije or JAPTI). In 2012,

GDP and the economy



GDP

- From 1991 to 2015, GDP effectively increased by 75.2% and GDP per capita by 70%
- In 1991, GDP per capita amounted to approximately EUR 5,000 → In 2015, GDP per capita exceeded EUR 18,000



Supportive environment for entrepreneurship

- Since 1994, accelerated establishment of new supporting institutions in the form of technological parks and incubators has been recorded
- Through direct grants or EU funds support for more than 3,000 small and medium-sized companies
- 1,400 innovations and patents were created
- EUR 1.75 billion of private investments was encouraged
- Over 45,000 jobs were created
- From 2008 to 2015, 48,000 new companies were registered, mostly in expert, scientific and technical activities as well as trade and manufacturing



Tourism

Last 25 years:

- Number of foreign overnight stays has tripled
- Number of overnight stays of domestic guests increased by 35%
- 59 million tourists visited Slovenia in the last 25 years and generated 187 million overnight stays
- In 1991, there were approximately 28,274 hotel beds → In 2015, there were approximately 41,208 hotel beds



European funds

- The accommodation capacities increased by more than 11,800
- The number of visitors to the renovated and revitalised cultural heritage and cultural institutions increased by 760,000

JAPTI was merged with the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) and the Public Agency for Technological Development of the Republic of Slovenia (TIA).

Since 1994, many new supporting institutions in the form of technological parks and incubators have been established. Over 3,000 small and mid-sized companies received direct subsidies from the EU funds, creating 1,400 innovations and patents as a result; this encouraged €1.75 billion of private investments and contributed to more than 45,000 new jobs.

Once Slovenia joined the EU, it gained access to the EU single market, which ensures free movement of goods, services, people and capital, or, in other words, free trade without any customs of tariffs among the EU Member States.

The improved cooperation between science and the economy is, in its own, also a great achievement. Various measures in the fields of research, development and innovation encouraged the integration of science with the economy, improved the inventiveness and commercialisation in solutions, strengthened the R&D divisions in companies, promoted technological investments, supported development centres etc.

Tourism has become an increasingly important industry in years following the declaration of independence. The number of overnight stays by foreign tourists has tripled in the past 25 years and the number of overnight stays by Slovenian guests increased by 35 percent.

By using the EU funds alone, the accommodation capacities increased by more than 11,800, while the number of visitors to the renovated and revitalised cultural heritage and cultural institutions increased by 760,000,

In 1991, there were approximately 28,274 hotel beds in all hotel categories, i.e. 38% of all tourist accommodation capacities in Slovenia. By 2015, the number of available hotel beds exceeded 41,208 (a 33% share), which accounts for a 46% growth.

Furthermore, Slovenia also promotes the sustainable development of tourism – e.g. in 2015, 29 hotels became certified as hiking and biking hotels.

THE PATH TO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND FOREIGN POLICY

The Republic of Slovenia has come a long way since that evening in June 1991, when the flag of independent Slovenia was raised at the Trg republike square. Its progress and development are the result of work and efforts contributed by all our citizens. Everyone who worked within the Slovenian diplomacy in the past twenty years with candour, commitment and self-motivation contributed to the recognisable, responsible and principle-based role the Republic of Slovenia now plays in the European and the broader international community.

The diplomatic work in the independent state of Slovenia did not start in June 1991; its beginnings can be traced back to May 1990, when the first Slovenian democratically elected government came into office. At the time, a decision was adopted within the National Committee for International Cooperation, which was led by the minister Dr Dimitrij Rupel, that Slovenia must open its own diplomatic posts at key locations abroad. Furthermore, the goal was to develop the Slovenian foreign policy and establish a ministry of foreign affairs.

The first authorised representative of Slovenia abroad was appointed by the Government in August 1990. The position was filled by Lojze Sočan, head of the Ljubljanska Banka bank office in Brussels. By June 1991, he was joined by more than a dozen representatives, appointed by the Government or the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They mostly came from business circles or were members of Slovenian minorities or emigrant communities; some of them were also foreign nationals who were connected to Slovenia on a personal level. At the same time, Slovenia relied on the diplomats who were, at the time, still performing their tasks at Yugoslavia's diplomatic posts, but whose work and contacts were of great help for Slovenian efforts.

After June 1991, the number of authorised representatives further increased, and the Slovenian diplomats, who left the system of the former state, returned to Ljubljana. Some of them took over the tasks related to representing Slovenia and its interests abroad. At the time, Slovenia's interests were completely clear, i.e. to ensure international recognition of the new state in the international community that mostly ignored the imminent fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and was relatively unsympathetic to the establishment of the new state.

FROM INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION TO A SAFE, SUCCESSFUL AND WORLD-WIDE RESPECTED SLOVENIA



May 1990

First Slovenian democratically-elected government took up the mandate

- Start of diplomatic work in the independent state of Slovenia



Declaration of independence on 26th June 1991

- Croatia was the first country to recognise Slovenia as an independent state on 26th June 1991



Adoption of the Brioni Declaration on 7th July 1991

- End of the Ten-Day War in Slovenia



By the end of 1991

- Slovenia was recognised by Lithuania, Georgia, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine and Belarus
- Iceland was the first western state to recognise Slovenia
- In December 1991, the decision on recognition was announced by Germany and Sweden



23rd December 1991

- A new constitution was adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, which was also the first constitution of the independent Slovenia



15th January 1992

- The recognition by the European Community (the predecessor of today's European Union) was a milestone in terms of the integration of the young state to the international community



22nd May 1992

- Slovenia became the 176 member of the world organisation of the United Nations. This finally positioned it among the independent, sovereign and equal members of the international community



At the beginning of 1993

- Slovenia was accepted to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and it became a member of the Council of Europe in May 1993. The first international organisation that the state has entered into has been the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which was later renamed to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe



April 1993

- Slovenia signed a cooperation agreement with the European Community and the integration into this European family has become the main foreign policy goal



November 1994

- Slovenia becomes an associate member of NATO



June 1996

- Slovenia signed an Association Agreement with EU and submitted an application to become a full member



29th March 2004

- Slovenia became a member of NATO



1st May 2004

- Slovenia joined the EU along with nine other states



1st January 2007

- Slovenia introduced the euro as the first among the new EU Members States



22nd December 2007

- Slovenia becomes a member of the Schengen area



First half of 2008

- Slovenia presided over the Council of the EU as the first among the states that joined in 2004



2010

- Slovenia joined the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)



2015

- The three pillars, i.e. security, the principle of peaceful politics and focus on well-being, were classified by the new declaration of the Slovenian foreign policy

However, the efforts made by the then short-standing diplomacy showed concrete results relatively soon after independence was declared. The first state to recognise Slovenia was Croatia, who did it on 26th June, and by December Slovenia was gradually recognised by the countries of the former Soviet Union, i.e. Lithuania, Georgia, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine and Belarus. On 19th December 1991, the first western country to recognise Slovenia was Iceland, which also extended its friendship to Slovenia six months later by proposing the resolution of the UN General Assembly on Slovenia's admission to the United Nations. On 19th December, Germany and Sweden also announced their decision to recognise Slovenia; their recognition entered into effect on 15th January 1992, when Slovenia was recognised by the European Community member states as well as most other European states, Canada and Australia. Two days earlier, Slovenia was recognised by the Vatican and San Marino. The new state was recognised by the majority of South American states in January and by the Russian Federation in February, and it also joined the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (now known as OSCE) in March. The USA recognised Slovenia in April. By late spring 1992, Slovenia's place on the world political map was well secured.

On 22nd May 1992, the independent Republic of Slovenia became a member of the United Nations. This finally positioned it among the independent, sovereign and equal members of the international community. Slovenia's application for UN membership was approved less than a year after the declaration of independence, but this was not achieved easily. It was the result of great efforts and a wide variety of activities carried out by Slovenian diplomats and other representatives. While some of these activities were quite traditional and formal, others required resourcefulness and innovativeness.

Looking back at the time since its beginnings in 1990, we can say that the Slovenian foreign policy and diplomacy co-created the growing ambitions and goals of the Slovenian state and considerably contributed to their fulfilment. Today, Slovenia is a Member State of the European Union and NATO; in the past, it presided the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Slovenia is a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, other international organisations and important informal global and regional integrations. As a newly-established state, Slovenia served its term at the UN Security Council, became a member of the UN Human Rights Council for the second time, and is also a member of the UNESCO Executive Board. Slovenia

is actively adjusting to changes in the international community and challenges faced by both the young state, Europe and the entire international community, ranging from terrorism to climate change, migrations and population ageing. Today, diplomats know how to take into consideration the interests of the economy and support it in its efforts.

Last year, a significant amount of work was invested into the preparation of two new strategic documents for Slovenian foreign policy in collaboration with many partners from political, expert and academic circles as well as with the interested public. The last strategic document in the field of foreign policy was drafted in 1999 and the objectives defined therein were achieved and even exceeded thanks to successful work done by the state and its diplomacy. Meanwhile, situation in the international community have changed drastically, the balance of powers has shifted, and new players and new challenges have emerged. Over the last eight years, Slovenia has faced three global crises – after the financial breakdown and global economic crisis, it is now going through a security crisis, which was caused by new conflicts, unresolved regional crises and terrorism. All these processes directly affect Slovenia and the European Union.

The goals and priorities defined by the new declaration can be classified into three pillars: the first one represents security and includes Slovenia's actions in all mechanisms for providing international peace and security, including the UN, NATO and OSCE as well as peace operations and missions. The second pillar represents the principle of peaceful politics, while the third is aimed at well-being – primarily active measures implemented by Slovenia as a European Union Member State dedicated to providing support for Slovenia's national priorities and interests.

Slovenia currently has a network of 52 diplomatic posts around the world. There are 21 diplomatic missions appointing diplomats who deal exclusively with the economy, whereas, at the remaining posts, these tasks are performed by other diplomats or local employees. In 25 years, Slovenia has built a network of 18 consulates-general led by honorary consuls-general and 101 consulates led by honorary consuls.

In all these years, their activities were upgraded, adapted and expanded in order to bring the services of the state as close as possible to the needs and expectations of the Slovenian citizens and its economy. The fact is that the Slovenian economy is very export-oriented and requires the support of diplomacy in the process

of its internationalisation. Hence, the economic diplomacy under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs resolves requests by entities in the Slovenian economy, supports Slovenian companies on their business path to foreign markets, and carries out activities aimed at attracting foreign investments.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs improved its visa-related activities due to the demands of the citizens and Slovenian economy. To achieve this goal, Slovenia strengthened its cooperation with other countries in the Schengen area, who now represent Slovenia in visa procedures in states where Slovenia does not have a diplomatic mission. Consequently, this service is now available at additional 140 locations around the world. Furthermore, the visa-related activities have also been improved through outsourcing and representation by agencies. These measures strengthen the interpersonal contacts, tourism industry, business ties and cross-border cooperation in general.

DEFENCE, PROTECTION AND DISASTER RELIEF

The Defence Forces of the Republic of Slovenia had not changed substantially until 1994, when their name was changed into the Slovenian Armed Forces. Later on, the Government and the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision to reform the Slovenian Armed Forces into a small, professional and modern army that will keep peace and security in Slovenia and abroad, which is also in Slovenia's national interest.

At the end of 1994, the permanent structure of the Armed Forces included approximately 3,000 professional members of the Territorial Defence and 5,000 soldiers serving their military duty in one generation, and the military structure included 54,000 members of the Territorial Defence.

Today, Slovenian Armed Forces include both permanent and contractual members. The permanent members are the professional members of the Slovenian Armed Forces, while the contractual members include citizens who enter into an agreement on serving military duties in the reserve forces. At the end of 2015, there were 7,049 permanent members, of which 16 percent women and 914 contractual members.

After becoming independent, Slovenia reached another milestone when it joined NATO. In 1993, the National Assembly adopted the decision that Slovenia would join the Euro-Atlantic integrations. In 1996, Slovenia started the accession talks with NATO, which allowed an exchange of experience and knowledge while also establishing the basic framework for reforming the Slovenian defence system. The reforms focused on structure of the Slovenian Armed Forces and the capabilities that Slovenia would require as a potential NATO member state. On 11th April 1996, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision that Slovenia would guarantee its security interest within the system of collective defence made possible by the NATO membership. On 14th April 1996, Slovenia entered a dialogue with NATO as the first partner country, upon NATO's proposal, after it had already joined the Partnership for Peace in 1994 as one of the first countries to do so. The NATO mission called AFOR (Allied Harbour) was the first engagement of the Slovenian Armed Forces in the international military interventions and joint operations, taking place from 14th May to 28th June 1997. At the end of 1998, the first international military drill in Slovenia took place. It was called the Cooperative Adventure Exchange 98, and for the first time in history

it took place in a country that was not a NATO member state. Slovenia's accession negotiations with NATO ended with an invitation to join the alliance. On 29th March 2004, Slovenia became a full NATO member. In the same year, Slovenia sent members of the Slovenian Armed Forces to join the international ISAF mission in Afghanistan for the first time. The largest contingent of the Slovenian Armed Forces participated in a KFOR mission in Kosovo in February 2007. On this occasion, the contingent members assumed their area of responsibility and, for the first time, commanded members of foreign armed forces (NATO members).

By joining NATO, Slovenia acquired a level of security that could not be guaranteed just by the state even if a considerably larger amount of money would be dedicated to this purpose. Slovenia became a full member of an organisation based on democratic values, the rule of law, and the observance of human and individual rights. At the same time, it entered into relationships with similar states, aimed at providing collective defence. Furthermore, Slovenia contributes to the credibility of this alliance as well as to the collective and, indirectly, its national security by cooperating within the NATO-sponsored operations and exercises, contributing its proportional share to NATO budgets and

its structures, increasing its capabilities in accordance with NATO capability targets, and participating in multinational joint capability development programmes. The year 1994 was especially important for civil protection and disaster relief as the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief made a decision to replace multiple

emergency service numbers with a single number, i.e. 112. The number 112 started to be used by all 13 regional notification centres in 1998. Slovenia was thus the second European country to introduce 112 as the emergency number for the entire country.

DEFENCE, PROTECTION AND DISASTER RELIEF



Official start of the Armed Forces' development

- On 2nd June 1991, the first generation of military recruits, who served in Territorial Defence, took an oath



Structuring of the Armed Forces

- 1994 - Approximately 3,000 professional members → 2015 - Approximately 7,000 professional members



Milestone in 2004

- Slovenia's entry into NATO
- Slovenia acquired a level of security that could not be guaranteed just by the state, even if a considerably larger amount of money would be dedicated to this purpose



Protection and Disaster Relief

- 1994 – a decision to replace multiple emergency service numbers with a single number, i.e. 112 was made
- 1998 – Slovenia was the second European state to introduce 112 as the emergency number for the entire state
- 2009 – Slovenia was the first in Europe to enable deaf and hard of hearing people to use text emergency calls to dial 112
- 2015 – Slovenia was the first European state where the eCall system for receiving automatic emergency calls from vehicles was deployed for the entire state

The scope of services was further expanded and Slovenia was among the first to introduce the option for automatically displaying callers' location. By implementing the innovative WAP112 solution, Slovenia was the first in Europe to enable deaf and hard of hearing people to use text emergency calls to dial 112 in 2009. In 2014, the eCall system for receiving automatic emergency calls from vehicles was established by using Slovenia-developed technical solutions. The eCall has been regularly operating since 1st December 2015, and Slovenia is the first European country where the eCall system is now deployed for the entire country.

SLOVENIAN POLICE – IN SERVICE OF PEOPLE FOR 25 YEARS

In the past 25 years, the Slovenian Police had to overcome a difficult path. During the key moments of the 1991 War for Independence, in the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, the Slovenian Militia decisively joined the people in defending Slovenia. It was the only armed force on which Slovenian citizens could actually depend. By carrying out various activities before the war, members of the Slovenian Militia deliberately protected the emerging democratic processes, and later also unselfishly participated in the armed conflicts against the hegemonic central government, in which some of them lost their lives. Their actions showed how internally unified, excellently organised, experienced and highly professionally qualified the Slovenian Police really is.

In any other case, the Slovenian Militia, as part of Slovenia's defence forces, could not have played such an essential role in paving the way to a new, free and independent state 25 years ago. Its close cooperation with the civil population, which placed complete trust in the police, was also deeply significant. In addition to their commitment to performing duties on a daily basis and in a professional manner, the

trust and great reputation among the people have built a foundation for successful work the Slovenian Police has continued to carry out to this day. Without a close cooperation with citizens, the police could not have developed into a modern security institution operating in accordance with the European standards and achieving impressive results. Furthermore, without the wholehearted support of people, the police could not have maintained an enviously high level of security that has been provided in Slovenia for the past 25 years.

Many people take the police for granted, but it is a fact that security is a rare commodity, which requires continued active efforts to remain at such a high level. It is also a value that has not been lost during the transition into a different system, which was unfortunately not the case with many others. On the contrary, Slovenia has maintained and additionally improved security as one of the most important values of a democratic state. Slovenia therefore remains an "oasis" of security and peace, which is also evident in numerous international indexes, where it is ranked among the safest countries in the world. This is all thanks to the police as their professional activities help prevent crimes and contribute to the safety of all citizens and other people who live in or are visiting Slovenia.

Moreover, the police reduces and manages other security risks, thus decreasing the number of threats to the integrity of people and their property and allaying their fear of becoming victims of crimes.

Today, there are 8,151 police officers in Slovenia, who are available 24 hours a day and who also perform their duties in the most difficult situations, even in the cold and rain, when necessary. They often have to endure severe physical and mental burdens and pressures, which can also be life-threatening. Nevertheless, each successfully completed task brings personal satisfaction, knowing that they have prevented a crime, found a perpetrator, or saved a person's life. There are 111 police stations across the state, and nearly half a million calls made to 113 in the past year alone indicate that people can still rely on police officers to help them whenever they are in trouble, whether a case concerns a stolen wallet, a break-in into an apartment, a traffic accident, or domestic violence. Even when people turn to the police "only" in search of a professional opinion, preventive advice or perhaps even consolation, police officers try to provide a citizen-friendly service in such cases as well by listening and helping to the best of their ability and in a respectful manner.

Over more than two decades, the Slovenian Police achieved many historical milestones, launched extensive security projects and underwent organisational changes that affected the work of police officers and the public. The changes were aimed at increasing the professional level and efficiency of police work, developing preventive actions and introducing new forms and methods of work, all of which helped police officers working in the field to establish better relationships with people. However, the years marked by the economic crisis affected the Police forces as well. In the future, the Police would like to see their work more appreciated and they would also wish to acquire new

equipment, vehicles and various high-technology devices, so that they can continue to effectively fight the new, increasingly globalised and complex crimes. Recently, Slovenia has gone through a period of intense social and political transformations. The once familiar world is once again changing as threats of terrorism, mass migration flows and other security-related phenomena represent new circumstances under which Slovenia faces specific questions never encountered before.

All these challenges will require utmost commitment from police officers, since the basic mission of the police still remains exactly the

SLOVENIAN POLICE



Maintaining a high level of security

- There are 8,151 police officers in Slovenia, who are available 24 hours a day
- 111 police stations
- 2015 – nearly half a million calls made to 113



The future

- Increase of the professional level of the police work
- Development of the preventive actions and new work methods for police officers working in the field to establish better relationships with people
- Faster acquisition of equipment, vehicles and various high-technology devices

same as it was 25 years ago, i.e. how to effectively guarantee security in the state in all work areas. So far, the Police has successfully adapted to new social changes, and it certainly does not want to disappoint the citizens it serves in the future. The Police will continue their efforts to carry out their mission in a professional, lawful, responsible and fair manner, respecting the equality of all people before the law, their rights, freedoms and personal dignity, thus justifying their expectations and building public trust in the Police as one of the few the institutions that can, together with other bodies, guarantee security and the rule of law.

SLOVENIA REMAINS A SOCIAL STATE

For 25 years, Slovenia has had one of the best systems for annual leave and maternity pay. Mothers are entitled to a maternity leave with a 100% maternity pay in the maternity period of 105 days. Parental leave with 100% parental compensation can be divided between parents. Currently however, this compensation is 10% lower owing to the austerity measures that are being implemented. Each parent is entitled to 130 days, i.e. a total of 260 days of parental leave between the two of them. Furthermore, fathers have a right to take a maximum of 20 days of paternity leave when the baby is born with a 90% paternity allowance, and 50 days with social security contributions paid. In order to better coordinate the professional and personal life, one of the parents has a right to work with reduced working hours until the child turns three or, if they have two or more children, until it finishes the first grade of primary school. In such cases, the state covers for the parent the difference in social security contributions calculated from a minimum wage until full work obligation.

Free access to healthcare services is provided to all children and young people, and free transportation to primary school is also provided for all children who live at least four kilometres away from their primary schools.

Special needs children have a right to free transportation regardless of the distance between their residences and their primary schools, if this is stipulated in the decision on the placement of the child. Moreover, a lower price of public transportation tickets is provided for secondary school and university students during the school or academic year.

In the 25-year period, a diversified system of various transfers for individuals and families was developed. Over 240,000 children receive child benefits, over 50,000 children receive scholarships, numerous children and secondary school pupils receive subsidised school meals, and all university students receive subsidised meals.

In 2001, the minimum income was introduced in the field of social assistance. Such income is received by people who do not have other sources of sustenance. As of 1st January 2016, the basic minimum income has amounted to €288.81. The supplementary benefit for an elderly unmarried person without other income amounts to a maximum of €470.76.

Slovenia is one of the countries in which the share of elderly population is increasing. In 1992, there were 50 public retirement homes in

Slovenia with 10,987 places. According to the recent data, there are currently 98 such homes in Slovenia with 20,224 places, out of which 59 are public institutes and 39 are private.

In the past decade, significant shifts occurred in the institutional care of the elderly. The retirement homes are being renovated and they no longer look like institutions for elderly care, which was the public image they had years ago. Their new appearance, pleasant colours,

user-friendly equipment, and the personal belongings of residents make such places appealing and give the impression of cosiness and pleasant homes.

There are 62 social work centres in Slovenia. Social work centres are public national professional institutions, which make efforts to prevent and resolve the social distress and troubles of individuals, families, and specific vulnerable groups in the population. In 1992, the social work centres were transferred from municipalities to state management.

The role of social work centres is pivotal as they connect the entire social assistance system. Their role in the community is becoming increasingly important as they encourage new programmes and forms of operation adapted to the needs of the environment. In addition to exercising the public powers and providing services, social work centres carry out numerous programmes that alleviate the distress of users and are not offered by other operators in their local environment. Therefore, they also manage crisis centres for the young people, safe houses for women and children who fall victims of violence, support groups, workshops for the young people, learning assistance for children etc.

SOCIAL STATE



Parents – system for annual leave and maternity pay among the best in Europe

Maternity leave

- 105 days – 100% maternity pay

Parental leave

- 260 days – 90% parental compensation

Paternity leave

- Up to 20 days – 90% paternity allowance
- 50 days of paid social security contributions

Reduced working hours

- Until the child turns three or, in case of two or more children, until it finishes the first grade of primary school – paid social security contributions from the minimum wage until full work obligation



Children, youth

- Free access to health care services
- Subsidised school meals
- Lower price of public transportation tickets is provided for secondary school and university students
- Free transportation to primary school for all children who live at least 4 kilometres away from their primary schools
- 240,000 children receive child benefits
- Over 50,000 children receive scholarships



Elderly

Significant shifts in the institutional care of the elderly in the past decade

- 1990 – 50 public retirement homes in Slovenia with 10,987 accommodations → Today: there are 98 retirement homes (59 public, 39 private) with 20,224 accommodations

There are 18 independent social assistance institutes operating within occupational activity centres and 5 operating within Centres for Training, Work and Care.

Since 1995, minimum wage has been provided by law in Slovenia. The statutory minimum wage is a great advantage for workers as it means that a worker cannot and may not receive a lower amount than the amount set forth by law for full-time work.

SLOVENIA PAYS EXTENSIVE ATTENTION TO THE DISABLED

Slovenia has a modern disability policy, which is comparable to policies established in the developed European countries. As early as 1991, a disability protection development strategy was adopted, i.e. the Disability Protection Management and Development in Modern Society – a Slovenian Disability Protection Development Strategy Concept.

A number of programmes and regulations the education, employment, healthcare, elimination of communication obstacles and obstacles in the environment, the self-organisation of the disabled, and the provision of financial aid for the special needs of disabled people were adopted.

In 2000, an amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia was adopted, which specifies, in Article 14, that in Slovenia “everyone shall be guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of ... the disability or any other personal circumstance.”

Disability organisations play an especially significant role in the development of the protection of disabled people. Therefore, a special Disabled People’s Organisations Act was adopted in 2002, regulating the status of disability organisations and their representation and defining special social programmes such organisations can carry out and how these programmes are financed.

SOCIAL STATE



Disabled

Modern disability policy:

- Prohibition of discrimination
- Measures for providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities
- A quota system for the employment
- Vocational rehabilitation system
- Programmes and regulations for education, employment, healthcare, elimination of communication obstacles and obstacles in the environment, the self-organisation of the disabled, and the provision of financial aid for the special needs of people with disabilities
- As early as 1991, a disability protection development strategy was adopted

That same year, the Act on the Use of Slovenian Sign Language was adopted, defining the Slovenian sign language as the language of communication with deaf people and giving the deaf the right to use it (the financing of interpreters etc.).

A quota system for the employment of the disabled and a vocational rehabilitation system are in place in Slovenia. All regulations in the field of employment and labour prohibit discrimination with regard to the employment of the disabled and utilise various measures to promote the employment of disabled people.

Slovenia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2010, the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act was adopted, regulating the prohibition of discrimination based on disability and enforcing measures for the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The right to technical aids and adjustment of vehicles as well as the possibility for financing a call centre for deaf people are especially noteworthy.

FOR BETTER HEALTH

Compared to 1991, life expectancy is now more than six years longer. In Slovenia, healthcare for pregnant women and babies has been excellent throughout the period – the rate of mortality in babies is an important indicator of effectiveness in the healthcare system and shows the level of access that pregnant women have to healthcare and quality treatment. In the past 25 years, Slovenia exceeded levels achieved by the most developed countries in the EU and is now, according to this index, among the very top countries in Europe. By 2014, the induced abortion rate decreased to one third of the value recorded in 1991.

Fewer people now die due to cardiovascular diseases before the age of 65. In the past twenty years, the number of deaths due to cardiovascular diseases was cut in half and, compared to 2002, the number of deaths due to the same diseases on an annual level is lower by about 1200. At least about 600 of these lives are saved due to successful preventive programmes.

The incidence of cancer in Slovenia is growing, which is mainly due to the ageing population, lifestyle and other factors present in the environment. However, mortality due to cancer was

reduced in the past 25 years, and the rate of survival in patients was also improved. A lot was accomplished by introducing the ZORA, DORA, and SVIT screening services. In ten years of the ZORA programme, the incidence of cervical cancer was cut in half, and, since 2011, there has been a lower incidence of colorectal cancer, which is the most common form of cancer in Slovenia, due to the SVIT programme.

Slovenia was the first country in the world to establish a system of reference clinics, which was launched across Slovenia in April 2014. A reference clinic is a name for a family medicine clinic with an extended team of healthcare personnel; in addition to a doctor and a nurse, a registered nurse will also monitor patients in a reference clinic. This way, doctors have more time to focus on seriously ill patients, and the registered nurse has more time to focus on patients with chronic illnesses.

Currently, there are 584 reference clinics in Slovenia (two thirds of all clinics), which are located in regions around the country.

Slovenia is among those countries where the number of new HIV/AIDS cases is less than 1/1000, which ranks it among top achievers in the this category. Removing the stigma and the

discrimination of those infected are among the leading principles of the Slovenian HIV/AIDS management strategy.

In Slovenia, efforts are being made to observe the principles of quality and safety adopted in Europe and the world as well as more general goals that have a greater impact on the society. With the help of partners in the healthcare system, numerous activities performed by the Ministry of Health helped to establish a quality and safety system that is comparable to those of other world countries.

The Slovenian internal medicine made great strides from the previously largely non-invasive diagnostics supported only by laboratory testing and x-ray imaging and treatment with a limited set of medications to a medical field utilising medical devices and intervention methods. Numerous diseases that used to be treated by using surgical methods can now be treated in a non-invasive manner. The duration of hospital stay has reduced dramatically. Over one thousand patients that use to be treated at hospitals are now treated in clinics and day hospitals.

Numerous measures within the food and exercise policies were successfully implemented in stopping the upward trend of obesity. The share

HEALTH SECTOR



Health care

- Quality and safety system comparable to those of other world states was established



Life expectancy

- Life expectancy has increased by more than 6 years longer since 1991



Excellent health care for pregnant women and babies

- In the past 25 years, Slovenia exceeded levels achieved by the most developed states in the EU
- By 2014, the induced abortion rate decreased to one-third of the value recorded in 1991



The mortality due to cardiovascular diseases before the age of 65 was reduced

- In the past 20 years, the number of deaths due to cardiovascular diseases was cut in half



The mortality due to cancer was reduced

- In the past 25 years, the mortality due to cancer was reduced and the rate of survival in patients was also improved
- Good results obtained by the screening programmes and early detection of precancerous and early cancerous changes by the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme called ZORA, the National Breast Cancer Screening Programme called DORA, and Colorectal Cancer Screening called SVIT



Slovenia was the first state in the world to establish a system of reference clinics

- Currently, there are 584 reference clinics, which are located in regions around the state



Preventing obesity

- Numerous measures within the food and exercise policies were successfully implemented in stopping the upward trend of obesity

of excessively fed and obese school children has doubled in the past 30 years, but this trend began to stagnate in certain age groups and with some gender differences occurring after 2010. The shift mainly started in families with a higher social and economic position.

**DEALING WITH THE GOVERNMENT:
FROM RUNNING FROM OFFICE TO OFFICE
TO MODERN “E-SERVICES” AVAILABLE
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME**

Since administrative units were created in 1994, the full computerisation of administrative units with regard to the equipment with hardware and software as well as the access to computerised data collections and the internet has been carried out. Within the administrative procedure management and when resolving specific administrative matters, employees at administrative units acquire data alone ex officio from official records (interoperability); before that, citizens had to provide this data by themselves from various records kept by national authorities.

The data connections between state institutions used to be difficult, expensive, and unreliable. In 2012, a set of common building blocks for electronic data inquiries were established for the needs of e-social services (e-sociala), enabling the effective gathering of data from over 50 data sources within the state administration and elsewhere. The e-Sociala project received the United Nations Public Sector Award in 2013 for the best project in Europe and North America in the field of promoting whole-of-government approaches in the information era.

Electronic access to a number of data on natural entities, electronic submission of applications or requests, and the submission of administrative acts were enabled, and a web portal for administrative units was set up.

In 2005, local competence for numerous administrative services was abolished (issuance of personal documents, (de-)registration of residence, issuance of certificates using data from official records, administrative certification, certification of voters' support, insertion of data into the Register of Grape and Wine Producers etc.), which means that, in practice, these services can be performed for citizens at any administrative unit.

The first e-government web portal for citizens, which, at the time, only offered information, was launched nearly 15 years ago. It was first redesigned in 2006, becoming more user-friendly due to a different manner of content posting: information was divided among the life events, application forms were added for certain services, and first electronic applications could be submitted. However, its greatest obstacles included the failure to update the content and the complexity of use. The web portal was thus once again redesigned in 2015 by using the European funds. The web portal is intended for all citizens

who can be either proficient in using the internet or not, for the active working population, the elderly, the blind and partially sighted, the deaf and hard of hearing, dyslexic people, and people with other impairments, for young people who swear by mobility, and for the two ethnic minorities. Thus far, more than 10,000 users signed up to use the web portal.

For this reason, a visit to an administrative unit is often no longer required. Nowadays, many services can be ordered by citizens through the e-Government web portal from the comfort of their homes. Users can now manage their documents from home, make payments and submit applications through the internet, and monitor statuses of their submitted applications.

Anyone can set up reminders for events they should not forget about (e.g. to renew a document, buy a voucher, submit an application etc.) and also monitor e-Government website on their mobile devices. After undergoing a full re-design in 2015, the web portal now offers content in a clearer and simpler manner, which makes it even more user-friendly.

The Government also helped its citizens in business by establishing the Vem access points and the e-Vem national business web portal. Procedures for entrepreneurs who want to establish

or terminate their businesses have also been significantly simplified.

It currently features 37 electronic procedures and comprehensive information for companies. In 1991, it took 3–6 months to incorporate a company. Now, the incorporation procedure lasts one day for sole traders and a few days for a simple private limited company (d.o.o.). The same applies for the removal of a company from the register or the process of implementing changes, for example, for a simple private limited company.

In 10 years, as many as 1,680,637 applications were submitted through the e-Vem system, and 44,208 private limited companies (d.o.o.), 116,409 sole traders, and 40,000 users were registered.

Since Slovenia acquired its independence, there has been an increasing awareness that the inclusion of the public is very important in drafting high-quality regulations and policies, so this field has been systematically developed (Guidelines for the Inclusion of Stakeholders into the Drafting of Regulations, a Manual for the Inclusion of the Public in Drafting Regulations by Means of the Transfer of Good Practice Arising from an Extensive International Analy-

sis have been drafted, and suitable training for public officials has been carried out). As a result, the e-Democracy and similar web portals were set up (Stop Bureaucracy, predlagam.vladi.si).

These various web tools provide the interested public with greater accessibility to democratic processes, more direct communication, and hence greater influence on political decisions. This increases the transparency of decision-making and the responsibility of decision-makers.

DIGITALISATION, COMPUTERISATION



eGovernment, eServices

- Over 10,000 registered users on eGovernment web portal
- Computerisation of administrative units
- Electronic serving of administrative acts
- Elimination of local jurisdiction
- With eProcurement, the Public Administration reduced the paper consumption by 1.7 tonnes in the last few years



e-VEM entrepreneurship system

- 10 years of operation
- Incorporation procedure/removal of a company: 1991 - 3–6 months → 2016 - one day for sole traders and a few days for a simple private limited company (d.o.o.)
- 37 electronic procedures
- 40,000 registered users
- 1,680,637 applications submitted
- 44,208 registered private limited companies (d.o.o.)
- 116,409 registered sole traders
- Simplification of the incorporation procedure, implementation of changes or the removal of a company allowed for EUR 10.7 million of savings on annual basis



eSocial Services

- Effective gathering of data from over 50 data sources within the state administration
- A unified application to be submitted in one place → EUR 19.6 million of annual savings
- In 2013 the United Nations Public Sector Award for the best project in Europe and North America in the field of promoting whole-of-government approaches in the information era



Computerisation of the judiciary system, electronic means of communication for courts

- 52% of cases have been filed electronically
- 53% of cases at the courts of the first instance are entirely managed in electronic form
- Increased effectiveness of enforcement procedures allowed for EUR 2.4 million of savings on an annual basis



eLand Register

- Land registration proceedings and enforcements are conducted entirely in electronic form
- Due to the introduction of eLand Register, the administrative burden decreased by EUR 5.5 million in the last 6 years

DIGITALISATION OF THE JUDICIARY BRANCH AND THE LAND REGISTER

The rapid development in information technologies in the past three decades resulted in additional challenges for the Slovenian judiciary system. In particular, with the help of information technologies, the judiciary system managed to transform itself into a modern, high-quality system that successfully includes advanced technology, thus additionally contributing to the simplification, reduction, and greater transparency of judicial procedures.

The progress made in recent years shows that the judiciary is on the right track, which is also reflected in the fact that more than 97 percent of all cases are monitored or controlled by information systems, whereas the courts increasingly rely upon electronic means of communication. Through such means of communication, no less than 52% of all cases have been filed electronically, and 53% of all cases at courts of first instance are entirely managed in electronic form.

As many as 96% of all proposals for entry into the Land Register are filed electronically, while all land registration proceedings and enforcements on the basis of an authentic document are conducted entirely in electronic form.

For over two decades, the computerisation of the judiciary system has been carried out under the auspices of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia and its Centre for Information Technology, which is a special feature of the Slovenian judicial system in comparison to other EU Member States. This is another reason why the computerisation did not only follow the rapid development in the field of information technologies, but also introduced various solutions and technologies even before they became general trends in the information system development.

Thus, the judiciary system is one of the leading state authorities in the use of open source solutions, e-service, centralised printing and data warehouses, which enables the current optimisation of the system performance and significant savings, which can be counted in millions of euros. Just one-year's savings achieved as a result of this are enough to cover the costs of computerising the entire judicial system.

At the beginning of this year, the 2020 Slovenian Judiciary Project was launched within the framework of the Effective Judiciary operation, which is in a way an upgrade of the above-described processes. It is planned that, after the project is completed, the users of judicial services will deal with courts only in electronic form in all legal proceedings.

FOOD FOR THE FUTURE IS PROVIDED, AND THE NATURAL WEALTH IN THE FOREST AND THE SEA IS TAKEN CARE OF

Constant structural changes have been implemented in agriculture since Slovenia became an independent state, which are primarily reflected in a higher concentration and specialisation of agricultural holdings. The number of farms is decreasing, but their average size is increasing. Improvement in the size structure is the result of a reduction in the number of farmsteads that fall within the smallest size categories. In recent years, the upper limit, above which the absolute and relative number of agricultural households is still increasing, has moved to 20 hectares of agricultural land in use or 20 livestock units. The level of specialisation is also increasing. Parallel with the process of restructuring agriculture, the labour consumption is being reduced and the educational structure in farmers is improving.

After acquiring independence, the agricultural policies in Slovenia were defined by the Development Strategy for Slovenian Agriculture. This strategy defined the main objectives of agricultural policies, i.e. the stable production of high-quality and affordable food and food safety in Slovenia, maintenance of settlement

areas and the cultural landscape, permanent increase in competitiveness of the Slovenian agriculture, and provision of parity income to producers showing above-average productivity. These objectives defined the development of agriculture, agricultural policies, and conformity to EU requirements. Comparable measures in market price policies, direct payments, and the rural development programme started to be introduced.

By means of the 2011 Resolution on Strategic Policies for the Development of Slovenian Agriculture and Food Industry until 2020 – “Securing Food for Tomorrow,” Slovenia was given a vision for agriculture and the food industry in the 21st century. This Resolution defines the vision and the objectives for the development of agriculture in Slovenia in the next mid-term period, until 2020, and provides an answer to the challenges faced by agriculture in the 21st century. The observance of the multi-purpose role of agriculture and the definition of the development of agriculture through sustainable development objectives are the essence of this Resolution. Its content is based on the observance of the economic, environmental, and social role of agriculture.

By conforming to the EU Common Agricultural Policy, a considerably larger share of budgetary resources was provided for agriculture. Growing budgetary transfers mitigated and replaced losses due to unfavourable price movements and contributed to the fact that incomes in agriculture remained relatively stable throughout the years and considerably above the level recorded before the year 2000. Slovenia has been successfully using the EU funds since it joined the EU. Funds have been used from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF; 96% use of funds related to direct payments in the 2007–2013 period) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD; 99.7% use of funds within the Programme for the Development of Rural Areas in the 2007–2013 Programme Period). Since Slovenia entered the EU, it has also been providing additional national funds in addition to EU funds, but since 2013, 100% of payments have been secured from the EU budget.

Since joining the EU, the third Programme for the Development of Rural Areas has been carried out in the field of rural development, in which over 50% of funds are intended for measures implemented in areas with natural and special limitations for agricultural production (WCO) and for agricultural and environmental measures. Furthermore, a significant part has

been secured for investments of agricultural holdings to stimulate development and the increase in the competitiveness in agricultural holdings. Therefore, funds in the amount of €1.17 billion were provided to support the Slovenian agriculture through the Programme for the Development of Rural Areas in the 2007–2013 Programme Period.

Over 54,000 agricultural holdings from all Slovenian municipalities were supported and over 1,170 new jobs were created. With regard to the use of available funds, Slovenia was very successful as it was able to use virtually all funds from all four axes and funds arising from Technical Assistance. Approximately 58 thousand holdings receive direct payments, and about 6,000 agricultural holdings were supported by

FOOD FOR TOMORROW, THE NATURAL RICHES



Safe, high-quality, and locally produced = the vision of Slovenian agriculture

- Production of organic food
- In 1991 produced on 0.5% of all agricultural land → In 2016 produced on 8.7% of all agricultural land



School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

- Successfully carried out in 90% of all primary schools for seven years
- Free fruit or vegetable meal at least once a week



Generational renewal of agriculture

- Support for 2,651 young farmers
- 760 investments in the field of entrepreneurship – irrigation systems, renewable energy sources, etc.
- Over 250 investments were carried out as part of the restoration and development of villages
- 150 projects for preserving and improving the cultural heritage in rural areas



Lungs of Slovenia

- Forests – 60% of Slovenian territory
- With regard to forestation and the quantity of wood per square kilometre, Slovenia ranks third in the European Union, preceded only by Sweden and Finland
- Forest management is following the principles of sustainability, environmental friendliness, the multi-purpose nature of forests, and work planning
- Wood as strategic raw material – Action Plan to Increase the Competitiveness of the Forest-Wood Chain in Slovenia by 2020

means of investment measures in this period. The majority of funds were invested into dairy production as it is the most important industry in the Slovenian agriculture. It could also be claimed that, in recent years, until the crisis in 2015, this industry has experienced the most success in restructuring.

Safe, high-quality, and locally produced food is included in the vision of Slovenian agriculture. In 1991, organic food was produced on 0.5% of all agricultural land in Slovenia, and in 2016 organic food is being produced on no less than 8.7% of all agricultural land.

Slovenia also successfully implemented the EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, which has been successfully carried out in 90% of all primary schools for seven years. Primary school pupils receive a free fruit or vegetable meal at least once a week, and educational activities for teaching children about agriculture and raising their awareness in healthy food and a healthy attitude towards the food and environment are also being carried out.

The Slovenian agriculture places extensive emphasis on the generational renewal of agriculture. To this end, 2,651 young farmers have thus far been supported, while, at the same

time, entrepreneurship in rural areas has been promoted with 760 investments in the field of entrepreneurship having been supported. Numerous small and large irrigation systems as well as investments into renewable energy sources have been financed. Over 250 investments have been carried out as part of the restoration and development of villages, and 150 projects have been intended for preserving and improving the cultural heritage in rural areas.

Forests, which cover 60% of Slovenian territory, are the lungs of Slovenia. With regard to forestation and the quantity of wood per square kilometre, Slovenia comes third in the European Union, preceded only by Sweden and Finland. The size of forests in Slovenia keeps growing. Currently, 3/5 of the Slovenian territory is covered in woods. In these forests, 950 plant species grow, with 71 of them being from the tree family – 10 coniferous and 61 deciduous tree species. Slovenia's most common tree species are the beech and the Norway spruce.

Forestry in the independent state of Slovenia is the most important form of a managed use of land. Forest management has been carried out following the principles of sustainability, environmental friendliness, the multi-purpose nature of forests, and work planned together with

those who provide permanent conservation of forests and all their functions. Acquiring timber and other forestry goods as well as the use of forests must be in accordance with the potentials and capacities of forests as determined by the natural development of woodland vegetation.

Silvicultural measures are adapted to this, providing the conservation of the natural structure of woodland vegetation and its biodiversity and enhancing the all-round resistance of forests and their ability to fulfil production, ecological, and social functions of forests. A sustainable forest management the development of which was pioneered by Slovenia, among other countries, is one of the rare activities that organically connects the economy with nature conservation. Such forest management is very difficult from a professional aspect, so all measures in forests must be carefully planned.

In the Action Plan to Increase the Competitiveness of the Forest-Wood Chain in Slovenia by the Year 2020 – 'Les je lep' ('Wood is beautiful'), Slovenia defined wood as its strategic raw material. The Action Plan sets forth the measures to intensify forest management and the measures for recovery and development of wood processing and the use of scrap wood for energy. The

more visible results of the Action Plan thus far, which are also expected in the future, are mainly related to the establishment of internationally competitive forest-wood chains with a clear business plan that included processing wood into products with a maximum added value and market potential. They are also related to the increase of share in realised felling compared to potential felling in forests, the professionalisation of work in forests, and the reduction in the number of work-related accidents in forests. Furthermore, the Action Plan is used to promote innovation activities of companies, integration with institutions providing knowledge in the field of forestry and wood and furniture industry, education and raising the awareness of young people, and increasing the use of timber with the general population.

In the field of fisheries, Slovenia established a system of strategic documents, national regulations, and tenders pursuant to the European and national legislation, and it successfully implemented the measures specified under the 2007–2013 Operational Programme. Measures on the four priority axes were carried out, i.e. measures for managing the Slovenian fishing fleet, measures for fish farming, inland fisheries, the processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products, measures that are in

the common interest, and the sustainable development of fisheries areas programme were carried out. In total, close to €23 million was provided for the fisheries sector.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Significant progress in waste management has been made in Slovenia in the past 25 years. In this period, Slovenia reduced the number of operating waste landfills and, instead, waste underwent waste recovery and recycling procedures, which take priority over waste disposal at landfills. Waste separation is a prerequisite for recycling. In 2014, over half a million tonnes of municipal waste was collected separately, and in the past twelve years the share of separately collected municipal waste increased from 8.6% in 2002 to 64.7% in 2014.

Slightly less than 283,000 tonnes of all types of waste were deposited at waste landfills, which accounted for almost 10% less than in 2013 and almost 3.5 times less compared to 2002. 23% of municipal waste was deposited, i.e. 7% less than in 2013. In 2002, about 713,000 tonnes of municipal waste was deposited at landfills compared to 2014, when less than 208,000 tonnes of municipal waste were deposited.

Significant progress in air quality in Slovenia has been made in the past 25 years as well. Due to the successfully implemented measures related to a decrease in emissions and the introduction of low-sulphur fuel at thermal power

plants, in industry, and in household heating, once extreme sulphur dioxide levels decreased to the extent that they are often close to the threshold of detection in measuring devices used for this purpose. Today, the main challenge of air protection are excessive levels of the PM10 particles and ozone. Ozone pollution is largely the result of cross-border pollution, but the increased levels of particles are mainly the result of local emissions. The measurement results show that levels of particles in Slovenia are decreasing, but the prescribed air quality standards have still not been met. In order to face the challenge in a more effective manner, Air Quality Plans were finally adopted at the end of 2013 and at the beginning of 2014 for areas where limit values for PM10 particles are exceeded. These plans are carried out with the purpose of achieving conformity with the limit values as soon as possible, thus reducing the harmful effects on humans and the environment.

Slovenia also successfully separated the economic growth from the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. From 1991 to 2014, the gross domestic product increased by approximately 70%, while greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 4%. Changes in emissions due to the use of fuel in industrial activities also became more distinct as they decreased by nearly 50% in the

same period. From 2008 to 2012, Slovenia fully met its obligations related to the decrease of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the first period of the Kyoto Protocol.

In 1993, the Eco Fund was established. It specialises in promoting environmental investments for the implementation of environmental policies. In the 1995–2015 period, over 17,300 loans in a total value of over €451 million were approved to final recipients. From 2008, when the provision of grants was added to the granting of loans, to the end of 2015, over €141 million of non-refundable financial incentives and aid for over 78,400 investments were granted to final recipients.

With the help of the Eco Fund, numerous private and public projects in the field of the protection and effective use of water, waste management, and air protection as well as investments into the effective use of energy and the use of renewable energy sources that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and include the renovation and new construction of buildings, the installation of solar plants, hydropower plants and boiler rooms using wood biomass, and investments into the optimisation of technological processes in industry were carried out.

In the past 25 years, Slovenia has transferred all cadastral designs and maps from paper to digital form, thus enabling a simple and quicker use of spatial data on computers and through the internet. Numerous new records, such as a land register of buildings, real property market records, a geographical name register, and a topographic database were established. The general market value was calculated for all real property in the country. Together with all other spatial data in digital form, this provides users with greater transparency and safety when performing real-property activities as well as greater transparency of the real property market. By transitioning to a new European coordinate system, spatial data kept and maintained by the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia allowed easier integration with comparable data at the European and global level.

Slovenia has incredibly diverse and well conserved nature. In 2004, the state established the Natura 2000 network in order to protect, at the European level, the plant and animal species and their habitats that are rare or endangered. Because 37% of Slovenia's territory is included in this network, Slovenia is ranked number one in the European Union. By means of funds from the Slovenian and the European budget, major

projects for visiting and experiencing nature (as well as many minor ones) have been completed in over 20 areas (including the Julian Alps, the Karavanke Mountains, the Pohorje Mountains, the Kozjansko region, Goričko Hills, Mount Boč, the Škocjanski Zatok Nature Reserve, Škocjan Caves, the Sečovelje salt pans, the Strunjan salt pans, Ankaran, the Ljubljana Marshes,

the River Mura, the River Kolpa, the Zelenci Spring, Cerknica Lake, the Pivka intermittent lakes, Vrbje, Bukovniško Lake, Podvinci, Velovlek), where one third of Slovenians go for relaxation and recreation. Furthermore, one third of foreign guests are drawn to Slovenia due to the well conserved nature.

Slovenia has also established one of the strictest bio-security systems and it has a high level of protection in place for both human and animal health and the environment. Biosafety is based on the precautionary approach/principle, which enables a safe use as well as the prevention and reduction of possible harmful effects on the environment, biodiversity, and the health of people at work due to genetically modified organisms (GSO) in closed systems, when GSOs are intentionally released into the environment, and when products are introduced on the market.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Efficient waste management

- Reduction of the number of operating waste landfills
Benefit: waste recovery and recycling procedures
- 2014 - 3.5 times less waste deposited in comparison to 2002
- 2014 - Over half a million tonnes of municipal waste collected separately
- 2002 - 8.6% → 2014 - 64.7% of municipal waste collected separately



Environmental investments

- 1995–2015: 17,300 loans = over EUR 451 million
- 2008–2015: Over 78.400 investments = over EUR 141 million of non-refundable financial incentives
- Eco Fund investments: Protection and effective use of water, waste management, air protection, efficient energy use, use of renewable energy sources



Natura 2000

- 37% of the territory – first place in the EU



Energy-saving renovation of buildings

- 587 projects in energy-saving building renovation
- Renovation of 352 public buildings included: 15 hospitals, 7 secondary schools, 20 retirement homes, 7 higher education facilities, 303 buildings owned by the local community
- 55 projects in the field of the effective use of electrical power
- EUR 1.5 million lower energy costs in the municipalities on an annual basis
- 170 biomass projects

ENERGY CONSERVATION

The share of renewable energy sources (OVE) in the gross electricity production increased by nearly 10% in the 1991–2014 period.

The gross electricity production per capita increased from 6,375 to 8,458 kWh per capita between 1991 and 2014.

In the 1991–2014 period, the structure of gross electricity production in the Republic of Slovenia also changed. The share of hydroelectric power production increased by no less than 8.2%, the share of thermal energy decreased by 7.3%, and the share of nuclear energy decreased by 2.4%. Moreover, 1.5% of energy in 2014 was produced by using solar plants.

From 1991 to 2014, the gross electricity production in Slovenia increased from 12.7 TWh to 17.4 TWh. Hydroelectric power increased from 3.6 TWh to 6.4 TWh, nuclear power from 5 TWh to 6.4 TWh, and thermal power from 4.2 TWh to 4.4 TWh.

In 2015, the energy-saving building renovation was completed in buildings owned by the state, municipalities, or private owners. From a total of 587 projects, 352 related to the renovation

of public buildings. Fifteen hospitals, 7 secondary schools, 20 homes for the elderly, 7 higher education facilities, and 303 buildings owned by the local community were renovated. In addition to these projects, 55 in the field of the effective use of electrical power and 170 biomass projects were completed. Just projects arising from tenders for the encouragement of the energy-saving renovation in buildings owned by municipalities contributed to a decrease in energy-related costs in municipalities, which was about €1.5 million annually.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

From 1992 to 2015, there has been a great increase in the number of vehicles registered in the Republic of Slovenia. In 1992, 784,550 vehicles were registered (of which 601,063 were private passenger cars), and no less than 1,437,444 vehicles were registered in 2015 (of which 1,087,685 private passenger cars).

By the end of 1991, 113 km of motorways and express roads and 59.1 km of single lane dual carriageways were built. Today, the company of DARS, d.d. manages no less than 610 km of motorways and trunk roads, 163 km of access roads and junctions, 27 rest stops, and 7 km of other roads.

The introduction of the vignette tolling system in 2008 is considered an essential measure for the improvement of traffic safety in recent years because the use of roads, once again, became more affordable for a broader range of users. As a result, traffic on the side state roads has decreased.

From 1991 to 2015, the number of casualties in traffic accidents decreased from 462 to 120, and the number of sever bodily injuries caused by traffic accidents decreased from 2660 to 932.

In the 1991–2015 period, there was about the same number of passengers in railway transport recorded every year. In 2015, this figure stood at 14,558,000.

From 1991 to 2015, the total cargo carried by the company Luka Koper d.d. increased by no less than 16.4 million tonnes, from 4.3 million tonnes to 20.7 million tonnes.

From 1991 to 2015, the number of passengers at the Jože Pučnik Ljubljana Airport increased from 34,583 to 1,464,579, the amount of cargo from 4,662 tonnes to 18,852 tonnes, and the number of aircraft movements from 8,794 to 32,893.

Furthermore, Maribor also built its own airport by using funds received from the European Regional Development Fund.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY



Vehicles

- 1992: 784,550 vehicles (of which 601,063 were private passenger cars)
- 2015: 1,437,444 vehicles (1,087,685 private passenger cars)



Roads

- 1991: 113 km of motorways and express roads
- 2016: 610 km of motorways and express roads



Traffic safety

Essential measure = vignette (toll sticker) system (2008)

Decrease in the number of casualties in traffic accidents per year:

- 1991 – 2015: 462 → 120

Decrease in the number of severe bodily injuries per year:

- 1991 – 2015: 2660 → 932



Aviation

Jože Pučnik Ljubljana Airport

- 1991: 34,583 passengers
- 2015: 1,464,579 passengers



Total cargo

Port of Koper: more than 16.4 million tonnes of total cargo

- 1991: 4.3 million tonnes of total cargo
- 2015: 20.7 million tonnes of total cargo

Jože Pučnik Ljubljana Airport: more than 14.3 million tonnes of total cargo

- 1991: 4,662 tonnes of total cargo
- 2015: 18,852 tonnes of total cargo

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS

To this day, culture remains an essential element in the Slovenian national identity and identification and a constitutive point where creativity, self-awareness, self-expression, critical thinking, and self-reflection meet. Above all, it is the place for creating visions of the future that see culture as the driver of personal creativity, development of the society, and social cohesion.

While there were 350,000 theatre goers in 1991 recorded in Slovenia, by 2014, their number more than doubled, reaching the figure of 745,400, i.e. 157 viewers per performance. This is mainly the result of the intensive development of the non-governmental sector.

The theatre activities are featured most prominently at two central annual festivals, i.e. the Maribor Theatre Festival (Borštnikovo srečanje) in October and the Week of Slovenian Drama held in early spring in Kranj. Often, Slovenian theatres are also hosted by renowned international festivals.

The two Slovenian opera houses and musical public institutions prepare regular season programmes in accordance with international standards, as well as special events by means of

which they attempt to be ranked at the very top of current developments in arts.

Slovenia is especially known for its innovative choirs, such as the internationally successful Carmina Slovenica and Perpetuum Jazzile. It also has a vibrant independent alternative production centred in and around the Metelkova City complex, which is in the direct vicinity of the Ministry of Culture.

The Slovenian music is internationally acclaimed, which is also confirmed by numerous performances abroad and various videos, ranging from the Laibach band to the European tour and the award-winning record by the Slovenian Philharmonics featuring Ana Netrebko. Moreover, Slovenian instrumentalists work in prestigious orchestras, such as the Berlin and the Vienna Philharmonics, while Slovenian composers and choreographers, such as Edward Clug, achieve international success.

Since Slovenia acquired its independence, the number of visitors to museums and exhibitions has been growing steadily. It increased by no less than 82% from 1997 to 2014 (from 1,700,698 to 3,094,947, which is more than the population of Slovenia). Approximately one fifth of the visitors are children and the young people.

New forms of artistic expression required new places to host special collections created under these activities. Since becoming independent, Slovenia thus established the Museum of Architecture and Design at the Fužine Castle in Ljubljana (2010), the Museum of Modern Art as part of the street museum at the Metelkova ulica Street in Ljubljana (2011), and the Museum of Slovenian Film Actors in Divača (2011).

Concurrent with global trends, Slovenia also experienced a flourishing in the inter-media art through galleries and other adequate facilities. This form of art takes an artistic, creative, reflective and research-oriented approach to display processes, products and influences of modern technologies on phenomena emerging in a modern society.

In Slovenia, there are 58 general libraries with 269 branches and 13 travelling libraries (bibliobuses with 699 stops in 588 towns) and 86 moving collections in small towns or various institutions, where:

- more than 11 million units of library materials are kept, which places Slovenia in the very top on the European scale. In 2014, there were just over 465,000 new units of library material kept in Slovenian general libraries,

- one quarter of the population had a library card each,
- libraries recorded over 10 million visits per year.

According to the number of books published per capita, Slovenia is among the leading countries in Europe. In 2014, 5,554 books and brochures were published, i.e. 9% more than in the year before, of which 1,599 were books of fiction (804 books in original Slovenian fiction and 795 translated books).

By means of the Slovenian Book Agency, the Republic of Slovenia finances the publication of about 300 of the most high-quality books in fiction and humanities, numerous magazines, and other book-related cultural projects.

Slovenia also hosts many international literary events, such as the Vilenica International Literary Festival and the Days of Poetry and Wine.

The Film Fund, established in 1995, was the first such institution in former Yugoslavia. At this time, the Ministry of Culture handed over the planning and co-funding of Slovenian films to this independent professional institution. During these years, independent film producers became the providers of film production, which

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF SLOVENIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY



Number of theatre goers more than doubled

- In 1991: 350,000 → In 2014: 745,400



Number of visitors to museums and exhibitions has been growing steadily

- From 1997 to 2014 for 82%: from 1,700,698 to 3,094,947
- More than one-fifth of the visitors are children and young people



In Slovenia, there are 58 general libraries

- 269 library branches
- 13 travelling libraries: Bibliobuses have 699 stops in 588 towns
- 86 moving collections in small towns or various institutions
- More than 11 million units of library materials place Slovenia at the very top of the European scale → in 2014 alone, there were over 465,000 new units of library material in Slovenian general libraries
- One-quarter of the population has a library card
- Libraries recorded over 10 million visits per year



According to the number of books published per capita, Slovenia is among the leading states in Europe

- In 2014, more than 9% of books and brochures were published compared to the year before
- Out of 5,554 books, 1,599 were belletristic books



Provision of equal opportunities for blind and partially sighted people and people with reading disabilities with regard to the access to publications



Film production

- The 1995–2015 period represents the revival of the Slovenian film and its establishment abroad
- Over 100 Slovenian feature films were financed

was modelled after the European film industry. The 1995–2015 period saw the revival of the Slovenian film, which increasingly established itself in the European and global film industry. The Slovenian Film Centre, the same as its predecessor, i.e. the Film Fund of the Republic Slovenia, funded over 100 Slovenian feature films from 1995 to 2014. Since 2000, the Centre has also funded 33 feature films with a minor participation share from the part of Slovenian co-producers.

Since the declaration of Slovenian independence, numerous theatre and concert halls (the Puppet Theatre and the Slovenian National Theatre “Drama” in Maribor, the Opera in Ljubljana, the Slovenian Philharmonics, and the Cankarjev Dom Concert Hall) as well as libraries (scattered around different towns in Slovenia, such as Murska Sobota and Ptuj) have been renovated. Museums and galleries have also been renovated (e.g. the Film Museum, and Coastal Galleries). Furthermore, numerous churches have been renovated, including the internationally acclaimed restoration work of baroque frescoes at the Ljubljana Cathedral. The reconstruction of the National Gallery is especially noteworthy. This year, it was opened for the public, representing an important Slovenian cultural heritage. The reconstruction allowed

the building to be revealed in its original image and for the national collection of art to finally be displayed in an appropriate manner.

When the Yugoslavian army left in 1991, Slovenia allowed the southern section of the military base in at the Metelkova ulica Street to be used by museums, while the northern section was used by artists and activists, who established the Metelkova City Autonomous Cultural Centre in 1993. A part of the former barracks along the Roška ulica Street were redesigned into a modern Conservation-Restoration Centre with new laboratories. The Gallery of Modern Art in Ljubljana was renovated, as was the former Kostanjevica Monastery by using the earmarked budgetary funds in order to transform it into the Božidar Jakac Gallery.

In 1998, the Provision of Funds for Certain Vital Cultural Programmes of the Republic of Slovenia Act was adopted, which enabled the state to provide funds for the renovation of many cultural monuments. This included the renovation of the Jable and Strmol Castles, which are now used for state protocol purposes, the Snežnik Castle (including its interior equipment), the Negova, Pišece, and Brestanica Castles, and the Grad Castle in Goričko Hills. The funds for their renovation were also provided by the EU based

on cohesion policies. Funds for the renovation of the following castles with museums/galleries were also provided: Brežice, Ljubljana, Radovljica, Škofja Loka, Sevnica, Lendava, Murska Sobota, Dobrovo, Lipica, Maribor, Celje, Velenje, Kranj, Ravne na Koroškem.

Furthermore, 315 units of immovable cultural heritage were declared cultural monuments of national significance by the Government. A comprehensive Immovable Cultural Heritage Register, which is comparable to such registers in other parts of Europe, was established. Over 30,000 units have already been registered.

As for the protection of Slovenian cultural heritage having significance on a global level, Slovenia managed to place the prehistoric lake dwellings at the Ljubljana Marshes (2011) and the heritage of mercury in Idrija on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List since having acquired its independence. Currently, the Škofja Loka Passion Play and the kurentovanje carnival events are waiting to be placed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Furthermore, the Franja Partisan Hospital was given the European Heritage Label in 2015 as an site of exceptional cultural heritage with symbolic value for Europe.

In late January 2015, Slovenia and the Czech Republic successfully submitted an application to the World Heritage Centre in Paris under a project named Timeless Humanist Architecture of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana and Prague for a number of Plečnik's buildings and city plans to be included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Amateur culture, based on which the population of this area has established itself for centuries, is significantly tied to development of the Slovenian society and its past aspirations for having own country, and has remained an important part of the Slovenian identity to this day. All of Slovenia's significant professional cultural institutions originate from the amateur culture established in the previous century. Today, no less than 100,000 adults working in 5,000 cultural societies and groups are actively involved in Slovenian amateur culture. Just a few decades ago, this number was 50% lower. The activities that are especially worth noting are dancing, singing, producing works of fine arts, playing musical instruments, and stage or film acting, as Slovenians exceed the EU average in all of these areas. (Public Fund for Cultural Activities)

The Ministry of Culture also pays a great deal of attention to incentives for the training and employment of vulnerable social groups who are active in culture. This way, 117 projects in the field of culture were co-funded within the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development, and 143.5 gross jobs were created by the end of 2015 for the target group in the field of culture.

In 2015, the establishment of infrastructure for providing equal opportunities for blind and partially sighted people and people with reading disabilities with regard to the access to publications was successfully completed. This established conditions necessary for the operation of a central library for the blind and partially sighted and people with reading disabilities.

The Ministry of Culture provides funds for high-quality presentations of Slovenian culture abroad, creates conditions for greater international mobility of Slovenian artists by means of joint themed performances and residences, cooperates in international working groups and organisations (UNESCO, ICOM, Eurimages, Forum of Slavic Cultures) etc.

Two major events are especially worth noting: from 23rd April 2010 to 23rd April 2011, Ljubljana was the tenth book capital, carrying the title Ljubljana – World Book Capital 2010, and Maribor became the European capital of culture in 2012. At the time, this was an excellent opportunity for Maribor and the entire Slovenia to focus on creative future.

In 2012, the first Slovenian cultural institute abroad was established, i.e. the Slovenian Culture and Information Centre (SKICA) in Vienna, by following the example of already established networks of the majority of European countries in Vienna. A similar centre was opened in Berlin in 2016.

Information in the field of culture is available to all people who are interested in Slovenian culture and creativity, on the web portals Sigić (music web portal), SiGledal (theatre web portal) and Culture.si (intended mainly for foreigners), which have been constantly growing, both in the number of posts as well as in the number of visitors.

FROM KINDERGARTEN TO UNIVERSITY

So far, preschool activities performed by public kindergartens have demonstrated incredible development and progress. In 1991, less than half of all children were enrolled in preschools, but in the 2014/2015 school year the share of children enrolled in kindergartens was 76.8%, which places Slovenia at the very top on a global scale.

Slovenia also recorded an increase of private kindergartens in the past 25 years. These usually offer different programmes than public kindergartens (Waldorf education, Montessori education etc.). The first private kindergarten in the Republic of Slovenia was opened in 1992, while there are already 78 private kindergartens today in Slovenia, which include 7% of children.

It was not only the purpose of the State to establish conditions for high-quality preschool education in kindergartens, but also to make kindergartens more affordable. In particular, the State improved the affordability of kindergartens for families with two or more children enrolled in a kindergarten. Furthermore, the State also covers 70% of the kindergarten fee for the second child, and parents are exempt from payment for the third and any subsequent child.

Until 1999, Slovenia had an eight-year primary education system. In 1999, the project for the introduction of a nine-year system was launched in 17 schools and was finally adopted by all schools in the 2003/2004 school year.

By establishing the Curricular and Extracurricular Activities Centre in 1992, Slovenia laid foundations for an accelerated development of the outdoor school education (called "School in Nature"). The performance of high-quality and relatively affordable School in Nature is allowed through good financing conditions, relatively good technical equipment (sports facilities, such as sports centres, climbing walls, pools, various sports fields, and bikes, kayaks and canoes), and good teachers providing sport, social and natural science programmes at facilities dedicated to School in Nature.

In 1991, there were 53 public music schools in the Republic of Slovenia. These had a total of 18,867 pupils, accounting for 6.86% of the entire primary-school children population. In 1993, the first private music school opened its doors, i.e. the Tartini Music Atelier in Ljubljana, which still successfully operates to this day.

Today, there are 54 public music schools and 13 private schools, which meet the public funding

criteria. In the 2015/16 school year, a total of 25,448 students attended music schools; 23,917 children attended public music schools and 1,531 children attended private music schools. This accounted for 14% of the entire primary school children population.

Slovenia is one of the world's countries that focuses on the importance of nutrition with school children. As early as 1992, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, upon the proposal of the former Ministry of Education and Sport, provided funds for subsidising school food for socially endangered children in primary and secondary schools. The goal was to provide one meal a day for all primary and secondary school students whose parents cannot provide it by themselves. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has thus been subsidising school meals for primary and secondary school pupils since 1992. As of 2010, the Ministry has also been subsidising lunch for such students.

In the 1992/93 school year, 11% of primary school students and 18% of secondary school students received subsidised school meals. The Government gradually provided more funds for this purpose, thus increasing the percentage of those entitled to receive the subsidy. Today, 98% of primary school students

are getting school meals, with more than half of these receive meals completely free of charge. As many as 73% of primary school students have school lunch and one tenth of these get it for free. Furthermore, 66% of secondary school students receive school meals and 43% of them receive subsidised meals.

Higher professional education complements and adds to the offer in tertiary education. In the 1990s, the short-cycle higher education system underwent a thorough reform. As the Higher Education Act was introduced in 1993, short-cycle study programmes were no longer available at higher education institutions. Short-cycle higher education was defined in the

White Paper on Education from 1995 as a part of vocational education.

In 1996, new two-year short-cycle study programmes comparable to programmes in Europe were adopted. They were created based on actual human resource needs in the economy.

The scope of education has significantly increased since its beginnings, with the number of graduates also having increased (approximately 16% of all graduates in tertiary education in 2005 and 2006). The number of students increased from the original 342 in the 1996/1997 academic year to 16,928 in the 2007/2008 academic year, when the highest number of students was recorded. In the 2015/16 academic year, there are 10,757 students enrolled. According to the inclusion of young people in tertiary education, Slovenia is above the average in the European Union. More than 90% of secondary school students who finished secondary school and met the criteria to enrol into study programmes, have been enrolled into tertiary education programmes since the 2001/02 academic year. This trend continued to constantly increase over the past decade. This way, 96% of secondary school pupils who finished secondary school enrolled into tertiary education programmes in 2008. Nearly 10% of

EDUCATION



Preschool education

- 1991 – less than half of all children were enrolled in kindergarten
- 2014/2015 – 76.8% were enrolled in kindergartens, which places Slovenia at the very top of a global scale
- Advancement of financial affordability of kindergartens → The state also covers 70% of the kindergarten fee for the second child, and parents are exempt from paying for the third and any subsequent child



Subsidized school meals

- School year of 1992/1993: 11% of primary school students, 18% of secondary school students
- School year of 2015/2016: Over half of all students, 43% of secondary school students



Music schools

- 1991: 18,867 primary school students = 6.86% of the entire primary school child population
- 2015: 25,448 primary school students = 14% of the entire primary school child population



High educational level

- In 2015, 21.3% of Slovenian citizens had higher education diplomas
- According to the inclusion of young people in tertiary education, Slovenia is above the average in the European Union

them enrolled into short-cycle vocational higher education, and 86% enrolled into higher education programmes.

According to data provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 21.3% of Slovenian citizens had higher education diplomas in 2015.

Since Slovenia declared its independence, two new universities were founded. In addition to the already existing University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor, the University of Primorska and the University of Nova Gorica have been founded. The number of higher education institutions and study programmes has considerably increased in the past decade. Currently, almost 50 private higher education institutions operate in Slovenia besides the public higher education institutions. Funds for first and second cycle study activities within study programmes at private higher education institutions are provided from the state budget through concessions. The state funds full-time study (as well as integrated master's study) and full-time study within second cycle study programmes.

In recent years, the mobility of students and higher education teachers and workers has also increased, i.e. from 2008 to 2015, 12,820 Slovenian students and 3,715 higher education

teachers took part in student exchange abroad within the Erasmus+ programme, and 12,293 foreign students and 3,933 higher education teachers came to Slovenia.

SLOVENIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE

In the past quarter of a century, the Slovenian science had a significant period with exceptional achievements and results. This proves that the Slovenian science is excellent, internationally acclaimed, and, in many areas, globally recognisable and influential.

There have been many high-profile achievements that make Slovenia one of the top world countries in different fields, ranging from particle physics as part of major international collaborations to experiments revealing the fundamental laws of nature and the quantum world. One of such achievements was made by Slovenian scientists who worked on the world-class experiments at CERN, which resulted in a discovery of the Higgs boson in elementary particle collisions and the broken symmetry between the matter and antimatter on the Belle detector at KEK, Japan. The result of these experiments were two Nobel prizes received for theoretical prediction.

The Slovenian research community significantly contributed to the development of processes and technologies that are based on the use of renewable energy sources and waste materials, thus having a negligible carbon footprint.

Recently, focus has been placed on the use of carbon dioxide emissions and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while balancing the electricity grid by using electricity at its peak excessive generation, and the production of useful chemicals for their further conversion. By developing new materials and processes, Slovenian scientists enabled optimisation in the use of conventional and renewable gas energy carriers in cooperation with foreign and local public and industrial partners.

In the social sciences and humanities, the Slovenian achievements considerably contributed to world science by discovering the first Neanderthal musical instrument and raising the social and cultural capital in environments where members of the Roma communities live.

The work and studies performed by scientists also result in articles featured in important magazines with a significant scope of influence (e.g. Nature, Science), lectures held at renowned international conferences and symposiums, cooperation with the most acclaimed researchers in the world and, finally, performing joint research projects within framework research and development programmes, whereby Slovenian research organisations and companies have increasingly been assuming the leading and coordinating roles in the most influential projects.

Over the past 25 years, the Slovenian science has seen many achievements in a variety of fields, which all serve the Slovenian nation and are also recognisable on a global scale. Let us point out but a few of them. A physical hydraulic model for optimising the position and the length of vertical slots in the transition of aquatic organisms that significantly improves hydraulic conditions in fishways was established. The methodology for analysing accessibility to public facilities as an effective tool for removing architectural and communication barriers was developed. Modern procedures and materials for protecting the surfaces of construction facilities from the adverse effects of the environment were developed. Optimal parameters for surface modification of processed cold-work tool steel during laser surface melting were determined. Multiple affordable and environmentally-friendly materials that effectively disintegrate carcinogenic, mutagenic, and other organic pollutants in waste water and air to CO₂ and H₂O were developed, even without the use of strong oxidants, at room a temperature and with neutral pH. Biological indicators and theranostics for glioblastoma were developed and ground-breaking discoveries regarding the possibility of its cell therapy were made. The Geology of Slovenia book includes a new geological map placing Slovenia on the European and world geological map. The book called Contem-

porary History of Slovenia synthetically treats the entire course of Slovenian national history from the creation of the first national political programme called United Slovenia in 1848 to formation of the first independent state in the 1991–1992 period. In accordance with theoretical and practical insights, the view of preschool education and development of kindergartens in Slovenia has been updated and modified. New discoveries have been made in the process of learning numbers in early childhood, supported with new evidence showing that grammatical properties in the language with which children grow up also affect how children learn numbers.

ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Slovenians have always been a nation of sports lovers. This was also written down when the first National Programme of Sport in the independent Slovenia was adopted in 2000.

In 1991, the Olympic Committee of Slovenia was established, which was recognised by the International Olympic Committee a year later. Slovenian athletes appeared at the Olympic Games for the first time under the Slovenian banner in 1992 in Albertville.

Today, Slovenia competes at major global and European sporting events, usually producing great achievements. Thus far, Slovenian athletes won no less than 34 medals at Olympic Games – six gold, ten silver, and eighteen bronze – and more than 680 medals at world and European championships.

Slovenian athletes achieve the best results in ski jumping, alpine skiing, rowing, track and field disciplines, judo, sailing, gymnastics, parachuting, dance, shooting, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing. In recent years, success has been marked in team sports as well, such as handball, volleyball, football, and recently also basketball. Slovenian athletes have been

achieving tremendous success in other sports as well.

“You are a small nation, but great at sports!”

With these words, former President of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch summarised the exciting development of sports and Olympic ideas in Slovenia

ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS



Slovenians have always been a nation of sports lovers

“You are a small nation, but great in sports!” (words of the former President of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch when he visited Slovenia in 1993)



Milestones of institutional development

- In 1991, the Olympic Committee of Slovenia was established, which was recognised by the International Olympic Committee a year later
- Slovenian athletes appeared at the Olympic Games for the first time under the Slovenian banner in 1992 in Albertville
- In 1994, the Olympic Committee of Slovenia merged with the Sports Union of Slovenia - the new umbrella sports organisation brought together 66 national sports federations and 84 local sports organisations with over 5,300 societies and 450,000 individuals
- In 2000, the first National Programme of Sport in the independent Slovenia was adopted



At the top on a global level by the numbers of medals won

- Thus far, Slovenian athletes won no less than 34 medals at Olympic Games – 6 gold, 10 silver, and 18 bronze – and more than 680 medals at the world and European championships



Nation of amateur athletes

- Slovenia is at the very top on a global level also by general participation in sports, which stands at 64%, placing it alongside the Scandinavian states



More than 860 development-focused investments into building, updating and equipping sports facilities

- More than 130 new school gymnasiums were constructed
- More than 90 football fields, sports fields, jogging paths, track and field facilities, pools, and ski jumps were either newly constructed or renovated
- The Planica Nordic Centre is one of the largest sport infrastructure investments

when he visited it in 1993. The independent membership in the Olympic family opened new horizons in the development of sports and Olympic ideals in Slovenia in 1992.

After becoming an independent state, Slovenia developed modern organisational and statutory frameworks for the development of sports. In 1994, the Olympic Committee of Slovenia merged with the Sports Union of Slovenia. The new umbrella sports organisation, which was named the Olympic Committee of Slovenia – Association of Sports Federations brought together 66 national sports federations and 84 local sports organisations with over 5300 societies and 450,000 individuals.

Through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, the Government creates conditions for the development of sports under the National Programme of Sport adopted by the Slovenian Parliament. The Plan defines short-, mid-, and long-term goals. Furthermore, it defines the fulfilment of public interest in sports and encompasses comprehensive organised sports activities, i.e. physical education, recreation, high-quality sports, world-class sports, and disabled sports. In Slovenia, the Faculty of Sport is competent for the development of education and science in sport.

In order to enable the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia to regularly carry out sport activities, exercise and physical activities facilities for professional and amateur athletes and other sports enthusiasts must be provided in addition to suitable funds. In this field, Slovenia is at the very top on the global level not only by the number of medals won but also by general participation in sports, which stands at 64%, placing it alongside the Scandinavian countries.

Projects in co-financing the sports infrastructure in the past 25 years thus included development-focused investments into building, updating and equipping sports facilities which are a prerequisite for the management and monitoring of training process in talented children and adolescents as well as world-class athletes. At the same time, they also provide suitable conditions for general exercise and recreation.

With this goal in mind, Slovenia participated in over 860 investments. More than 130 new school gymnasiums were constructed out of which 30 in the size of handball arenas. More than 90 football fields, sports fields, jogging paths, track and field facilities, pools, and ski jumps were either newly constructed or renovated. Major sport centres were also constructed – e.g. football stadiums in Celje, Maribor, Lju-

bljana and Domžale, sport centres at Bonifika in Koper, Podmežakla in Jesenice, and Zlatorog in Celje, the Gymnastics Centre in Ljubljana, the Biathlon Centre at Pokljuka, the Running Centre on Rogla, the Rowing Centre at Bled, and the Planica Nordic Centre was built under one of the largest sport infrastructure investments. The Planica project was mostly financed through the European Regional Development Fund.

BREAKTHROUGH IN DEVELOPMENT

In 2004, Slovenia joined the European Union and, since then, has been among the most successful Member States in implementing the European cohesion policies and using European funds. Following its long-term strategy and goals, Slovenia invested money acquired from structural funds and the Cohesion Fund as well as its own budget funds mainly to promote social and economic development of the state. There is no region or municipality in Slovenia that would not have at least one project co-funded through the UE funds. Over eleven years, there were more than 5000 of them supported in this way. A little over €4.4 billion of European funds have been provided for these projects. Among other things, these projects helped to reduce the differences in development of Slovenian statistical regions, increase the country's competitiveness and innovativeness, create conditions for raising added value, protect the water resources and cultural heritage, take advantage of cross-border entrepreneurial potential and, consequently, improve the living conditions of citizens.

BREAKTHROUGH IN DEVELOPMENT



Use of European funds 2004–2013 period

Slovenia is among the most successful Member States in using European funds

- EUR 4.4 billion of European funds
- Over 5,000 projects were implemented
- Over 45,000 jobs were created



Education and Science

- More than 610,000 people participated in training and educational courses
- 3 faculties in the field of natural science and technology were renovated
- More than 75,000 m² of new research and educational premises were provided, including the purchase of research equipment
- The share of publicly valid educational and training programmes increased from 5 to 41 %



Employment

- More than 750,000 people participated in activities within the programme designed for encouraging entrepreneurship and adaptability, employability of job seekers and non-active citizens, human resource development and life-long learning, equal opportunities and social inclusion as well as institutional and administrative competence



Infrastructure, transport

- The renovated eGovernment national web portal offers submission of more than 180 different applications electronically
- 30,000 households in the "white areas" gained broadband Internet access
- More than 14,800 of new broadband connections
- 155 km of railways were upgraded
- Nearly 90 km of roads were constructed or upgraded
- Nearly 40 km of cycling routes were constructed or upgraded
- 9 other major transport-related projects were carried out
- posodobitev letališke Upgrade of airport infrastructure at the Maribor Airport



Health sector

- 10 emergency centres were built

BREAKTHROUGH IN DEVELOPMENT



Culture, tourism, sport

- The number of visitors to the renovated and revitalised cultural heritage and cultural institutions increased by 760,000
- A Library for the blind and visually impaired and a new speech synthesiser for the Slovenian language, eBralec (eReader)
- Accommodation capacities increased by more than 11,800
- The Planica Nordic Centre is considered as one of the largest investments in sports infrastructure in Slovenia, which cost almost EUR 48 million



Entrepreneurship

- Over 3,000 small and mid-sized companies were awarded direct grants, creating 1,400 innovations and patents; this also encouraged EUR 1.75 billion in private investments



Environment, ecology:

- 5 waste management facilities were constructed
- More than 40 water treatment plants were constructed
- Over 670 km of sewage was constructed
- 150,000 people gained access to the sewage system
- Over 1,100 km of water supply networks were constructed
- 400,000 people have better water supply and access to drinking water
- 18 major environment-related projects were completed
- Greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by more than 150,000 tonnes of CO₂
- Final energy consumption savings of more than 300 GWh was achieved



Agriculture

- 99.7% use of funds within the Programme for the Development of Rural Areas in the 2007–2013 Programme Period, which means more than one billion euros for the support of the Slovenian agriculture
- Over 54,000 agricultural holdings were supported
- Over 1,170 jobs were created
- Over 50% of funds were intended for measures implemented in areas with natural and special limitations for agricultural production and for agricultural and environmental measures



Local community

- Over 1000 projects, which contributed to a more balanced development of regions

As a result:

- over 45,000 jobs were created,
- more than 610,000 people participated in trainings and educational courses,
- over 3,000 small and mid-sized companies were awarded direct grants, creating 1,400 innovations and patents; this also encouraged €1.75 billion in private investments,
- more than 75,000 m² of research and educational premises were provided, including the purchase of research equipment,
- 3 faculties in the field of natural science and technology were renovated,
- the share of publicly valid educational and training programmes increased from 5 to 41 percent,
- 10 emergency centres were built,
- broadband Internet access was made available to 30,000 households in the “white areas” and more than 14,800 new broadband connections were added,
- local communities carried out over 1000 projects, which contributed to a more balanced development of regions,
- by using the EU funds, the accommodation capacities increased by more than 11,800, while the number of visitors to the reno-

vated and revitalised cultural heritage and cultural institutions increased by 760,000,

- more than 750,000 people participated in activities within the programme designed for encouraging entrepreneurship and adaptability, employability of job seekers and non-active citizens, human resource development and life-long learning, equal opportunities and social inclusion as well as institutional and administrative competence,
- 155 km of railways were upgraded,
- nearly 90 km of roads and approximately 40 km of cycling routes were constructed or upgraded, and 9 other major transport-related projects were carried out,
- 5 waste management facilities, more than 40 water treatment plants, over 670 km of sewage and over 1,100 km of water supply networks were constructed, and an additional 18 major environment-related projects were completed,
- 150,000 people gained access to the sewage system, 400,000 people now have better water supply and access to drinking water,
- greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by more than 150,000 tonnes of CO₂, and final energy consumption savings of more than 300 GWh were achieved.

Nearly €17 million were provided within the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the EEA Financial Mechanism for the renovation of 3 cultural monuments, the construction of public infrastructure in 2 natural parks, 4 projects in the field of Natura 2000 area management, 19 projects aimed at improving public health and reducing inequalities in health protection, and 5 projects focused on improving the situation of women in decision-making positions in business and politics and reconciling professional and family life.

With the help of €18 million provided to Slovenia by Switzerland within the Swiss Contribution scheme, 4 major and 42 minor projects were carried out, which improved the quality of life in citizens and encouraged development in the private sector and the human and social development, provided support to non-governmental organisations and improved the health, environment and infrastructure.



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