Doing Business in SLOVENIA: 2014 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business in SLOVENIA

Market Overview Return to top

- Strategically located at the "gateway" to the Western Balkans, Slovenia was considered a star performer after attaining independence in 1991. This small transition economy with a population of only two million registered dramatic gains in per capita and aggregate wealth, established a stable and well-functioning democracy, and raised the standard of living for Slovenians to a level on par with Western European economies. Belying its size, Slovenia has used its savvy, determination and unique geography to its advantage, becoming a significant and respected regional and international player. Slovenia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in March 2004, the European Union in May 2004, the euro zone in January 2007, held the EU Presidency during the first half of 2008 and joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Europe (OECD) in 2010.

- After years of economic growth, the Slovenian economy was hit hard by the global economic crisis and systemic economic reforms are needed to return the economy to health. In 2013, Slovenia's GDP per capita was USD 22,748 with 8.8% unemployment. Slovenia's economy is highly dependent on foreign trade. More than 75% of Slovenia's trade is with the EU, focused primarily on the German, Italian and Austrian markets. Additionally, the country has successfully penetrated markets to the south and east, including the former Soviet Union region. U.S. foreign direct investment in Slovenia stood at USD 332 million in 2012.

- Slovenia enjoyed healthy growth figures, averaging 5 percent annual GDP growth between 2004 and 2008. Mirroring developments in other countries during the global economic crisis, the GDP contracted in 2008 and 2009. Led by recovering exports, the Slovenia economy started to slowly rebound in the second half of 2010, but the growth slowed down in 2011 and Slovenia entered back into recession with negative 2.5% growth in 2012 and a further 1.1% decline in 2013. Modest growth is predicted for 2014 and 2015.

- The crisis has exposed some of Slovenia's underlying structural problems especially in the financial services sector. Key reforms, such as privatization, more openness to foreign investment, increased transparency in public procurement, and business and investor-friendly changes to Slovenia's labor and taxation code would support greater competiveness in the economy and increase opportunities for trade and investment. Slovenia has introduced taken positive steps, but the pace needs to accelerate.

Market Challenges

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- Slovenia has a small domestic market of 2 million people.
- Slovenia has been slow to privatize, has an opaque and bureaucratic public procurement system, and is often skeptical to foreign direct investment.
- Slovenia has a highly skilled, but rigid workforce due to the labor laws and stationary character of the population.
- High level of social contributions and income taxes coupled with a lack of predictability in the tax system have raised the cost of hiring new workers.
- A judicial backlog prevents cases from being resolved in a timely manner.

Market Opportunities

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- Parliamentary democracy with generally stable legal and regulatory framework.
- Excellent and fully modernized communication and transportation infrastructure with a major port on the Adriatic Sea.
- A highly educated work force and innovative technology firms.
- Geostrategic position that gives Slovenia access to the European Union as well as Central and Southeastern European markets.
- The major growth industries in Slovenia are the high-tech sector, especially information and communication technology (ICT), energy, financial services, and logistics/transport. Unfortunately, given the government's focus on fiscal austerity, no major infrastructure projects are planned for 2014.

Market Entry Strategy

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Slovenia is a small country where personal relationships are valued. Thus, local representation and/or establishing a permanent presence in country have proved to be valuable strategies for entering the market. Additionally, corporate social responsibility is starting to gain currency in Slovenia and is an avenue by which firms can show that they are serious about the market. Investments, especially Greenfield investments, which create jobs or transfer technology, are looked upon favorably by the government. Investors should be able to obtain incentives for these types of investments.

More information on doing business in Slovenia is available at the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia's website and www.buyusa.gov/slovenia/en. U.S. exporters and investors seeking general export information/assistance and country-specific commercial information should contact the U.S. Department of Commerce, Trade Information Center by phone at 1-800-USA-TRAD or by fax at (202) 482-4473.

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3407.htm

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Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services

Using an Agent or Distributor

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The use of a carefully selected local agent or distributor can be cheaper and more efficient than direct sales by a U.S. exporter unfamiliar with the Slovene market. Reliable and capable partners can be found, but care should be exercised. The U.S. Embassy in Slovenia can assist companies in screening potential Slovene partners. More information on how the U.S. Embassy can help you identify potential business partners can be found at http://export.gov/slovenia/.

Due to a general lack of financial discipline, late payment to suppliers is a common problem in Slovenia. Therefore, U.S. firms are advised to obtain a confirmed irrevocable letter of credit as the basis for conducting business with a new local partner. Dunn & Bradstreet's agent in Slovenia "I d.o.o." (http://www.idoo.si, email: imojstri@idoo.si, phone: +386-1-234-2940; fax: +386-1-234-2958) or the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (email: info@gzs.si, phone: +386-1-5898-000; fax: +386-1-5898-100, attn: INFOLINK Office) may be helpful in determining the creditworthiness of a potential local partner.

The following are some well-known American companies with local agent/distributor or representative offices: Goodyear, Merck, Sharp & Dohme, Coca-Cola Amatil, UPS, IBM, Nike, DHL, Philip Morris, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, 3M, McDonald's, Microsoft, Air Routing International, Pfizer, Wrigley, Deloitte & Touche, Cisco, Chrysler, Ernst & Young, Johnson & Johnson, Masterfoods, Pharmacia & Upjohn, Proctor & Gamble, Schering Plough, and Eli Lilly.

In Slovenia, foreigners may establish any legal organizational form described in the Companies Act (limited-liability companies, joint-stock companies, limited partnerships with share capital, limited partnerships, general partnerships, and silent partnerships). Foreigners may be exclusive or part owners of companies.

All companies acquire the status of a legal person upon their entry into the court register. Prior to entry into the court register, a number of formalities must be performed. It is therefore beneficial to consult a lawyer as early as possible to avoid difficulties that may arise during the process of establishing a company (from adopting the memorandum and articles of association to their certification by a notary public and entry into the court register).

Foreign companies have the same rights, obligations, and responsibilities as domestic companies conducting business in Slovenia. When a company is entered into the court registry, it becomes a Slovenian legal entity, regardless of the origin of its capital. The principles of commercial enterprise, free operation, and national treatment apply to the operations of foreign as well as domestic companies. Basic rights are guaranteed by the Companies Act and the Law on Foreign Transactions:

- the right to manage or participate in the management of companies in proportion to invested funds
- the right to transfer contractual rights and obligations to other foreign and domestic natural and legal persons
- the right to participate in profits in proportion to invested funds; the right to free transfer and reinvestment of profits
- the right to recover investments in companies and their share in net assets after the dissolution of companies.

Restrictions are, however, placed on foreign investments in certain sectors of national strategic or other special significance. For example: foreigners cannot establish their own companies in the manufacture or sale of arms or military equipment.
For certain activities, such as road transport, catering, and other professions, certification is required.

More detailed information on the types of legal entities, as well as on how to establish a company, can be found at http://www.investslovenia.org/.

Companies wishing to use distribution, franchising and agency arrangements need to ensure that the agreements they put into place are in accordance with EU and member state national laws. Council Directive 86/653/EEC establishes certain minimum standards of protection for self-employed commercial agents who sell or purchase goods on behalf of their principals. In essence, the Directive establishes the rights and obligations of the principal and its agents; the agent's remuneration; and the conclusion and termination of an agency contract, including the notice to be given and indemnity or compensation to be paid to the agent. U.S. companies should be particularly aware that the Directive states that parties may not derogate certain requirements. Accordingly, the inclusion of a clause specifying an alternate body of law to be applied in the event of a dispute will likely be ruled invalid by European courts.

Key Link:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0653:EN:HTML

The European Commission's Directorate General for Competition enforces legislation concerned with the effects on competition in the internal market of "vertical agreements." U.S. small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are exempt from these regulations because their agreements likely would qualify as "agreements of minor importance," meaning they are considered incapable of affecting competition at the EU level but useful for cooperation between SMEs. Generally speaking, companies with fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of less than €50 million are considered small- and medium-sized undertakings. The EU has additionally indicated that agreements that affect less than 10 percent of a particular market are generally exempted as well (Commission Notice 2001/C 368/07).

Key Link:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2001:368:0013:0015:EN:PDF

The EU also looks to combat payment delays with Directive 2000/35/EC which was reviewed in 2010. The new directive, which replaces the existing one in March 2013, covers all commercial transactions within the EU, whether in the public or private sector, primarily dealing with the consequences of late payment. Transactions with consumers, however, do not fall within the scope of this Directive. In sum, the new Directive 2011/7/EU entitles a seller who does not receive payment for goods and/or services within 30 days of the payment deadline to collect interest (at a rate of 8 percent above the European Central Bank rate) as well as 40 Euro as compensation for recovery of costs. For business-to-business transactions a 60 day period may be negotiated subject to conditions. The seller may also retain the title to goods until payment is completed and may claim full compensation for all recovery costs.

Key Link:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:048:0001:0010:en:PDF

Companies' agents and distributors can take advantage of the European Ombudsman when victim of inefficient management by an EU institution or body. Complaints can be made to the European Ombudsman only by businesses and other bodies with registered offices in the EU. The Ombudsman can act upon these complaints by investigating cases in which EU institutions fail to act in accordance with the law, fail to respect the principles of good administration, or violate fundamental rights. In addition, SOLVIT, a network of national centers, offers online assistance to citizens and businesses who encounter problems with transactions within the borders of the single market.

Key Links:
http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/home/en/default.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/about/index_en.htm

Establishing an Office

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Establishing a company in Slovenia takes up to 30 days. The Companies Act recognizes the following types of undertaking:

Partnerships (organized according to general provisions of continental law):

- Limited partnership
- General partnership
- Silent partnership

Corporate forms:

Persons who wish to establish a commercial enterprise in Slovenia can choose from the following types of business undertakings:

- Delniška družba (d.d.) – a public limited company/a joint-stock company
- Družba z omejeno odgovornostjo (d.o.o.) – a company with limited liability/ private limited company
- Samostojni podjetnik posameznik (s.p.) – a sole proprietorship/ sole proprietor/ sole trader
- Družba z neomejeno odgovornostjo (d.n.o.) – a general partnership
- Komanditna družba (k.d.) – limited partnership
- Dvojna družba – a dual-listed company, komanditna delniška družba (k.d.d.) – a limited partnership/ partnership limited by shares (Kommanditgesellshaft auf Aktien, the German model)
- Podružnica – branch office (legally organized unit of foreign legal entity; the parent company is responsible for all liabilities arising from the operations of its branch)

The most common forms are a limited liability company (d.o.o.) and a joint stock company (d.d.). Most foreign companies establish a limited liability company or a branch office in Slovenia.

Establishing a limited liability company

Founders/shareholders: minimum 1, maximum 50 shareholders. If a limited liability company has more than 50 shareholders, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology must give approval.

Capital: The minimum founding capital is € 7,500. The minimum contribution of each shareholder is € 50. Before registration, at least 25 percent of each shareholder's cash contribution must be paid in; the sum of all paid contributions must be at least € 7,500. Contributions in kind must be contributed in full before registration. Where the value of contributions in kind exceeds € 100,000, their value must be assessed by a certified independent accountant.

Acts: The limited liability company is established by a notarized agreement on incorporation signed by all shareholders. Agreements of incorporation may be signed by a proxy, with appended notarized authorization.

The agreement of incorporation must contain:

- a list of all shareholders with their name and addresses;
- the name, address and activities of the company;
- the amount of founding capital and a list of particular shareholders' contributions;
- duration; and
- eventual liabilities of shareholders to the company other than payments of the company's contributions and liabilities to the shareholders.

Management: Management rights of shareholders are provided by the agreement of incorporation. In the absence of such provisions in the agreement of incorporation, the authority of shareholders is provided by the Companies Act. The main body of the limited liability company is the shareholders' meeting. Normally, each shareholder has one vote for each € 50 of his contribution, but the agreement of incorporation may provide otherwise. It may also provide for the establishment of a supervisory board. A limited liability company has one or more managers appointed for at least a two-year renewable mandate.

Establishment procedure:

- Preparation of articles/agreement of incorporation
- Notarization of articles/agreement of incorporation (and decision on the appointment of managers if not included in the articles/agreement of incorporation).
- Conclusion of a deposit agreement with a selected domestic commercial bank for the opening of a temporary account by which the account number, to which the foreigner will transfer the amount of capital required to establish a company, is obtained.
- Application for court registration must be filed by the manager and accompanied by: - name, registered office and address; agreement of incorporation; - list of shareholders and value of their shares; - report on contributions in kind; - bank receipt for capital contributions to the temporary account; and - certified accountant's report on the value of contributions in kind.
- Applications for court registration of companies must be filed within 15 days of the adoption of the agreement of incorporation with the court in the location of the registered office of the company.
- After court register approval, a special form is sent to the Statistical Bureau to obtain the identification number.
- Make a company's rubber seal.
- Order for the commercial bank to transfer resources to the permanent account (from that moment the company may freely dispose of such assets).

Dissolution:

A limited liability company is dissolved in the following cases:

- expiration of the term of duration,
- upon the shareholders' decision adopted by a 3/4 majority vote,
- invalidation of court registration,
- bankruptcy,
- if the capital is reduced to be under the level required by the law; or
- merger, amalgamation or transformation to another corporate form.

A new company may be established by an individual or legal entity directly, by a notary, through one of the VEM points ("all in one place") or even on the web. A list of VEM points can be found here:
http://www.podjetniski-portal.si/ustanavljam-podjetje/vem-tocke/seznam-vstopnih-tock-vem

The Ministry of the Interior web portal (in English) on how to establish a company in Slovenia with legal sources and other useful links is
http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/en/poslovneSituacijeStran.euprava?dogodek.id=316

Source: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia
Detailed information about the status corporation rules of the foundation and operations of companies you can find in Companies Act (pdf) and in web pages Invest Slovenia

Franchising Return to top

Opportunities for franchising are limited only by Slovenia's small market size. McDonald's and Re/Max are the best-known U.S. franchises in Slovenia. The local market does not require any special legal requirements for gaining a franchise license. For local (tax) reporting purposes, a legal entity must be the holder of the franchise license.

U.S. businesses looking to franchise within the European Union will likely find that the market is quite robust and friendly to franchise systems in general. There are a number of laws that govern the operation of franchises within the EU, but these laws are fairly broad and generally do not constrain the competitive position of U.S. businesses. The potential franchiser should take care to look not only at the EU regulations, but also at the local laws concerning franchising.

Direct Marketing Return to top

There is a wide range of EU legislation that impacts the direct marketing sector. Compliance requirements are stiffest for marketing and sales to private consumers. Companies need to focus, in particular, on the clarity and completeness of the information they provide to consumers prior to purchase and on their approaches to collecting and using customer data. The following gives a brief overview of the most important provisions flowing from EU-wide rules on distance-selling and on-line commerce.

Processing Customer Data
The EU has strict laws governing the protection of personal data, including the use of such data in the context of direct marketing activities. For more information on these rules, please see the privacy section above.

Distance Selling Rules
The EU's Directive on Distance Selling to Consumers (97/7/EC and amendments) sets out a number of obligations for companies doing business at a distance with consumers. It can read like a set of onerous "do's" and "don'ts," but in many ways, it represents nothing more than a customer relations good practice guide with legal effect. Direct marketers must provide clear information on the identity of themselves as well as their

supplier, full details on prices including delivery costs, and the period for which an offer remains valid – all of this, of course, before a contract is concluded. Customers generally have the right to return goods without any required explanation within seven days, and retain the right to compensation for faulty goods thereafter. Similar in nature is the Doorstep Selling Directive (85/577/EEC) which is designed to protect consumers from sales occurring outside of a normal business premises (e.g., door-to-door sales) and essentially assure the fairness of resulting contracts.

In 2011, the EU overhauled its consumer protection legislation and merged several existing rules into a single rulebook - "the Consumer Rights Directive". The provisions of this Directive will apply to contracts concluded after June 13, 2014, and will replace current EU rules on distance selling to consumers and doorstep selling. The Directive contains provisions on core information to be provided by traders prior to the conclusion of consumer contracts, regulates the right of withdrawal, includes rules on the costs for the use of means of payment and bans pre-ticked boxes. Companies are advised to consult the information available via the hyper-links, to check the relevant sections of national Country Commercial Guides, and to contact the Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union for more specific guidance.

Key Links:
Consumer Affairs Homepage:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/index_en.htm

Distance Selling:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/rights-contracts/distance/index_en.htm

Door-to-Door Selling:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/rights-contracts/doorstep/index_en.htm

Consumer Rights:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/rights-contracts/directive/index_en.htm

Distance Selling of Financial Services
Financial services are the subject of a separate directive that came into force in June 2002 (2002/65/EC). This piece of legislation amends three prior existing Directives and is designed to ensure that consumers are appropriately protected with respect to financial transactions taking place where the consumer and the provider are not face-to-face. In addition to prohibiting certain abusive marketing practices, the Directive establishes criteria for the presentation of contract information. Given the special nature of financial markets, specifics are also laid out for contractual withdrawal.

Key Link:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0065:EN:NOT

Direct Marketing over the Internet
The e-commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) imposes certain specific requirements connected to the direct marketing business. Promotional offers must not mislead customers and the terms that must be met to qualify for them have to be easily accessible and clear. The Directive stipulates that marketing e-mails must be identified as such to the recipient and requires that companies targeting customers on-line must regularly consult national opt-out registers where they exist. When an order is placed,

the service provider must acknowledge receipt quickly and by electronic means, although the Directive does not attribute any legal effect to the placing of an order or its acknowledgment. This is a matter for national law. Vendors of electronically supplied services (such as software, which the EU considers a service and not a good) must also collect value added tax (see Electronic Commerce section below).

Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/e-commerce/index_en.htm

Joint Ventures/Licensing Return to top

In addition to establishing their own companies, foreigners can also invest in existing companies. For private companies and limited-liability companies, investments are allowed with the agreement of the partners and by joining in the partnership agreement. Takeovers of joint-stock companies are much more frequent and depend less on the individual partners/shareholders as the shares are quoted on the Stock Exchange (shares of closed companies are an exception).

Takeovers can be accomplished through mergers or acquisitions. The Law on Takeovers and the Companies Act regulate takeovers. This law establishes conditions for the purchase of stocks/shares sold by individual companies and issuers of stocks when specific legal or natural persons acquire or wish to acquire a stake in a company that gives the buyer more than 25 percent of the voting rights. Takeovers occur of both public companies with stocks quoted on the market and private companies through direct offers to shareholders. If the company conducting a takeover acquires a controlling interest in another company, it is obliged to inform the issuer of shares, the Securities Market Agency (SMA), and the Stock Exchange within seven days of the date that it acquires a majority stake. The issuer, who has received such a notice, must publish it within ten days in daily newspapers or on the premises of the Stock Exchange (Official Gazette no. 47/97).

Both domestic and foreign legal and natural persons may freely conclude all types of commercial contracts (agency contracts, distribution contracts, license contracts, etc.). Slovene legislation does not stipulate different administrative procedures for the performance of individual foreign trade transactions or contracts. Contractual parties in international legal transactions may select the law that will regulate their mutual relationships and the court (arbitration tribunal) of competent jurisdiction that will hear disputes.

Selling to the Government Return to top

The procedure used by state agencies and state controlled companies for purchases is prescribed by the Public Procurement Act, published in the Official Gazette no. 36/2004. The most frequently used form of procurement is a public tender. In most cases foreign and domestic bidders have the same rights. In public tenders funded by EU funds, the requirement usually involves only EU origin goods or services. However, U.S.-owned companies can qualify if they have a representative office somewhere in EU.

The public procurement process in Slovenia can be a frustrating experience for American and other foreign companies. Complaints include insufficient time to prepare bids, extremely strict requirements regarding language, lack of transparency on who is the decision making authority on tenders, dismissal of bids as non-compliant on grounds not substantive to a company's ability to provide goods or perform services, and an appeals process insufficiently protected from political influence or even corruption.

As a NATO member, Slovenia should dedicate two percent of GDP to military expenditure. For several past years, Slovenia has not met this goal. Lately, the percentage of GDP allocated to defense has been steadily decreasing to approximately 1.07% in 2013 from 1.35% in 2005). Near-term prospective projects include expanding and upgrading the NATO military airport in Cerklje, upgrades to Cougar helicopters and Air Defense systems. For more information on foreign military sales opportunities, please contact the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) at the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana.

The EU public procurement market, including EU institutions and member states, totals approximately EUR 1.6 billion. This market is regulated by three Directives:

- Directive 2004/18 on Coordination of Procedures for the Award of Public Works, Services and Supplies Contracts;

- Directive 2004/17 on Coordination of Procedures of Entities Operating in the Utilities Sector, which covers the following sectors: water, energy, transport and postal services; and

- Directive 2009/81 on Coordination of Procedures for the Award of Certain Works, Supply and Service Contracts by contracting authorities in the fields of defense and security.

Remedies directives cover legal means for companies who face discriminatory public procurement practices. These directives are implemented in the national procurement legislation of the 28 EU member states.

The U.S. and the EU are signatories of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Government Procurement Agreement (GPA), which grants access to most public supplies and services and some work contracts published by national procurement authorities of the countries that are parties to the Agreement. In practice, this means that U.S.-based companies are eligible to bid on supplies and services contracts from European public contracting authorities above the agreed thresholds.

However, there are restrictions for U.S. suppliers in the EU utilities sector both in the EU Utilities Directive and in the EU coverage of the GPA. The Utilities Directive allows EU contracting authorities in these sectors to either reject non-EU bids where the proportion of goods originating in non-EU countries exceeds 50 percent of the total value of the goods constituting the tender, or is entitled to apply a 3 percent price difference to non-EU bids in order to give preference to the EU bid. These restrictions are applied when no reciprocal access for EU companies in the U.S. market is offered. Those restrictions, however, were waived for the electricity sector.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union website dedicated to EU public procurement. This site also has a database of all European public procurement tenders that are open to U.S.-based firms by virtue of the Government Procurement Agreement. Access is free of charge.

Key Link:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/index.asp

Distribution and Sales Channels Return to top

Several distribution channels are open to U.S. goods on the Slovene marketplace, including wholesaling and retailing, as well as franchising, joint ventures, and licensing.

There are a large number of merchants, agents, intermediaries, wholesalers, and retailers available in Slovenia. Any firm may carry out both foreign and domestic trade.

Slovenia's major distribution centers are located in Brnik and Koper. The port of Koper is Slovenia's only seaport and is located in the western part of the country on the Adriatic Sea. Jože Pučnik Airport in Brnik is the nation's largest commercial airport and is located in the center of the country, 20 kilometers north of the capital and largest city Ljubljana. Smaller distribution centers can also be found in major cities such as Ljubljana and Maribor, Slovenia's second largest city.

Selling Factors/Techniques Return to top

Operating hours of most businesses in Slovenia are Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4 pm, and the majority of retail stores close by 7 or 8 pm, with a few staying open until 9 pm. Most stores are open on Saturday mornings and several shopping centers are open all day on Saturdays. Larger grocery stores and larger shopping centers are opened until 3 pm on Sundays.

Many Slovenian consumers prefer to pay in monthly installments, even for lower cost goods. Other factors/technologies critical to success are close and frequent contact with buyers, motivated and trained intermediaries, and aggressive market promotion.

User manuals for technical equipment and content declaration (with appropriate labeling requirements) for goods must be presented in the Slovene language.

Electronic Commerce Return to top

There are quite a few online stores available; buying online and paying with credit cards are becoming more common in Slovenia.

The Electronic Commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) provides rules for online services in the EU. It requires providers to abide by rules in the country where they are established (country of origin). Online providers must respect consumer protection rules such as indicating contact details on their website, clearly identifying advertising, and protecting against spam. The Directive also grants exemptions to liability for intermediaries that transmit illegal content by third parties and for unknowingly hosting content. The European Commission released a work plan in 2012 in order to facilitate cross-border online services and reduce barriers.

Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/e-commerce/directive_en.htm

In July 2003, the EU started applying Value Added Tax (VAT) to sales by non-EU based companies of Electronically Supplied Services (ESS) to EU based non-business customers. U.S. companies that are covered by the rule must collect and submit VAT to EU tax authorities. European Council Directive 2002/38/EC further developed the EU rules for charging Value Added Tax. These rules were indefinitely extended following adoption of Directive 2008/8/EC.

U.S. businesses mainly affected by the 2003 rule change are those that are U.S. based and selling ESS to EU based, non-business customers or those businesses that are EU based and selling ESS to customers outside the EU who no longer need to charge VAT on these transactions. There are a number of compliance options for businesses. The Directive created a special scheme that simplifies registering with each member state. The Directive allows companies to register with a single VAT authority of their choice. Companies have to charge different rates of VAT according to where their customers are based, but VAT reports and returns are submitted to just one authority. The VAT authority responsible for providing the single point of registration service is then responsible for reallocating the collected revenue among the other EU VAT authorities.

Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/e-services/index_en.htm

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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All the normal channels for advertising are available and are widely used in Slovenia, including newspapers, internet banners, magazines, television, radio, and outdoor billboards/signs. Other promotional techniques commonly employed are sales promotions, public relations, and trade fairs.

Slovenia's major newspapers are Delo, Dnevnik, Slovenske Novice, and Vecer. Newspapers and magazines are also most commonly used for printed as well as internet based advertising (on their webpages). The major business journals are Finance, Manager, Podjetnik, and Slovenian Business Report. For reference, the circulation figures for popular dailies are: Slovenske novice 78,000, Delo 65,000, Dnevnik 47,000, Vecer 38,000, and Finance 12,000.

The major television stations are Radio Televizija Slovenija (network), PLANET TV, and POP TV. The major "out-of-home" advertiser is Proreklam Europlakat (billboards, bus stations, city lights, etc.)

For a listing of all fairs in 2014 in Slovenia, visit this web site:
http://www.sloveniapartner.eu/business-environment/trade-fairs-in-slovenia/

Fair grounds that organize trade shows:

- Ljubljana Fair Grounds: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/
  List of events: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/visit-us/calendar-of-events

- Celje Fair grounds: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en

List of events: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en/fairs

- Portoroz: http://www.internautica.net

- Gornja Ragdona: http://www.pomurski-sejem.si/

General Legislation
Laws against misleading advertisements differ widely from member state to member state within the EU. To respond to this imperfection in the Internal Market, the Commission adopted a directive, in force since October 1986, to establish minimum and objective criteria regarding truth in advertising. The Directive was amended in October 1997 to include comparative advertising. Under the Directive, misleading advertising is defined as any "advertising which in any way, including its presentation, deceives or is likely to deceive the persons to whom it is addressed or whom it reaches and which, by reason of its deceptive nature, is likely to affect their economic behavior or which for those reasons, injures or is likely to injure a competitor." member states can authorize even more extensive protection under their national laws.

Comparative advertising, subject to certain conditions, is defined as "advertising which explicitly or by implication identifies a competitor or goods or services by a competitor." member states can, and in some cases have, restricted misleading or comparative advertising.

The EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive lays down legislation on broadcasting activities allowed within the EU. Since 2009, the rules allowing for U.S.-style product placement on television and the three-hour/day maximum of advertising have been lifted. However, a 12-minute/hour maximum remains. Child programming will be subject to a code of conduct that will include a limit of junk food advertising to children. Following the adoption of the 1999 Council Directive on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees, product specifications, as laid down in advertising, are considered as legally binding on the seller. (For additional information on Council Directive 1999/44/EC on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees, see the legal warranties and after-sales service section below.)

The EU adopted Directive 2005/29/EC concerning fair business practices in a further attempt to tighten up consumer protection rules. These rules outlaw several aggressive or deceptive marketing practices such as pyramid schemes, "liquidation sales" when a shop is not closing down, and artificially high prices as the basis for discounts in addition to other potentially misleading advertising practices. Certain rules on advertising to children are also set out.

Key Link:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/fair_bus_pract/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/avms/index_en.htm

Medicine
The advertising of medicinal products for human use is regulated by Council Directive 2001/83/EC as amended by Directive 2004/27/EC. Generally speaking, the advertising of medicinal products is forbidden if market authorization has not yet been granted or if the product in question is a prescription drug. Mentioning therapeutic indications where self-medication is not suitable is not permitted, nor is the distribution of free samples to

the general public. The text of the advertisement should be compatible with the characteristics listed on the product label, and should encourage rational use of the product. The advertising of medicinal products destined for professionals should contain essential characteristics of the product as well as its classification. Inducements to prescribe or supply a particular medicinal product are prohibited and the supply of free samples is restricted.

The Commission presented a new proposal for a framework for information to patients on medicines in 2008. The framework which is still being debated would allow industry to produce non-promotional information about their medicines while complying with strictly defined rules and would be subject to an effective system of control and quality assurance.

Key Link:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/information-to-patient/index_en.htm

Nutrition & Health Claims
On July 1, 2007, a regulation on nutrition and health claims entered into force. Regulation 1924/2006 sets EU-wide conditions for the use of nutrition claims such as "low fat" or "high in vitamin C" and health claims such as "helps lower cholesterol". The regulation applies to any food or drink product produced for human consumption that is marketed on the EU market. Only foods that fit a certain nutrient profile (below certain salt, sugar and/or fat levels) will be allowed to carry claims. Nutrition and health claims will only be allowed on food labels if they are included in one of the EU positive lists. Food products carrying claims must comply with the provisions of nutritional labeling directive 90/496/EC and its amended version to come into effect in 2011.

The development of nutrient profiles, originally scheduled for January 2009, has been delayed. Nutrition claims can fail one criterion, i.e. if only one nutrient (salt, sugar or fat) exceeds the limit of the profile, a claim can still be made provided the high level of that particular nutrient is clearly marked on the label. For example, a yogurt can make a low-fat claim even if it has high sugar content but only if the label clearly states "high sugar content". A European Union Register of nutrition claims has been established and is updated regularly. Health claims cannot fail any criteria.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission have compiled a list of 222 approved functional health claims which still need to be agreed upon by the European Parliament in 2012. The list includes generic claims for substances other than botanicals which will be evaluated at a later date. Disease risk reduction claims and claims referring to the health and development of children require an authorization on a case-by-case basis, following the submission of a scientific dossier to EFSA. Health claims based on new scientific data will have to be submitted to EFSA for evaluation but a simplified authorization procedure has been established.

Key Link: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/NDA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178684448831.htm

Food Information to Consumers
In 2011, the EU adopted a new regulation on the provision of food information to consumers (1169/2011). The new EU labeling requirements will apply from December

13, 2014 except for the mandatory nutrition declaration which will apply from December 13, 2016.

Key link: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:304:0018:0063:EN:PDF

Food Supplements

Regulation 1925/2006, applicable as of July 1, 2007, harmonizes rules on the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods. The regulation lists the vitamins and minerals that may be added to foods. This list was most recently revised in November 2009. A positive list of substances other than vitamins and minerals has not been established yet, although it is being developed. Until then, member state laws will govern the use of these substances.

Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/index_en.htm

Tobacco

The EU Tobacco Advertising Directive bans tobacco advertising in printed media, radio, and internet as well as the sponsorship of cross-border events or activities. Advertising in cinemas and on billboards or merchandising is allowed, though these are banned in many member states. Tobacco advertising on television has been banned in the EU since the early 1990s and is governed by the TV without Frontiers Directive. The EU revised the Tobacco Products Directive in 2014. Changes include bigger, double-sided health pictorial warnings on cigarette packages and plain packaging.

Key link: http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/law/advertising/index_en.htm

Pricing

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The price level of goods and services in Slovenia is relatively high for the region due to the high cost of labor and lack of competition in certain sectors. The market generally determines prices. The government controls the prices of oil, natural gas, railway transport, and some other products. The government may also influence the pricing policies of companies under its direct or indirect control. The price of gasoline is set through a pricing model, which adjusts to world prices every two weeks.

All prices generally include 22 percent VAT. Food items and certain other goods and services include a VAT of 9.5 percent.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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Sales service, after sale services and customer support are relatively poorly developed marketing tools in Slovenia.

Conscious of the discrepancies among member states in product labeling, language use, legal guarantee, and liability, the redress of which inevitably frustrates consumers in cross-border shopping, the EU institutions have launched a number of initiatives aimed at harmonizing national legislation. Suppliers within and outside the EU should be aware of existing and upcoming legislation affecting sales, service, and customer support.

Product Liability

Under the 1985 Directive on liability of defective products, amended in 1999, the producer is liable for damage caused by a defect in his product. The victim must prove the existence of the defect and a causal link between defect and injury (bodily as well as material). A reduction of liability of the manufacturer is granted in cases of negligence on the part of the victim.

Key link:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/product-liability/

Product Safety

The 1992 General Product Safety Directive introduces a general safety requirement at the EU level to ensure that manufacturers only place safe products on the market. It was revised in 2001 to include an obligation on the producer and distributor to notify the Commission in case of a problem with a given product, provisions for its recall, the creation of a European Product Safety Network, and a ban on exports of products to third countries that are not deemed safe in the EU. The legislation is still undergoing review.

Key link: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/prod_legis/index_en.htm

Legal Warranties and After-sales Service

Under the 1999 Directive on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees, professional sellers are required to provide a minimum two-year warranty on all consumer goods sold to consumers (natural persons acting for purposes outside their trade, businesses or professions), as defined by the Directive. The remedies available to consumers in case of non-compliance are:
- Repair of the good(s);
- Replacement of the good(s);
- A price reduction; or
- Rescission of the sales contract.

Key link: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/gen_rights_en.htm
Other issues pertaining to consumers' rights and protection, such as the New Approach Directives, C

Protecting Your Intellectual Property Return to top

Introduction

Slovenia has a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of intellectual property rights. Slovenia signed the WTO Uruguay Round Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and has implemented those commitments. The number of intellectual property complaints in Slovenia remains low, although U.S.

industry representatives have raised some concerns about the pace and scope of action taken by the government against infringement.

Industrial property rights (patents, designs, trademarks and service marks, and appellations of origin) are protected in Slovenia through registration at the Slovenian Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) (website: http://www.uil-sipo.si/GLAVAGB.htm, email: sipo@uil-sipo.si, phone: +386 1 620 31 00; fax: +386 1 620 31 10). A list of Slovenian patent agents is available from the Patent Office of the SIPO (http://www.uil-sipo.si/GLAVAGB.htm).

Slovenia is a party to the following intellectual property agreements:

- Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization;
- Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights;
- Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property;
- Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks;
- Nice Agreement Concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks;
- Locarno Agreement Establishing an International Classification for Industrial Designs;
- Hague Agreement Concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Design;
- Patent Cooperation Treaty;
- Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works;
- Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcast Organizations;
- 1973 Geneva Phonograms Convention; and
- Brussels Convention Related to the Distribution of Program-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite.

In the event of an Intellectual Property Right infringement, U.S. companies are advised to hire a local attorney who can then pursue the matter in local commercial court.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property in the European Union:

Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property ("IP") rights in the European Union (EU). First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect your IP. Second, IP is protected differently in the EU than in the U.S. Third, rights must be registered and enforced in the EU, under local laws. Your U.S. trademark and patent registrations will not protect you in the EU. There is no such thing as an "international copyright" that will automatically protect an author's writings throughout the entire world. Protection against unauthorized use in a particular country depends, basically, on the national laws of that country. However, most countries do offer copyright protection to foreign works under certain conditions, and these conditions have been greatly simplified by international copyright treaties and conventions.

Registration of patents and trademarks is on a first-in-time, first-in-right basis, so you should consider applying for trademark and patent protection even before selling your products or services in the EU market. It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally cannot enforce rights for private individuals in the EU. It is the responsibility of the rights' holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants who are experts in the EU law. The U.S. Commercial Service can provide a list of local lawyers upon request http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/attorneys_list.html.

While the U.S. Government stands ready to assist, there is little we can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IP in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to legal doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a law suit. In no instance should U.S. Government advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on potential partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Consider carefully, however, whether to permit your partner to register your IP rights on your behalf. Doing so may create a risk that your partner will list itself as the IP owner and fail to transfer the rights should the partnership end. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins (and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales in the EU require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar with the EU laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IP and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these organizations, both EU or U.S.-based. These include:

- The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
- International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

IP Resources

A wealth of information on protecting IP is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: **1-866-999-HALT** or register at **www.StopFakes.gov**.

- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: **1-800-786-9199**.

- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: **1-202-707-5959**.

- For more information about how to evaluate, protect, and enforce intellectual property rights and how these rights may be important for businesses, a free online training program is available at www.stopfakes.gov.

- For US small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IP Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IP legal advice for companies with concerns in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, and . For details and to register, visit: **http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram_consultation.html**

- For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit: **www.StopFakes.gov** This site is linked to the USPTO website for registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IP-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IP.

- The U.S. Commerce Department has positioned IP attachés in key markets around the world. You can get contact information for the IP attaché who covers [INSERT MARKET] at: [INSERT ADDRESS FOR APPROPRIATE IP ATTACHÉ].

Due Diligence

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Product safety testing and certification is mandatory for the EU market. U.S. manufacturers and sellers of goods have to perform due diligence in accordance with mandatory EU legislation prior to exporting.

The Commercial Service at the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana offers an “International Company Profile” service, which provides detailed information on a company, their financials, and possible media exposure. For more information, visit http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/business/our-services.html.

The following firms operating in Ljubljana can assist in performing the important task of due diligence on potential Slovenian partners:

Poslovne informacije d.o.o. (Dunn & Bradstreet’s agent in Slovenia)
Ulica Janeza Pavla II 8
1000 Ljubljana
Tel: +386-1-234-29-40
Fax: +386-1-234-29-58

Web: http://www.idoo.si/en/home.aspx
Email: imojstri@idoo.si

Creditreform d.o.o.
Emonska cesta 8
1000 Ljubljana
Tel: +386-1-438-16-71
Fax: +386-1-438-16-70
Web: http://www.creditreform.si/en/index.jsp
Email: info@creditreform.si

Coface Intercredit d.o.o.
Cankarjeva cesta 3
1000 Ljubljana
Tel: +386-1-425-90-65
Fax: +386-1-425-91-30
Web: www.coface.si/
Email: office@coface.si

Product safety testing and certification is mandatory for the EU market. U.S. manufacturers and sellers of goods have to perform due diligence in accordance with mandatory EU legislation prior to exporting.

Local Professional Services

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Slovenia does not recognize U.S. legal accreditation, and regulations regarding licenses to practice in-country are restrictive. Some Slovene law firms conduct business in English and are familiar with U.S. law. For a list of English-speaking attorneys in Slovenia, please see: http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/attorneys_list.html

Local service providers focusing on EU law, consulting, and business development can be viewed on the website maintained by the Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union at:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/businessserviceproviders/index.asp

For information on professional services located within each of the EU member states, please see EU Member State Country Commercial Guides which can be found at the following website EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides.

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Commercial Service at U.S. Embassy Ljubljana
http://export.gov/slovenia/index.asp
http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/business/our-services.html

Slovenian Intellectual Property Office
http://www.uil-sipo.si/sipo/office/tools/home/

Invest in Slovenia
http://www.investslovenia.org/

For a listing of all fairs in 2014 in Slovenia, visit this web site:
http://www.sloveniapartner.eu/business-environment/trade-fairs-in-slovenia/

Fair grounds that organize trade shows:

Ljubljana Fair Grounds: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/
List of events: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/visit-us/calendar-of-events

Celje Fair grounds: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en
List of events: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en/fairs

Portoroz: http://www.internautica.net/

Gornja Ragdona: http://www.pomurski-sejem.si/ang-kzs/kzs.htm

Public Procurement Act
http://www.mf.gov.si/slov/jaunar/ZJN-2_angl.pdf

Print media:
Delo http://www.delo.si/
Dnevnik http://www.dnevnik.si/
Slovenske Novice http://www.slovenskenovice.si/
Vecer http://www.vecer.si/
Finance http://www.finance.si/
Slovenian Business Report http://www.sbr.si/

Information on English Speaking Lawyers in Slovenia
http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/attorneys_list.html

EU websites:
Coordination of the laws of the member states relating to self-employed commercial agents (Council Directive 86/653/EEC):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0653:EN:HTML

Agreements of Minor importance which do not appreciably restrict Competition under Article 81(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2001:368:0013:0015:EN:PDF

Directive on Late Payment:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:048:0001:0010:en:PDF

European Ombudsman:
http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/home/en/default.htm

EU's General Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1995:281:0031:0050:EN:PDF

Safe Harbor:

http://www.export.gov/safeharbor/

Information on contracts for transferring data outside the EU:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/document/international-transfers/transfer/index_en.htm

EU Data Protection Homepage
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/index_en.htm

Distance Selling Rules:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/rights-contracts/distance/index_en.htm

Distance Selling of Financial Services:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0065:EN:NOT

E-commerce Directive (2000/31/EC):
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/e-commerce/index_en.htm

VAT on Electronic Service:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/e-services/index_en.htm

The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/unfair-trade/unfair-practices/index_en.htm

Information to Patients - Major developments:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/information-to-patient/legislative-developments_en.htm

Nutrition and health claims made on foods: Regulation 1924/2006

Provisions of Nutritional Labeling
Nutritional Labeling Directive 90/496/EC
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1990:276:0040:0044:EN:PDF

EU-27 FAIRS EU Country Report on Food and Labeling requirements:
http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20-%20Narrative_Brussels%20USEU_EU-27_1-4-2012.pdf

Guidance document on how companies can apply for health claim authorizations:

Summary document from EFSA
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/cs/BlobServer/Scientific_Opinion/nda_op_ej530_guidance_summary_en.pdf?ssbinary=true

Full document from EFSA
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/cs/BlobServer/Scientific_Opinion/nda_op_ej530_guidance_%20health_claim_en.pdf,2.pdf?ssbinary=true

Health & Nutrition Claims
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/claims/index_en.htm

Tobacco
http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/policy/index_en.htm

Product Liability:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/consumers/consumer_safety/l32012_en.htm

Product Safety
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/index_en.htm

Legal Warranties and After-Sales Service:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/gen_rights_en.htm

Copyright: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/documents/documents_en.htm

Harmonization of certain aspects of Copyright and related rights in the Information Society - Copyright Directive (2001/29/EC):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32001L0029:EN:HTML

Industrial Property
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/indprop/index_en.htm

European Patent Office (EPO)
http://www.european-patent-office.org

Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM)
https://oami.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Madrid
http://www.wipo.int/madrid/en

Directive on harmonizing trademark laws:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/indprop/tm/index_en.htm

U.S. websites:

IPR Toolkit:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/intellectualpropertyrightssector/index.asp

EU Public Procurement:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/eufundingandgovernmentprocurementsectors/index.asp

Local Professional Services: http://export.gov/europeanunion/eg_eu_030910.asp

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Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

Commercial Sectors

Slovenia offers investors a variety of attractive sectors in which to invest. The government foresees and encourages projects in health, transport, and energy - both traditional and green. In addition, there are opportunities at the municipal level to invest in infrastructure, largely related to waste management and recycling. However, national and local government funding may be limited for the foreseeable future due to austerity and other spending cuts as the country begins to recover from its economic crisis. Many municipalities face serious budget constraints. Investors could also find firm-level opportunities to invest in information technology and telecommunications, the pharmaceutical sector, electronic and food processing.

Agricultural Sector

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According to the Statistical Office there are almost 75,000 holdings in Slovenia that perform agricultural activities. Average agricultural holdings use 6.4 hectares of agricultural area and breed 5.6 livestock units. An agricultural census (using EU standards) from 2010 showed that more than 474,432 hectares of agricultural land were used. This represents 0.6% of the territory of Slovenia. In 2010, almost 79% of agricultural holdings in Slovenia bred livestock.

The portion of agriculture in the Slovenian GDP is slightly decreasing each year and currently amounts to approximately 2.6 percent of total GDP. Small farmers are slowly abandoning their agricultural activities and integrating in to the workforce. To support the agricultural industry, the government is trying to revive the countryside with initiatives and subsidies with special emphasis on eco farming and incorporating tourism through eco tourist farms.

In Slovenia, the predominant crops are maize (production is nearly 1,300,000 tons/year), wheat (188,000 tons/year), potatoes, and fruit (apples alone account for over 105 thousand tons annually). The largest production is for animal feed. Over one million tons of maize and other types of fodder are grown annually.

The share of employment in agricultural sector in total employment is decreasing and is currently at 8.3%.

U.S. food products that should benefit from lower tariffs due to Slovenia's EU membership and have the best sales potential in edible dried beans, cocoa, dried fruits, fruit juices, pet foods, wines and whiskey. The shortage of wheat in the recent years and the subsequent increase of domestic prices have made it an attractive crop.

U.S. exports of agricultural, fish and forest products to Slovenia have fluctuated widely over the past several years. Most official statistics tend to understate actual imports from the U.S., as they do not account for products transshipped through other EU countries.

Eco Farming

The Slovene Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment supports the organic farming industry in Slovenia, particularly as it relates to agricultural tourism. The government also strongly encourages rural development through ecological farming and agricultural tourism for areas less favorable for agriculture, especially the alpine region.

Coexistence and Biotech

According to EU legislation, none of the EU member states can ban biotech products or prohibit biotech farming within their borders. However, there are still obstacles. In Slovenia, there are currently no biotech crops being farmed, due to the lack of proper coexistence legislation. The coexistence law has been in preparation for the past four years. The European Commission rejected Slovenia's proposed draft due to its overly restrictive measures. There is no suggested timeframe for when the government will present the legislation to the parliament for procedure again.

Due to the relatively high production of corn in Slovenia, adoption of coexistence legislation would present an attractive market opportunity for biotech seed and plants. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of negative public and media perception regarding biotechnology and the resulting consumer/market resistance throughout the European Union.

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For more information regarding Agricultural policy, projects and legislation development, please visit the Slovene Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment at http://www.mko.gov.si/en/

U.S. Commercial Service
Ms. Mirjana Rabič, Economic Commercial Specialist
Phone: +386 1 200 5500
Fax: +386 1 200 5555
E-mail: DoingBusinessinSlovenia@state.gov

Environmental Equipment (ENV)

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Slovenia's environmental legislation is harmonized with the European Union, and waste and pollution control mechanisms in Slovenia have improved over the last five years. The major concerns in Slovenia include insufficient level of treatment and coverage for municipal and industrial wastewater; uncontrolled dumping of solid and hazardous wastes; lack of proper disposal sites; lack of recycling facilities and incinerators and control of air pollution emissions in industrial areas. The current increase of hazardous waste is of particular concern. In July 2002, Slovenia ratified the Kyoto protocol, according to which Slovenia must significantly reduce greenhouse gases. However, Slovenia is behind in fulfilling its commitment.

In 2009, Slovenia produced 449 kilograms (kg) of solid waste per capita, which is below the EU-27 average of 513 kg per capita, but does not meet the EU target of 300 kg of waste per capita. The majority of the solid waste is deposited into landfills (62 percent). Only one percent of solid waste is actually incinerated.

Recycling of waste is drastically increasing. From 2002, the amount of recycled waste has increased 44 fold. However, only about 34 percent of all waste is recycled and authorities are predicting this number will increase as measures that will decrease landfill usage are implemented, including the establishment of regional centers for solid waste management and enforcement of fees on landfills.

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- Waste Water Treatment
- Recycling

Opportunities
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Project financing comes from various sources, including the state budget, local government budgets, environmental funds, EU structural funds and from individual investors and entrepreneurs. U.S. firms can compete for EU funds in a project if they partner with a Slovenian firm.

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Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment at http://www.mko.gov.si/en/

Slovenia Environment Agency http://www.arso.gov.si/en/

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Logistics and Distribution (TRN)

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The geographical location of Slovenia places it at the intersection of the 5th and 10th Pan-European corridors, making it one of the major transportation connectors between the Adriatic Sea and the Balkans. The port of Koper on the Adriatic Sea is a major cargo port. Joze Pučnik Airport in Ljubljana, located in the center of the country, houses a number of airway and land cargo logistic and transport companies. The airport has expanded the capacity of the airport terminals (passenger and cargo wise). Additionally, the airport plans to develop a new intermodal center (adding a railroad connection to the airport) that will improve distribution capacities. Two larger logistics companies (UPS and DHL) have already set up hubs at the airport. However, Adria Air, the state-owned national Slovenia air carrier, has cut flights to many European capitals this year given the country's ongoing financial troubles, somewhat reducing access to Ljubljana by air.

Leading companies in sector:
• BTC, d.d.(http://www.btc.si)
• Eurotek (http://www.eurotek.si)
• Intereuropa (http://www.intereuropa.si)
• Aerodrom Ljubljana (http://www.lju-airport.si)
• Luka Koper (http://www.luka-kp.si)
• Slovenske železnice (http://www.slo-zeleznice.si)
• Viator Vektor (http://www.viator-vektor.com)
• Schenker (http://www.schenker.si)

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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- cargo shipping
- ship cargo transport
- storing of goods
- maritime and inland logistics
- services at terminals

Opportunities

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The Government of Slovenia and the Slovenian FDI agency SPIRIT (formerly JAPTI) have been working on implementing "Slovenia – Your Logistics Hub to enter EU Market." Slovenia has a northern port in the Mediterranean Sea, with a modern and flexible infrastructure. Nine business zones spread around the country will support the national goal to become one of the best logistical partners in Europe. Business facilitation zones offer foreign business partners a chance for public-private partnership projects.

The government's Country Development Plan includes a thorough upgrade of railway networks in both the 5th and 6th European corridors and construction of a second track between the port of Koper and Divaca. The government has announced additional highway projects in the next few years. These plans depend on Slovenian Government's ability to allocate financing, which will not worsen country public debt. Forming a public private partnership is an option under discussion.

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Transport and Communications Association, Dimiceva 9, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
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Food Processing (FOD)

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There are substantial opportunities for cereals (e.g. wheat). Due to increased prices in recent years of agricultural commodities (cereals, oils, etc.) and the weak dollar, American agricultural commodities became more attractive to European food processing industries.

Leading companies in sector:
• Milk products:
- Ljubljanske mlekarne, d.d. (http://www.lj-mlek.si/)
- Mlekarna Celeia, d.o.o. (http://www.mlekarna-celeia.si)
- Pomurske mlekarne, d.d. (http://www.pomurske-mlekarne.si)

• Meat, meat products:
- Perutnina Ptuj, d.d. (http://www.perutnina.si)
- Kras, d.d. (http://www.kras.si)

• Non-alcohol, alcohol beverages, vinegar:
- Pivovarna Laško, d.d. (http://www.pivo-lasko.si)
- Pivovarna Union, d.d. (http://www.pivo-union.si)
- Fructal, d.d. (http://www.fructal.si)

• Wheat, cereals:
- Žito, d.d. (http://www.zito.si)

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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By sales
- Processed meat products (22%)
- Milk products (16%)
- Baked products - bread and pastries (13%)

By exports
- Non-alcohol and alcohol beverages, vinegar (24%)
- Milk products, eggs, honey (16%)
- Meat (7%)
- Meat products (12%)
- Wheat, cereals (6%)
- Sugar, sugar products (1%)

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Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
Web: http://www.kis.si/pls/kis/!kis.web?m=0&j=EN#nav

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Renewable Energy (RE)

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In line with the EU goals (EU Directive 2009/28/EC on Promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources), Slovenia has to reach at least 25% share of renewable energy (RE) in gross final energy consumption by 2020. In 2010 the share increased to 19.6% from 19% in 2009, while in 2011 it has decreased to 18.8%, which calls for further incentives and improvement of Slovenia's support scheme for RE production.

The RE consumption of a country is determined by its natural features. In Slovenia the largest share of RE consumption comes from usage of wood and hydropower, which amounted to over 88% in 2010. In 2010 there was a 6.4% growth of RE consumption, mainly contributed by usage of wood and wood waste (54.7%), geothermal energy (34.4%), biofuels (23.4%) and biogas (12.5%). Share of solar power in RE consumption has been increasing steadily, but remains relatively low. Its share amounted to 0.6% in 2010 and has been doubling each year. The share of wind power in Slovenia is minimal.

Water and wood are Slovenia's most important primary energy resources. In 2011 91.9% of all RE electric power production came from hydropower, followed by woody biomass, biogas and solar power.

Geothermal energy: In Slovenia there are some examples of heating of building with the usage of geothermal energy. In SE Slovenia, there is a potential for geothermal power plant, but no concrete decision have been adopted.

Solar Power: The majority of investments in the field of RE goes to solar power plants – EUR 142 million or 79% of all RE investments in 2010 and EUR 211 mio of 85% of all RE investments in 2011. In 2012, the government has reduced significantly the subsidies for PV and the buying-in price of PV energy, which is likely to decrease its growth.

Biogas: Scope of investments in biogas plants is the second largest after solar power plants. In 2010 there were EUR 31 mio worth of investments and EUR 26 mio in 2011.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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- Photovoltaic
- Biogas plants
- Hydropower plants

Opportunities

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Hydropower: Slovenia is planning to build 10 new hydro power plants on the middle Sava river (http://www.hse.si/en/projects/hydro/construction-of-hpps-on-the-middle-sava-river).

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Web: http://www.agen-rs.si/

Energy Restructuring Agency, Litijska 45, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
E-mail: info@agen-rs.si
Web: http://www.ape.si/

Report on the attainment of national objectives in the field of RE and cogeneration 2010-2011 http://www.agen-rs.si/dokumenti/29/2/2013/Poro%C4%8Dilo_o_doseganju_NC_2010-2011_1824.pdf

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Information Technology Equipment and Services

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Unit: Euro thousands

	2012	2013	2014 (estimated)	2015 (estimated)
Total Market Size	643,000	658,000	660,000	690,000
Total Local Production	221,000	230,000	280,000	300,000
Total Exports	128,000	142,000	150,000	160,000
Total Imports	550,000	570,000	530,000	550,000
Imports from the U.S.	420,000	436,000	430,000	430,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72

(Source: Statistical office Slovenia; Chamber of Economy; estimates based on top 10 IT firms' directors)

The information technology sector features opportunities at two different scales. On one side, there is a series of highly developed IT companies with established services and research projects. On the other end, small rising companies with high potential are wide open for investment and joint venture opportunities. Many of these start-up companies are concentrated in technology parks such as Technology Park Brdo-Ljubljana.

The estimated annual growth rate for 2014 is negative with positive trend in 2015 when economy's growth is expected to support IT sector growth. In 2014, growth is forecasted for IT services.

In 2013, the information systems outsourcing was the largest market in Slovenia, followed by systems integration and hardware support. IT services sales in 2013 were strongest in the following sectors: Finance, Government and Insurance industry.

The security market continues to expand, largely as a reaction to the rapidly changing nature of threats and vulnerabilities for enterprises. As more customers implement integrated product solutions for security and protection, corresponding services that follow the same model are likewise in demand. Industry experts believe that integrated and comprehensive security support services can help the IT industry target the small and medium-sized business (SME) segment in these challenging economic times. SMEs are looking for complete security solutions for their IT environments including product solutions and for support services. Designing and implementing integrated security support solutions offers opportunities for both systems integrators and pure-play security vendors in 2014 and beyond. Creating a comprehensive, integrated security product and service portfolio can lead to additional opportunities in this space. The market for security software grew for 4 percent in 2013. The projected growth rate for 2013 is 5 percent.

In response to ongoing budget pressures, the government has announced severe cuts in the IT sector in 2014. The IT budget was cut for 45% with an idea to completely reorganize and centralize information technology systems among all ministries. The Prime Minister's resignation in May 2014 has contributed to further delays in reorganizing public sector IT changes. However, the sector has received additional funds to continue with existing IT platform upgrades and to invest in a private cloud system. At the same time, the IT sector's workforce could be cut substantially.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects Return to top

The cloud computing sector is growing at 40 percent per year. It is the fastest growing segment of IT consumption in Slovenia. The highest demand is on PaaS. It is estimated by industry association at Chamber of Economy of Slovenia that during 2013-2014 there could be about 4,000 new jobs opened by IT startups in Slovenia, primarily related to offering cloud solutions to the public sector as well as to small and medium businesses.

- planning and implementation of communicating networks
- broadband infrastructure
- security systems
- e-banking
- CMS software
- cloud computing
- software systems for back-up files
- IT Solutions
- logistics

Opportunities Return to top

The key IT organization at the Ministry of Interior has allocated additional 10 million Euros for projects connected with a new private cloud system to be established for all ministries over the next 12 months.

The best opportunities for sales of U.S. software in Slovenia appear to be in the Internet systems engineering sector and applications consultancy, data bank and communications software/office automation, security, application development, systems integration, outsourcing, cloud computing, archiving, content and document management, business intelligence and IT consulting. The primary end-users are industry, financial services, public administration, trade, health, energy, production, distribution and electronic banking. Also, many opportunities would likely accompany Slovenia's possible privatization of national telecommunications.

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Drugs and Pharmaceutical products

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Unit: Euro thousands

	2012	2013	2014 (estimated)	2015 (estimated)
Total Market Size		550,000	550,000	550,000
Total Local Production		1,550,000	1,600,000	1,600,000
Total Exports		1,390,000	1,440,000	1,440,000
Total Imports		390,000	390,000	390,000
Imports from the U.S.		235,000	240,000	250,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD		0.72	0.72	0.72

(Source: Statistical office Slovenia; Health Institute Slovenia)

Slovenia's pharmaceutical market is very competitive. Once dominated by two local domestic generic producers, the market now has products from the entire world. Innovative drug producers had a comfortable position in Slovenia until 2007 when the government decreased spending on pharmaceuticals. Since then the government has introduced several amendments to by-laws in the medical sector legislation that worsened the position of drug producers. The market, however, remains attractive despite the small size of the country as the per capita consumption in Slovenia is almost double the consumption in Austria. Slovenia spent 560 million Euros for medicines. Approximately 160 million Euros goes for generic drugs, the rest belongs to innovative companies. The market has experienced minor impacts from the global economic crisis.

The Ministry of Health is the main player in the pharmaceutical market. The Ministry develops health policies, proposes the health care budget and monitors the national health care fund spending. Due to fiscal problems, in 2007 the Ministry evaluated purchasing programs and centralized hospital tenders to bring cost per unit down. These measures remain in place and have resulted in lower prices per unit every year. The money saved will be used for other drugs, in particular for innovative products treating the two most critical health problems in Slovenia, cancer and cardiovascular illnesses.

In 2013, the ministry of Health began introducing so called therapeutic-groups price levels in order to push down prices for innovative drug therapies.

An estimated annual real growth rate of 2 percent for the drug market over the next 3 years seems realistic despite ministry's intention to bring prices for certain therapeutic groups down. Almost three quarters of all pharmaceuticals approved for sale in Slovenia are imported. Pharmaceutical expenditures in Slovenia account for about 16 percent of total health care spending. Around 70 percent of health-care spending is publicly financed. International comparison shows that drug consumption in Slovenia is higher than EU average. Increased life expectancy and the growth in private health care insurance are expected to have a positive impact on the market.

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- Drugs for cardiovascular illnesses
- Innovative products for Cancer treatments
- Pharmaceuticals for psychotherapy
- AIDS medications
- Vitamins

Opportunities

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The best prospects among American-made pharmaceuticals are cancer medications, cardiovascular medications, and bio-technologically produced medications.

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Web: http://www.jazmp.si/index.php?id=56

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Health Care Equipment

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Unit: Euro thousands

	2012	2013	2014 (estimated)	2015 (estimated)
Total Market Size	350,000	340,000	350,000	360,000
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Imports	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Imports from the U.S.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72

(Source: Ministry of Health; Statistical Office of Slovenia; industry experts' estimates)

Slovenia's health care equipment market is dominated by imports because of limited and/or highly specialized domestic production. The approximate market size is $350 million. Imports to Slovenia mainly come from Germany, Italy, Austria, the United States and Switzerland. (Between 15 percent and 20 percent are imports from the U.S.) The market has seen some growth over the last ten years, but the real potential lies ahead. The majority of equipment in public hospitals is outdated and expensive to maintain. The government has announced plans to restructure the healthcare sector and there will likely be increased demand for innovative instruments and equipment. Slovenia invested in a few hospitals in the past four years, for instance Oncology Institute or Pediatric Clinic. A few more investments are needed and planned, but their execution is doubtful in this time of fiscal austerity. Currently, the Government is looking at ways to find savings in the healthcare budget and is consolidating several public healthcare agencies.

The Ministry of Health is the main player in the Slovenian medical equipment market. The Ministry develops health policies, proposes the health care budget and the investment program for the sector, and monitors the work of state-owned health institutions. Due to fiscal problems with the national health account, the Ministry was forced to take over purchasing programs and centralize hospital tenders. These measures have begun to show some results in increased transparency of public procurement. Dental services are mainly in private hands.

The Slovenian market is very price-sensitive. Institutions are, however, prepared to pay well for state-of-the-art equipment.

The entire health care expenditure accounts for roughly eight percent to nine percent of GDP. Per capita expenditure statistics (nearly 2,000 USD) are slightly below EU-28 average (2,500 USD).

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- Diagnostic equipment
- Scanners; CTI devices; magnetic resonance devices
- Laboratory equipment

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Electrical Power Systems and Energy

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The government of Slovenia owns a 100 percent stake in Holding Slovenske Elektrarne (HSE) and GEN ENERGIJA (GEN), the major electricity producers in Slovenia. The GOS seriously discussed a merger of both companies in 2010 in order to ease the financing of investments in energy sector. Namely, HSE was short the needed financing for the construction of the new coal burning generator at the Sostanj Thermal Power Plant (TES 6), and GEN Energija has been highly profitable in recent years, but the merger did not occur. Construction on the TES 6 project has continued despite concerns about its cost, commercial feasibility, environmental impact and the perceived lack of transparency surrounding the project- the Slovene Commission for the Prevention of Corruption found irregularities with the procurement process. The GoS has provided the necessary loan guarantees to finish the project despite expressing serious reservations with the project.

The current government has worked on a new national energy program since fall 2013, but the program has not yet been adopted. Slovenia's vision for the energy sector is to create the conditions for the transformation into a low-carbon society by focusing on efficient energy consumption, use of renewable energy sources, and the development of active electricity-distribution networks. This strategy will likely envisage a strong reliance on nuclear energy and further development of available hydro potential.

Increased hydroelectric power generation is one of the strategic objectives of the government's energy policy. Further upgrading of the upper stations on the Sava River is planned as well as construction of a chain of six new plants on the lower Sava. Construction of the first two plants began in 2004, and these are now online; construction permits for the third and fourth have been issued; construction of the remaining two plants is foreseen by 2016. In April 2013, the government announced construction of new hydro-power plants on middle Sava River to spur economy growth. The project envisages investment of $1.7 billion. Upgrading of three plants on the Drava River will be completed over the next few years. Feasibility studies are underway for additional small run-of-river and storage plants and for using other renewable energy sources. Together with the new plants, these renovations will create an additional 470 MW of hydroelectric capacity by 2016.

Plans for conventional coal-fired thermal power generation are based on maintaining production at existing plant locations and building facilities at new sites, primarily for combined heat and power generation. Investments will be required to improve pollution controls to meet environmental standards, to increase rapid response and peaking capacity, and for renovation of control systems at existing plants. Construction of a new production block with a 600 MW capacity at Thermal Plant Sostanj is underway and should begin operation in 2014. This plant will go off line in 2050. The government also plans construction of two oil-fired facilities, including a 60 MW unit in Sostanj.

GEN Energija has prepared a plan for a second nuclear production facility; however, the government's decision on the timing of any possible nuclear expansion will depend on energy needs, available financing and public sentiment about nuclear energy. The government is considering applying for a 20 year extension for Nuclear Facility Krsko 1 (NEK) , which if approved means NEK will go off line in 2043 (if not 2023). Even with this extension and TES 6, it is projected that Slovenia's energy demand will not be met by 2025 and there will a dramatic gap by around 2043. Thus, there are plans for a new nuclear unit of 1,000 – 1,600 MW production block to come online in 2023.

Investment plans through 2015 in the transmission and distribution system include the modernization of national dispatching and local distribution control centers, the renovation of the transmission grid, better control of reactive power in the system, and the completion and renovation of the east-west 400 kV transmission lines with a connection to Hungary and a 400 kV substation. However, a lack of financial resources has already postponed these priority investment projects, although the government has not yet revised its plans.

Finally, there are plans to build three wind-operated power plants in the Primorska region, where the Bora wind could produce significant quantities of electrical power. All three plants would consist of 150 wind powered turbines. They are still in the process of gaining all necessary approvals (mainly environmental) for the project. The local community (represented by a birdwatcher NGO) strongly opposes the project and is using every possible legal instrument to block the project.

Quick Facts about the ENERGY Sector:

While the gas and oil market is somewhat privatized, electricity production is still in state hands. Holding Slovenske Elektrarne (HSE) owns and manages a series of electricity production plants (predominately hydropower). GEN Energija manages a nuclear plant and a several hydro units. No plans or time schedules for privatization have been announced recently.

Import items:

- brown coal and lignin,
- oil derivatives,
- liquid gas,
- natural gas,
- electricity

Leading companies in Sector:

Oil:
- Petrol, d.d. (www.petrol.si)
- OMV Slovenija (http://www.omv.si

Gas:
- Geoplin, d.o.o. (http://www.geoplin.si)

Electricity:
- Holding Slovenske Elektrarne, d.o.o. (www.hse.si)
- Eles, d.o.o. (www.eles.si)
- GEN ENERGIJA d.o.o. (www.gen-energija.si)

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- trade (wholesale) with fuels and lubricants

- trade (retail) with motor fuels
- distribution of electricity, gas, heat, and hot water
- mining

Opportunities Return to top

Energy consumption is constantly increasing. Slovenia plans to upgrade its power production. New hydro-power plants on middle Sava River seems to be the first investment in place, most likely followed with an additional unit at the existing nuclear power plant and new gas power stations. Slovenia will also upgrade its distribution power grid.

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Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sector and Biotechnology

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Unit: USD thousands

	2012	2013	2014 (estimated)	2015 (estimated)
Total Market Size	4,200,000	4,100,000	4,100,000	4,300,000
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72

Note: The above statistics are unofficial industry experts' estimates

Since the chemical industry is very strong in Slovenia, there is a substantial need for raw materials. The pharmaceutical sector is mainly comprised of two big companies, Lek and Krka, both of which manufacture generic products. Swiss Novartis purchased Lek in 2002. Krka's shares are listed on the Ljubljana Stock Exchange.

The Jozef Stefan Institute, Slovenia's premiere research institute, is linked to the University of Ljubljana and is very involved in research and development in fields such as creating new materials, nanotechnology, and biotechnology.

Leading companies in sector:

- Belinka (http://www.belinka.si)
- Bia Separations (http://www.biaseparations.com)
- Cinkarna Celje (http://www.cinkarna.si)
- Helios (http://www.helios.si)
- Institut Jožef Stefan (http://www.ijs.si)
- Krka (http://www.krka.si)
- Lek (http://www.lek.si)
- Sava (http://www.sava.si)

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- base chemicals
- pesticides and agrochemicals
- paints, lacquers, and glazes
- pharmaceuticals and soaps
- products for cleaning and scents
- other chemical products
- artificial fibers
- rubber and plastics

Opportunities

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The leading Slovenian and regional coatings manufacturer, Helios, was acquired by Austrian company Ring in spring 2014. The acquiring company is much smaller than the acquired company, and there were some problems with lay-offs and unions. The unclear situation suggests difficulties in profiting from expected synergy effects on the market, thus lots of opportunities for other competitors.

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Chapter 5: Trade Regulations, Customs and Standards

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The Integrated Tariff of the Community, referred to as TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a license is required for a particular product, check the TARIC. The TARIC can be searched by country of origin, Harmonized System (HS) Code, and product description on the interactive website of the Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union. The online TARIC is updated daily http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

When Slovenia joined the EU in 2004, it adopted the EU's customs legislation. EU regulation provides an overall legal foundation and Slovenia has adapted some parts of the EU customs regulations to national legislation.

The basic legal framework of the Customs System in the Republic of Slovenia is provided by: Customs Law [together with implementing acts (applied January 1st, 1999 and compliant with the EC Customs Code) (OG RS 1-3/95)], Customs Service Law, and Customs Tariff Law (OG RS 66/00).

Further information on Slovenian customs legislation can be found at: http://www.carina.gov.si/en/businesses/customs_treatment_of_goods/

Import levies are payable upon the importation of most agricultural and food products. Levies are not charged if the agricultural or food product is exempt from duties pursuant to the Customs Law.

The primary basis for customs valuation is ad valorem on the transaction value of the goods, (i.e., the price paid or the price that is to be paid for the goods to be imported), including all duties and taxes paid outside Slovenia. For more than 95 percent of imports, customs value is established on the basis of transaction value. Besides customs duties paid according to rates provided by the Customs Tariff or preferential agreements, imports are also liable for VAT payment.

Trade Barriers

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For information on existing trade barriers, please see the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, published by USTR and available through the following website: http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/press-office/reports-and-publications/2011-0
agricultural trade barriers can be found at the following website: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/

To report existing or new trade barriers and get assistance in removing them, contact either the Trade Compliance Center at http://www.trade.gov/tcc or the U.S. Mission to the European Union at http://export.gov/europeanunion/

Import Requirements and Documentation

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The Integrated Tariff of the Community, referred to as TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a license is required for a particular product, check the TARIC.

The TARIC can be searched by country of origin, Harmonized System (HS) Code, and product description on the interactive website of the Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union. The online TARIC is updated daily.

Many EU member states maintain their own list of goods subject to import licensing. For example, Germany's "Import List" (Einfuhrliste) includes goods for which licenses are required, their code numbers, any applicable restrictions, and the agency that will issue the relevant license. The Import List also indicates whether the license is required under German or EU law. For information relevant to member state import licenses, please consult the relevant member state Country Commercial Guide: EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides or conduct a search on the Commerce Department's , available from: http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp.

Import Documentation

Non-agricultural Documentation

The official model for written declarations to customs is the Single Administrative Document (SAD). European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries including Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein also use the SAD. However, other forms may be used for this purpose. Information on import/export forms is contained in Title VII, of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2454/93, which lays down provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/92 establishing the Community Customs Code (Articles 205 through 221). Articles 222 through 224 provide for computerized customs declarations and Articles 225 through 229 provide for oral declarations.

Additional information on import/export documentation can be found in Title III, of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/92 of October 12, 1992, establishing the Community Customs Code (Articles 37 through 57). Goods brought into the customs territory of the Community are, from the time of their entry, subject to customs supervision until customs formalities are completed.

Goods presented to customs are covered by a summary declaration, which is lodged once the goods have been presented to customs. The customs authorities may, however, allow a period for lodging the declaration, which cannot be extended beyond the first working day following the day on which the goods are presented to customs. The summary declaration can be made on a form corresponding to the model prescribed by the customs authorities. However, the customs authorities may permit the use, as a summary declaration, of any commercial or official document that contains the particulars necessary for identification of the goods. It is encouraged that the summary declaration be made in computerized form.

The summary declaration is to be lodged by:
- the person who brought the goods into the customs territory of the Community or by any person who assumes responsibility for carriage of the goods following such entry; or
- the person in whose name the person referred to above acted.

Non-EU goods presented to customs must be assigned a customs-approved treatment or use authorized for such non-Community goods. Where goods are covered by a summary declaration, the formalities for them to be assigned a customs-approved treatment or use must be carried out:
- 45 days from the date on which the summary declaration is lodged in the case of goods carried by sea;
- 20 days from the date on which the summary declaration is lodged in the case of goods carried other than by sea.

Where circumstances so warrant, the customs authorities may set a shorter period or authorize an extension of the period.

The Modernized Customs Code (MCC) of the European Union is expected to be fully put into place by 2014 although there are concerns that this deadline may be missed due to the complexity of the project. Some facets of the MCC implementation have already been put into place such as EU wide Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) numbers. The MCC will replace the existing Regulation 2913/92 and simplify various procedures such as introducing a paperless environment, centralized clearance, and more. Check the EU's Customs website periodically for updates:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/procedural_aspects/general/community_code/index_en.htm

Batteries
EU battery rules changed in September 2006 following the publication of the Directive on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators (Directive 2006/66). This Directive replaces the original Battery Directive of 1991 (Directive 91/157). The updated Directive applies to all batteries and accumulators put on the EU market including automotive, industrial and portable batteries. It aims to protect the environment by restricting the sale of batteries and accumulators that contain mercury or cadmium (with an exemption for emergency and alarm systems, medical equipment and

cordless power tools) and by promoting a high level of collection and recycling. It places the responsibility on producers to finance the costs associated with the collection, treatment, and recycling of used batteries and accumulators. The Directive also includes provisions on the labeling of batteries and their removability from equipment. For more information, see our market research report: http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4062262.pdf

REACH

REACH is the system for controlling chemicals in the EU. It came into force in 2007 (Regulation 1907/2006). Virtually every industrial sector, from automobiles to textiles, is affected by the new policy. REACH stands for the "Registration, Evaluation and Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals." REACH requires chemicals produced or imported into the EU in volumes above 1 ton per year to be registered with a central database handled by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), including information on their properties, uses and safe ways of handling them. U.S. companies without a presence in Europe cannot register directly and must have their chemicals registered through their importer or EU-based 'Only Representative of non-EU manufacturer'. A list of Only Representatives (ORs) can be found on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU: http://export.gov/europeanunion/reachclp/index.asp

MSDS must be updated to be REACH compliant. For more information, see the guidance on the compilation of safety data sheets: http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17235/sds_en.pdf

U.S. exporters to the EU should carefully consider the REACH 'Candidate List' of substances of very high concern. Substances on that list are subject to communication requirements, and at a later stage, may require authorization for the EU market. For more information, see the ECHA website: http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/candidate-list-table

WEEE & RoHS

EU rules on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), while not requiring specific customs or import paperwork, may entail a financial obligation for U.S. exporters. They require U.S. exporters to register the products with a national WEEE authority, or arrange for this to be done by a local partner. The WEEE Directive is currently being revised; U.S. exporters seeking more information on WEEE and RoHS regulations should visit: http://export.gov/europeanunion/weeerohs/index.asp

The ROHS Directive, restricting the use of certain chemicals in electrical and electronic equipment, was revised in 2011 to become a CE marking directive and cover medical devices and monitoring and control equipment. The new ROHS Directive replaced the previous one on January 2, 2013. For more information on products covered by the legislation, substances banned in electrical and electronic equipment and the possibility to request exemptions, see: http://export.gov/europeanunion/weeerohs/rohsinformation/index.asp*Cosmetics*

On November 30, 2009, the EU adopted a new regulation on cosmetic products which was enforced on July 11, 2013. The new law introduces an EU-wide system for the notification of cosmetic products and the requirement to appoint a responsible person in the EU. For more information, see:

http://export.gov/europeanunion/accessingeumarketsinkeyindustrysectors/eg_eu_044318.asp

Agricultural Documentation

Phytosanitary Certificates: Phytosanitary certificates are required for most fresh fruits, vegetables, and other plant materials.

Sanitary Certificates: For commodities composed of animal products or by-products, EU countries require that shipments be accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country. This applies regardless of whether the product is for human consumption, for pharmaceutical use, or strictly for non-human use (e.g., veterinary biologicals, animal feeds, fertilizers, research). The vast majority of these certificates are uniform throughout the EU, but the harmonization process is not complete. During this transition period, certain member state import requirements continue to apply. In addition to the legally required EU health certificates, a number of other certificates are used in international trade. These certificates, which may also be harmonized in EU legislation, certify origin for customs purposes and certain quality attributes. Up-to-date information on harmonized import requirements can be found at the following website: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/Useu/certificates-overview.html

Sanitary Certificates (Fisheries)

In April 2006, the European Union declared the U.S. seafood inspection system as equivalent to the European one. Consequently, a specific public health certificate must accompany U.S. seafood shipments. Commission Decision 2006/199/EC lays down specific conditions on imports of fishery products from the U.S. Unlike for fishery products, the U.S. shellfish sanitation system is not equivalent to that of the EU's. The EU and the U.S. are currently negotiating a veterinary equivalency agreement on shellfish. In the meantime, the EU still has a ban in place (since July 1, 2010), that prohibits the import of U.S. bivalve mollusks, in whatever form, into EU territory. This ban does not apply to wild roe-off scallops.

With the implementation of the second Hygiene Package, aquaculture products coming from the United States must be accompanied by a public health certificate according to Commission Decision 2006/199/EC and the animal health attestation included in the new fishery products certificate, covered by Regulation (EC) 1250/2008. This animal health attestation is not required in the case of live bivalve mollusks intended for immediate human consumption (retail).

Since June 2009, the unique U.S. competent authority for issuing sanitary certificates for fishery and aquaculture products is the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-NMFS). In addition to sanitary certificates, all third countries wishing to export fishery products to the EU are requested to provide a catch certificate. This catch certificate certifies that the products in question have been caught legally.

For detailed information on import documentation for seafood, please contact the NOAA Fisheries office at the U.S. Mission to the EU (stephane.vrignaud@trade.gov) or visit the following NOAA dedicated web site: http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/EU_Export.html

U.S. Export Controls Return to top

Most technology can be exported from the U.S. to Slovenia under general export licenses. Some equipment still requires validated export licenses from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security and/or the Department of State. For further information on U.S. export controls, please see the following website: http://www.bis.doc.gov.

The Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), which regulate the export and re-export of some commercial items, including "production" and "development" technology.

The items that BIS regulates are often referred to as "dual use" since they have both commercial and military applications. Further information on export controls is available at: http://www.bis.doc.gov/licensing/exportingbasics.htm

BIS has developed a list of "red flags," or warning signs, intended to discover possible violations of the EAR. These are posted at: http://www.bis.doc.gov/enforcement/redflags.htm

Also, BIS has "Know Your Customer" guidance at: http://www.bis.doc.gov/Enforcement/knowcust.htm

If there is reason to believe a violation is taking place or has occurred, report it to the Department of Commerce by calling the 24-hour hotline at 1(800) 424-2980, or via the confidential lead page at: https://www.bis.doc.gov/forms/eeleadsntips.html

The EAR does not control all goods, services, and technologies. Other U.S. government agencies regulate more specialized exports. For example, the U.S. Department of State has authority over defense articles and services. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the BIS web site or in Supplement No. 3 to Part 730 of the EAR, which is available on the Government Printing Office Web site at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/bis/ear/ear_data.html

BIS provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one to two day seminars and focus on the basics of exporting as well as more advanced topics. A list of upcoming seminars can be found at: https://www.bis.doc.gov/seminarsandtraining/index.htm

For further details about the Bureau of Industry and Security and its programs, please visit the BIS website at: http://www.bis.doc.gov/

For information on this topic please consult the Commerce Department's Country Commercial Guides on EU member states: EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides.

Alternatively, search the Commerce Department's Market Research Library, available from: http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp under Country and Industry Market Reports.

Temporary Entry

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Slovenia is a signatory to the ATA Convention on Temporary Imports and Exports.

More information on ATA: The purpose of the Convention on temporary admission is to simplify procedures on temporary imports of certain kinds of goods (professional equipment, goods for exhibitions, etc.). The ATA Carnet is a customs document to perform temporary importation and temporary exportation and it also serves as a transit document for transit of goods to the country of temporary importation. The ATA System Guarantee Association in Slovenia is the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, which is also authorized to issue ATA Carnets.

Products may be imported into Slovenia on a temporary basis and be exempt from customs duties in various cases, of which the most important are the following:

- Goods to be released into free circulation exempt from customs duty under the Customs Act;
- Goods temporarily imported for exhibitions or testing, if the foreign owner has made them available free of charge and for a specific period of time;
- Animals, instruments, and other items which are required for artistic, sports, or other events and the production of motion pictures;
- Packaging materials, freight, and security equipment, etc. required for the delivery or dispatch of foreign-owned goods;
- Equipment for governmental and non-governmental international or bilateral organizations, or international or bilateral commissions, with a seat in the customs territory, or having a representative office with a seat in the customs territory;
- Equipment required to avert imminent danger of epidemics, elementary or other natural disasters, or to mitigate the immediate consequences of such disasters;
- Yachts, sailing ships, and other sea vessels with accessory floating moorings and anchoring equipment, if they are used for sport and tourism (under the conditions: - that they are temporarily imported by companies or individual entrepreneurs registered for the rental of foreign yachts, sailing ships, and other sea vessels - contracts concluded with foreign sport clubs and their associations permit them to rent the sea vessels to foreign tourists, members of these clubs, and their associations for use in Slovenia);
- Household items temporarily imported by domestic and foreign natural persons entering Slovenia for a temporary sojourn; and
- Equipment that is temporarily imported by permanent correspondents or editorial offices of foreign media registered in the customs territory.

The time limit for temporary imports is based on the purpose for which goods are temporarily imported, but may not exceed a period of 12 months. Partial exemption from payment of customs duty may be granted for the temporary import of goods not mentioned above, if they remain the property of foreign persons. The amount of duty to be paid for temporary imports of goods with a partial exemption from customs duty is 3 percent of the duty that would have to be paid for these goods if they were released for free circulation. There is no information on warranty and non-warranty items entering Slovenia for repair available.

Labeling and Marking Requirements Return to top

An overview of EU mandatory and voluntary labeling and marking requirements has been compiled in a market research report that is available at: http://buyusainfo.net/docs/x_366090.pdf
The following labeling information must be in Slovene on the original package of products subject to quality control:
- Title of the product
- Full address of the manufacturer
- Full address of the importer
- Net quantity/weight/volume
- Information, where applicable, regarding ingredients
- Use and storage instructions
- Other warnings important for the customer.

Technically complicated products must also include instructions for use, the manufacturer's specifications, a list of authorized maintenance offices, a warranty, and other applicable data. All this information must be in Slovene and attached to each product before reaching customers. Details on labeling and marking requirements are available at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry at http://www.gzs.si/slo/.

An overview of EU mandatory and voluntary labeling and marking requirements has been compiled in a market research report that is available at: http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4171929.pdf.

The subject has been also been covered in the section about standards (see below).

Prohibited and Restricted Imports Return to top

The TARIC is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a product is prohibited or subject to restriction, check the TARIC for the following codes:

CITES Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
PROHI Import Suspension
RSTR Import Restriction

For information on how to access the TARIC, see the Import Requirements and Documentation Section above.http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

Customs Regulations and Contact Information Return to top

Homepage of Customs and Taxation Union Directorate (TAXUD) Website
Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/index_en.htm

Major Regulatory Efforts of the EC Customs and Taxation Union Directorate:

Electronic Customs Initiative – Deals with major EU Customs modernization developments to improve and facilitate trade in the EU member states. The electronic customs initiative is essentially based on the following three pieces of legislation:

- The Security and Safety Amendment to the Customs Code, which provides for full computerization of all procedures related to security and safety;

- The Decision on the paperless environment for customs and trade (Electronic Customs Decision) which sets the basic framework and major deadlines for the electronic customs projects;

The modernized Community Customs Code which provides for the completion of the computerization of customshttp://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/electronic_customs_initiative/electronic_customs_legislation/index_en.htm

Customs Valuation – Most customs duties and value added tax (VAT) are expressed as a percentage of the value of goods being declared for importation. Thus, it is necessary to dispose of a standard set of rules for establishing the goods' value, which will then serve for calculating the customs duty.

The EU imports in excess of 1.9 trillion euro worth of goods (year 2013, estimate). It is important that the value of such commerce is accurately measured for the purposes of:

- economic and commercial policy analysis,
- application of commercial policy measures,
- proper collection of import duties and taxes, and
- import and export statistics.

These objectives are met using a single instrument - the rules on customs value.
The EU applies an internationally accepted concept of 'customs value'.

The value of imported goods is one of the three 'elements of taxation' that provides the basis for assessment of the customs debt, which is the technical term for the amount of duty that has to be paid, the other ones being the origin of the goods and the customs tariffhttp://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/declared_goods/index_en.htm

Customs and Security – At the end of July 2003, the Commission presented to the Parliament and Council a series of measures to address security issues. These measures can be found in two communications and a proposal for amending the Community Customs Code. This package brought together the basic concepts underlying the new security-management model for the EU's external borders, such as a harmonized risk assessment system. The security amendment to the Community Customs Code (Regulation (EC) n° 648/2005 of 13 April 2005) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on May 4, 2005. With this amendment, the European Union introduced a number of measures to tighten security around goods crossing international borders. The measures mean faster and better-targeted checks. The results are positive for customs authorities, the public and Industry.

The measures cover three major changes to the Customs Code:

- require traders to provide customs authorities with information on goods prior to import to or export from the European Union (see Pre Arrival / Pre Departure Declarations);

- provide reliable traders with trade facilitation measures see Authorized Economic Operator (AEO);

- introduce a mechanism for setting uniform Community risk-selection criteria for controls, supported by computerized systems http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/index_en.htm

Contact Information for national customs authorities: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/personal_tax/savings_tax/contact_points/index_en.htm

Standards

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Overview

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The EU Standardization Act provides a new approach to determining the legal nature of standards and technical regulations. According to the Act, a standard does not become a binding requirement unless so designated by a competent ministry; thus, standards are optional/voluntary. Since Slovenia is part of the EU, it recognizes all EU and international standards.

Goods and services imported for sale in Slovenia must comply with prescribed standards and technical regulations and be certified by an authorized institution, if it is so prescribed by the appropriate ministry. The Slovenian Standards Institute will answer all questions pertaining to standards (Email: sist@sist.si). Where there is no authorized institution for certification, the Standards and Metrology Institute of the Republic of Slovenia will issue a certificate. Certificates issued abroad are valid in Slovenia if the issuing authority and the local issuing institution have a mutual recognition agreement. Health, veterinary, phytosanitary, or ecological control is obligatory for some types of products such as foodstuffs and animals.

Technical instructions, a written guarantee statement, and, if necessary, instructions for use, must be enclosed with technical goods and consumer durables imported into Slovenia. In addition, the importer must guarantee the servicing of products and supply of spare parts. A declaration consisting of the name and type of product, name of manufacturer and other prescribed data should be affixed to the product. The documents and the declaration must be written in Slovene.

If a contract with a foreign person, regulations of a foreign country, or a bilateral or international agreement requires that export or import goods be shipped with documents certified by a competent authority, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia or an authorized customs organization is the competent authority. If the regulations of the country in which the documents are to be used stipulate that the documents have to be issued by a state body, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the competent issuing authority in Slovenia.

Products tested and certified in the United States to American standards are likely to have to be retested and re-certified to EU requirements as a result of the EU's different approach to the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are always subject to the EU's General Product Safety Directive as well as to possible additional national requirements.

European Union standards created under the New Approach are harmonized across the 28 EU member states and European Economic Area countries to allow for the free flow of goods. A feature of the New Approach is CE marking. For a list of new approach legislation, go to http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/harmonised-standards/index_en.htm . The concept of new approach legislation is likely to disappear as the New Legislative Framework (NLF), which entered into force in January 2010, was put in place to serve as a kind of blueprint for existing and future CE marking legislation. Since 2010/2011 existing legislation has been reviewed to bring them in line with the NLF concepts.

While harmonization of EU legislation can facilitate access to the EU Single Market, manufacturers should be aware that regulations (mandatory) and technical standards (voluntary) might also function as barriers to trade if U.S. standards are different from those of the European Union.

Agricultural Standards

The establishment of harmonized EU rules and standards in the food sector has been ongoing for several decades, but it took until January 2002 for the publication of a general food law establishing the general principles of EU food law. This Regulation introduced mandatory traceability throughout the feed and food chain as of Jan 1, 2005. For specific information on agricultural standards, please refer to the Foreign Agricultural Service's website at: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/about.html

There are also export guides to import regulations and standards available on the Foreign Agricultural Service's website:
http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/about.html

Standards Organizations

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EU standards setting is a process based on consensus initiated by Industry or mandated by the European Commission and carried out by independent standards bodies, acting at the national, European or international level. There is strong encouragement for non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups, to actively participate in European standardization.

Many standards in the EU are adopted from international standards bodies such as the International Standards Organization (ISO). The drafting of specific EU standards is handled by three European standards organizations:

1. CENELEC, European Committee for Electro Technical Standardization (http://www.cenelec.eu/)

2. ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute (http://www.etsi.org/)

3. CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards (http://www.cen.eu/cen/pages/default.aspx)

Standards are created or modified by experts in Technical Committees or Working Groups. The members of CEN and CENELEC are the national standards bodies of the member states, which have "mirror committees" that monitor and participate in ongoing European standardization. CEN and CENELEC standards are sold by the individual member states standards bodies. ETSI is different in that it allows direct participation in its technical committees from non-EU companies that have interests in Europe and gives away some of its individual standards at no charge on its website. In addition to the three standards developing organizations, the European Commission plays an important role in standardization through its funding of the participation in the standardization process of small- and medium-sized companies and non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups. The Commission also provides money to the standards bodies when it mandates standards development to the European Standards Organization for harmonized standards that will be linked to EU technical legislation. Mandates can be checked on line at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/standardisation-requests/index_en.htm

Given the EU's vigorous promotion of its regulatory and standards system as well as its generous funding for its development, the EU's standards regime is wide and deep - extending well beyond the EU's political borders to include affiliate members (countries which are hopeful of becoming full members in the future) such as Albania, Belarus, FYR Macedonia, and Morocco among others. Another category, called "partner standardization body" includes the standards organization of Mongolia and Australia, which are not likely to become a CEN member or affiliate for political and geographical reasons.

To know what CEN and CENELEC have in the pipeline for future standardization, it is best to visit their websites. CEN's "sectors" page provides an overview by sector and/or technical committee whereas CENELEC offers the possibility to search its database. ETSI's portal (http://portal.etsi.org/Portal_Common/home.asp) leads to ongoing activities.

With the need to adapt more quickly to market needs, European standards organizations have been looking for "new deliverables" which are standard-like products delivered in a shorter timeframe. While few of these "new deliverables" have been linked to EU legislation, expectations are that they will eventually serve as the basis for EU-wide standardshttp://www.cen.eu/cenorm/products/cwa/index.asp

The role of standards in legislation is undergoing review. The Commission's proposal, which is now in its first reading at the European Parliament, clarifies the relationship between regulations and standards and confirms the role of the three European standards bodies in developing EN harmonized standards. The emphasis is also on referencing international standards where possible. For information, communication and technology products, the importance of interoperability standards has been recognized. Through a newly established mechanism, a board will decide which deliverables from fora and consortia will be acceptable for public procurement specifications. The European standards bodies have been encouraged to improve efficiency in terms of delivery and to look for ways to include more societal stakeholders in European standardizationhttp://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/standardisation-policy/index_en.htm

NIST Notify U.S. Service
Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/

Conformity Assessment

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Conformity Assessment is a mandatory step for the manufacturer in the process of complying with specific EU legislation. The purpose of conformity assessment is to ensure consistency of compliance during all stages, from design to production, to facilitate acceptance of the final product. EU product legislation gives manufacturers some choice regarding conformity assessment, depending on the level of risk involved in the use of their product. These range from self-certification, type examination and production quality control system, to full quality assurance system. Conformity assessment bodies in individual member states are listed in NANDO, the European Commission's websitehttp://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/nando/

To promote market acceptance of the final product, there are a number of voluntary conformity assessment programs. CEN's certification systems are the Keymark, the CENCER mark, and CEN workshop agreements (CWA) Certification Rules. CENELEC has its own initiative. ETSI does not offer conformity assessment services.

Product Certification

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To sell products in the EU market of 28 member states as well as in Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, U.S. exporters are required to apply CE marking whenever their product is covered by specific product legislation. CE marking product legislation offers manufacturers a number of choices and requires decisions to determine which safety/health concerns need to be addressed, which conformity assessment module is best suited to the manufacturing process, and whether or not to use EU-wide harmonized standards. There is no easy way for U.S. exporters to understand and go through the process of CE marking, but hopefully this section provides some background and clarification.

Products manufactured to standards adopted by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, and published in the Official Journal as harmonized standards, are presumed to conform to the requirements of EU Directives. The manufacturer then applies the CE marking and issues a declaration of conformity. With these, the product will be allowed to circulate freely within the EU. A manufacturer can choose not to use the harmonized EU standards, but then must demonstrate that the product meets the essential safety and performance requirements. Trade barriers occur when design, rather than performance, standards are developed by the relevant European standardization organization, and when U.S. companies do not have access to the standardization process through a European presence.

The CE marking addresses itself primarily to the national control authorities of the member states, and its use simplifies the task of essential market surveillance of regulated products. As market surveillance was found lacking, the EU adopted the New Legislative Framework, which went into force in 2010. As mentioned before, this framework is like a blueprint for all CE marking legislation, harmonizing definitions, responsibilities, European accreditation and market surveillance.

The CE marking is not intended to include detailed technical information on the product, but there must be enough information to enable the inspector to trace the product back to the manufacturer or the local contact established in the EU. This detailed information should not appear next to the CE marking, but rather on the declaration of conformity (which the manufacturer or authorized agent must be able to provide at any time, together with the product's technical file), or the documents accompanying the product.

Accreditation

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Independent test and certification laboratories, known as notified bodies, have been officially accredited by competent national authorities to test and certify to EU requirements.

"European Accreditation" (http://www.european-accreditation.org/content/home/home.htm) is an organization representing nationally recognized accreditation bodies. Membership is open to nationally recognized accreditation bodies in countries in the European geographical area that can demonstrate that they operate an accreditation system compatible with EN45003 or ISO/IEC Guide 58.

Publication of Technical Regulations

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The Official Journal is the official gazette of the European Union. It is published daily on the internet and consists of two series covering draft and adopted legislation as well as case law, studies by committees, and more (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en). It lists the standards reference numbers linked to legislation (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/harmonised-standards/index_en.htm).

National technical Regulations are published on the Commission's website http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm to allow other countries and interested parties to comment.

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: http://tsapps.nist.gov/notifyUS/data/index/index.cfm

Labeling and Marking

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Manufacturers should be mindful that, in addition to the EU's mandatory and voluntary schemes, national voluntary labeling schemes might still apply. These schemes may be highly appreciated by consumers, and thus, become unavoidable for marketing purposes.

Manufacturers are advised to take note that all labels require metric units although dual labeling is also acceptable. The use of language on labels has been the subject of a Commission Communication, which encourages multilingual information, while preserving the right of member states to require the use of the language of the country of consumption.
The EU has mandated that certain products be sold in standardized quantities. Council Directive 2007/45/EC harmonizes packaging of wine and spirits throughout the EU. Existing national sizes will be abolished with a few exceptions for domestic producers. Link: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/prepack/packsize/packsiz_en.htm

The Eco-label
The EU eco-label is a voluntary label which U.S. exporters can display on products that meet high standards of environmental awareness. The eco-label is intended to be a marketing tool to encourage consumers to purchase environmentally-friendly products. The criteria for displaying the eco-label are strict, covering the entire lifespan of the product from its manufacture, use, and disposal. These criteria are reviewed every three to five years to take into account advances in manufacturing procedures. There are currently twenty-three different product groups, and approximately 250 licenses have been awarded for several hundred products.

Applications to display the eco-label should be directed to the competency body of the member state in which the product is sold. The application fee will be somewhere between €300 and €1300 depending on the tests required to verify if the product is eligible. The eco-label also carries an annual fee equal to 0.15 percent of the annual volume of sales of the product range within the European community. However, the minimum annual fee is currently set at €500 and maximum €25,000.

There are plans to significantly reform the eco-label in the near future, reducing the application and annual fees and expanding the product ranges significantly. It is also possible that future eligibility criteria may take into account carbon emissions.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/ecolabelled_products/product_categories_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/contacts/competent_bodies_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/about_ecolabel/revision_of_ecolabel_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/about_ecolabel/carbon_footprint_en.htm

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Information on particular Slovene standards and certification requirements can be obtained from the Slovenian Standards Institute (phone: +386-1-478 3013; fax: +386-1-478 3094) webpage www.sist.si/index.htm, email sist@sist.si. The institute is responsible for national standards (technical as well as quality standards).

Trade Agreements Return to top

Slovenia has been a member of WTO since 1995
(http://www.wto.org/English/thewto_e/countries_e/slovenia_e.htm)

List of bilateral agreements between the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of United States of America:

Agreement on Investment Incentives
Signed in Washington, on 04.26.1994

Convention on International Civil Aviation
Signed in Chicago, on 12.07.1944

Statute of the International Monetary Fund
Signed in Washington, on 01.01.1945

Statute of the International Financial Corporation
Signed in Washington, on 04.11.1955

Statute of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Signed in Washington, on 12.27.1945

Accord on Transit in the International Air Space
(Accord relative au Transit des Services Aeriens Internationaux)
Signed in Chicago, on 12.07.1944

For a list of trade agreements with the EU and its member states, as well as concise explanations, please see http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp

Web Resources Return to top

Information on Slovenian customs legislation:

http://www.carina.gov.si/en/
http://www.carina.gov.si/en/businesses/customs_treatment_of_goods/

More on EU customs:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_strategy/index_en.htm

Information on excise duty:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/tax_policy/index_en.htm

National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, published by USTR:
http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Reports_Publications/2008/2008_NTE_Report/Section_Index.html

Agricultural trade barriers: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/Useu/

Trade Compliance Center: http://www.trade.gov/tcc

U.S. Mission to the European Union: http://www.buyusa.gov/europeanunion
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

EU's Customs website:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/procedural_aspects/general/community_code/index_en.htm

Information on batteries: http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_8086174.pdf

REACH: http://www.buyusa.gov/europeanunion/reach.html

WEEE and RoHS: http://www.buyusa.gov/europeanunion/weee.html

Up-to-date information on harmonized import requirements:
http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/certificates-overview.html

U.S. export controls: http://www.bis.doc.gov

EU mandatory and voluntary labeling and marking requirements:
http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4171929.pdf

Slovenian Standards Institute: www.sist.si

Foreign Agricultural Service: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/

Labeling: Key Links: http://buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4284752.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm
http://www.eco-label.com/

European Accreditation: http://www.european-accreditation.org/default_flash.htm

Trade agreements with the EU and its Member States:
http://www.wto.org/English/thewto_e/countries_e/slovenia_e.htm
http://www.wto.org/English/thewto_e/countries_e/slovenia_e.htm

More resources are available at http://www.poslovniportal.si/
The portal offers up-to-date information pertaining to legal and regulatory framework in Slovenia.

EU websites:
Online customs tariff database (TARIC):
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

The Modernized Community Customs Code MCCC):
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/customs/do0001_en.htm
ECHA: http://echa.europa.eu

Taxation and Customs Union:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/index_en.htm

Security and Safety Amendment to the Customs Code - Regulation (EC) 648/2005:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005R0648:en:HTML

Electronic Customs Initiative: Decision N° 70/2008/EC
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:023:0021:0026:EN:PDF

Modernized Community Customs Code Regulation (EC) 450/2008):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:145:0001:0064:EN:PDF

Legislation related to the Electronic Customs Initiative:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/electronic_customs_initiative/electronic_customs_legislation/index_en.htm

International Level:

What is Customs Valuation?
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/declared_goods/european/index_en.htm

Customs and Security: Two communications and a proposal for amending the Community Customs Code
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/index_en.htm

Establishing the Community Customs Code: Regulation (EC) n° 648/2005 of 13 April 2005
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005R0648:en:HTML

Pre Arrival/Pre Departure Declarations:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/procedural_aspects/general/prearrival_predeparture/index_en.htm

AEO: Authorized Economic Operator
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/customs_security/aeo/index_en.htm

Contact Information at National Customs Authorities:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/personal_tax/savings_tax/contact_points/index_en.htm

New Approach Legislation: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/documents/harmonised-standards-legislation/list-references/index_en.htm

Cenelec, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization:
http://www.cenelec.eu/

ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute:
http://www.etsi.org/

CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards:
http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/homepage.htm

Standardisation – Mandates:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/standardisation-requests/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/mandates/database/index.cfm?fuseaction=txtSearch.main&CFID=34648468&CFTOKEN=6ef965fc96926526-52EF213E-DE68-5C5C-981D1CB14CA6CF99&jsessionid=f412d234ecac366e803c2593f323e576c666TR

ETSI – Portal – E-Standardization:
http://portal.etsi.org/Portal_Common/home.asp

CEN – Sector Fora:
http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/sectors/index.asp

Nando (New Approach Notified and Designated Organizations) Information System:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/nando/

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs):
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/international-aspects/mutual-recognition-agreement/usa/index_en.htm

European Co-operation for Accreditation:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/content/home/home.htm

Eur-Lex – Access to European Union Law:
Standards Reference Numbers linked to Legislation:
European Standards

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/harmonised-standards/index_en.htm

What's New
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/news/index_en.htm

National technical Regulations
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm
NIST - Notify U.S.: http://tsapps.nist.gov/notifyU
.S./data/index/index.cfm

Metrology, Pre-Packaging – Pack Size:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/legal-metrology-and-prepack/documents/pack-sizes/

European Union Eco-label Homepage:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

Eco-Label Catalogue:
http://www.eco-label.com/default.htm

U.S. websites:
National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers:
http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/press-office/reports-and-publications/2009/2009-national-trade-estimate-report-foreign-trad

Agricultural Trade Barriers:
http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/Useu/

Trade Compliance Center:
http://www.trade.gov/tcc

U.S. Mission to the European Union:
http://useu.usmission.gov/

The New EU Battery Directive:
http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_8086174.pdf

The Latest on REACH:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/reachclp/index.asp

WEEE and RoHS in the EU:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/weeerohs/index.asp

Overview of EU Certificates:
http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/certificates-overview.html

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
http://www.fda.gov/Food/default.htm

EU Marking, Labeling and Packaging – An Overview
http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4171929.pdf

The European Union Eco-Label:
http://buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4284752.pdf

Trade Agreements
http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

Openness to Foreign Investment

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There are several factors that make Slovenia an attractive location for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), including modern infrastructure, a major port on the Adriatic Sea, a highly-educated professional work force, access to Central/Southeastern European and EU markets, and membership to the EU and Eurozone. However, despite these benefits, potential investors have at times faced challenges in Slovenia as a result of inconsistent transparency and unclear procedures for foreign investments.

Share of inward FDI stock in GDP in 2012 in Slovenia stood at 34%, below the EU-28 average of 48% and lowest among the newer EU members. Nevertheless, foreign companies are an important factor to Slovenia's economy. In 2012, the share of foreign companies as a total number of corporations was only 4.5%, but they accounted for 19.8% of capital, 23.2% of assets and 21.7% of employees in the entire corporate sector. Their capital and workforce generated 28.2% of total net sales in revenue, 25.4% of total operating profit, and 21.1% of total operating loss. Foreign companies accounted for 40.0% of exports and 43.1% of imports by the Slovenian corporate sector.

Sectors of the economy that had the most success in attracting FDI to Slovenia include manufacturing of metal products, electric and optical equipment (in particular production of components for electronic and automotive industry), chemical products and products from plastic materials, paper industry, pharmacy and rubber industry, whole- and retail-sale, and financial and business consultancy.

The survey among existing foreign companies in Slovenia, conducted in 2012 by the Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI), shows that the most decisive factors for choosing Slovenia as a location for investment include high quality of production of export goods, high quality of the labor force, know-how and technology, strengthening of long-term cooperation, market access (mostly for services), good geographical position and infrastructure.

Note: on January 1, 2013 JAPTI, the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO) and the Slovenian Technology Agency (TIA) were merged into one new agency, the Slovenian Public Agency for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Development, Investment and Tourism, or SPIRIT Slovenia. SPIRIT serves as Slovenia's agency for foreign investment and promotion. Its mission is to enhance Slovenia's economic competitiveness through technical and financial assistance to entrepreneurs, businesses and investors.

In 2013, Slovenia improved its ranking on the Heritage Economic Freedom index and on the World Bank's Ease of doing Business index, but slipped further in rankings on TI Corruption Perceptions index and Global Innovation index.

TABLE 1:

Measure	**Year**	**Rank or value**	**Website Address**
TI Corruption Perceptions index	2013	43 of 177	http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/
Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom index	2013	74 of 177	http://www.heritage.org/index/ranking
World Bank's Doing Business Report "Ease of Doing Business"	2013	33 of 189	http//doingbusiness.org/rankings
Global Innovation Index	2013	30 of 142	http://www.globalinnovationindex.org/content.aspx?page=gii-full-report-2013#pdfopener
World Bank GNI per capita	2012	USD 22,800	http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD

Attitude Toward FDI

While generally welcoming Greenfield investments, there are a number of informal barriers – including ambivalence toward FDI and the "clubby" nature of the Slovenian elite – that present challenges for foreign investors. According to JAPTI's survey, the most important barriers that have an effect on FDI in Slovenia are high taxes, financial indiscipline, high labor costs, inefficient judicial system, difficulties with firing employees, small market size, unavailability of properly trained manpower, expensive\poor energy infrastructure, high transportation costs, and difficulties with obtaining credits. Most of the barriers were not removed and are deteriorating, especially high costs of the labor force, labor market rigidity, small market size, and unavailability of properly trained manpower. There was significant improvement in certain areas such as establishment of new company, foreign trade operations, and minimal improvement in others such as: tax administration and purchase of land and buildings.

Foreign companies doing business in Slovenia and the local American Chamber of Commerce have cited additional areas of focus that are aimed at improving the investment climate, including the lack of strategy to promote FDI, a sizable judicial backlog, difficulties in obtaining building permits, a high-level of labor market rigidity, high social contributions and personal income taxes coupled with excessive administrative tax burdens, the lack of transparency in public procurement, unnecessarily complex/time-consuming bureaucracy, frequent changes in regulation, high prices of real estate and confusion over lead responsibility or jurisdiction regarding foreign investment among government agencies.

In some economically depressed and underdeveloped regions (such as Prekmurje region near the border with Hungary), Slovenia offers special facilities/services and financial incentives to foreign investors. The country particularly welcomes high-tech sector investments that create jobs and are linked to research and development (R&D) activities, for which special tax incentives are available. Although Slovenia has some of the highest taxes in Europe, the government has introduced tax cuts which significantly reduced business costs, eliminated payroll taxes in 2009, and lowered the corporate tax rate to 17% in January 2013. Similar to other EU countries fighting with the global recession, the government increased the VAT rate (standard rate rose from 20% to 22%, and reduced rate from 8.5% to 9.5%) in July 2013.

Industrial Strategy

The report titled *Slovenian Industrial Policy*, prepared by the government in 2013, notes that Slovenia's industry generates innovation, growth and employment. The report also sets development goals for the industry and the economy for the nearer future. The main goal is to restructure the existing industry into an efficient one, with regards to energy, natural resources, environment and society, through improvement of business environment, support of entrepreneurship and innovation and development of perspective technological and industrial fields. Specific technology priorities include environmental technologies (energy efficiency, renewable energy resources, green building…), sustainable transport, biotechnology and key enabling technologies – KET (nanotechnology, micro- and nano-electronics, photonics and advanced materials and production). European funds will be the main source of financing for these investments while internationalization is recognized as crucial for enabling technology transfer and inclusion of domestic companies in the global value chain.

Privatization Program

Unlike other countries in Central/Eastern Europe, Slovenia never underwent mass privatization, which resulted in a higher percentage of state owned enterprises (SOE) that are either owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the state. State control is particularly apparent in key sectors, such as energy, transport, banking, telecommunication and insurance. Large swaths of the manufacturing, construction, retail and tourism sectors are also owned or controlled (at least indirectly) by the state. In 2013, the government prepared a list of 15 state owned companies to be privatized, which was confirmed by the Parliament. Two companies from the list were sold. The government also plans to privatize at least one bank. The European Commission further recommends a significant withdrawal of the state from the corporate and financial sector, combined with a comprehensive strategy for the management of core assets and divestment of non-core assets.

Conversion and Transfer Policies Return to top

Since September 1, 1995, Slovenia has adhered to Article VIII of the IMF Article of Agreement, thus committing itself to full current account convertibility and full repatriation of dividends. Slovenia replaced its previous currency, the Slovenian tolar, with the Euro in January 2007. In order to repatriate profits, joint stock companies must provide the following: evidence of the settlement of tax liabilities; notarized evidence of distribution of profits to shareholders; and proof of joint stock company membership (Article of Association). All other companies need to provide evidence of the settlement of tax liabilities and the company's act of establishment.

For the repatriation of shares in a domestic company, the party must submit its act of establishment, a contract on share withdrawal, and evidence of the settlement of tax liabilities to the authorized bank.

Expropriation and Compensation Return to top

According to Article 69 of Slovenia’s Constitution, the right to possess real property can be taken away or limited, with compensation in kind or financial compensation, under conditions determined by law on the basis of public interest.

There are currently no expropriation-related investment disputes in Slovenia. National law gives adequate protection to all investments. However, there is an ongoing dispute over private property expropriated by the Socialist Yugoslav government for state purposes. After the fall of Yugoslavia, the 1991 Denationalization Act created the basis for the process of denationalizing these properties and returning them to the rightful owners or to their heirs, or paying some sort of compensation if it was not possible to return the property “in nature.” Some of those rightful owners and heirs are now U.S. citizens. Since the 1993 deadline for filing a claim, roughly 97% of all cases have been resolved, but only about 88% of American-involved claims have been resolved. Cases regarding expropriation of property belonging to U.S. citizens take longer for several reasons, most of which are tied to the fact that the claimants usually do not live in Slovenia. The first step is in the process is that the Ministry of Justice must determine the nationality of the former owner at the time the property was seized – a simple question for Slovenes who never acquired another citizenship, but more complicated in cases involving naturalized American citizens. Second, many non-resident claimants fail to engage local attorneys, or only did so at the start of the process and have since let those retainers lapse. Finally, there are concerns that some claims involve property currently controlled or owned by prominent members of Slovene society, thereby creating an additional, though often unseen obstacle to restitution.

Dispute Settlement

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Slovenia is a signatory to the 1958 New York Convention on Recognition of Foreign Arbitral Awards and the 1961 European Convention on International Commercial Arbitration. There have been no major investment disputes in the past five years. Investment disputes are handled as all other business disputes.

Slovenia has a well-developed and structured legal system. It is based on a five-tier (district, regional, appeals, supreme, and administrative) court system. These courts deal with a vast array of legal cases including criminal, domestic relations, land disputes, contracts, and other business-related issues as well as probate. A separate social and labor court system, comprised of regional, appeals, and supreme courts, deals strictly with labor disputes, pensions, and other social welfare claims. Similar to most European countries, Slovenia also has a Constitutional Court which hears complaints alleging violations of human rights and personal freedoms. The court expresses its opinions on the constitutionality of international agreements and state statutes, and deals with other high profile political issues. In keeping with European legal standards, in 1997 the Parliament established an administrative court to handle disputes among local authorities, between state and local authorities, and between local authorities and executors of public authority.

The Parliament passed a law on Legal Proceedings in 1999 to speed up court proceedings. The law stipulates a stricter and more efficient procedure for serving court documents and providing evidence. For commercial cases, defendants are now required to file their defense within 15 days of receiving a notice of a claim. As a result of EU warnings and GoS programs to reduce case backlogs, the efficiency of Slovenian courts has increased. The number of cases with backlog decreased from 242,332 in 2011 to 199,923 in 2012. There were, however, 289,574 open cases as of September 30, 2013.

Unless parties have agreed to binding arbitration for disputes, the regional court specializing in economic issues has jurisdiction over business disputes. However, the parties may agree in writing to settle disputes in another court of jurisdiction.

The parties may also exclude the court as the adjudicator of the dispute if they agree in writing that contractual disputes will be solved by arbitration, whether ad hoc or institutional. In the former case, the applicable procedure and law must be determined. In the case of institutional arbitration, the type of arbitration must be clearly defined. The Permanent Court of Arbitration within the Chamber of Commerce is an independent institution that solves domestic and international disputes arising out of business transactions among companies.

The procedure before the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia is governed by the Regulations on the Procedure before the Permanent

Court of Arbitration at the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia. Arbitration rulings are final and subject to execution.

Competition is keen in Slovenia, and bankruptcies are an established and reliable means of working out firms' financial difficulties. Slovenian law provides three procedural methods for dealing with bankrupt debtors. The first, compulsory settlements, allows the insolvent debtor to submit a plan for financial reorganization to the Court. The Compulsory Settlement Plan is then voted upon by the creditors and must be accepted by those creditors whose claims represent more than 60% of the total claimed. If the settlement is accepted, the debtor is excused from the obligation to pay the creditor the amount that exceeds the percentage of payment set forth in the confirmed settlement. The payment terms are then extended in accordance with the conditions of forced settlement. Confirmed compulsory settlement affects creditors who have voted against compulsory settlement and creditors who have not reported their claims in the settlement procedure.

The creditor or debtor may also initiate bankruptcy procedures. The court names a bankruptcy administrator who sells the debtors property according to the bankruptcy senate, president's instructions, and supervision. As a rule, the debtor's property is sold by public auction. Otherwise, the creditors' committee may prescribe a different mode of sale such as collecting offers or placing conditions for potential buyers. The legal effect of the completed bankruptcy is the termination of the debtor's legal status to conduct business, and the distribution of funds created from the sale of assets to creditors according to their share of total debt.

The third method, bankruptcy as a forced liquidation, is distinguished from voluntary liquidation (without court intervention) as set forth in the Law on Commercial Companies. Forced liquidation is imposed on a debtor for whom the law determines the liquidation procedure and the legal conditions for ending his existence as a business entity. This would occur, for example, if the management does not operate for more than twelve months, if the court finds the registration void, or by court order.

Performance Requirements and Incentives Return to top

Slovenia has been a signatory member of the WTO since its inception and to date the government has not violated WTO rules. Legally, all investors, domestic and foreign, are treated equally. No performance requirements are imposed as a condition for establishing, maintaining, or expanding an investment.

There are some incentives offered to potential investors through the "FDI Incentive Scheme." The Inward Investment Cost-Sharing Grant Scheme will co-fund investments in industry, strategic services, or research and development that will result in the creation of at least 10 to 50 new jobs. More information and application forms can be found at www.investslovenia.org. On the other hand, the rigid procedures necessary to acquire work permits serve as an impediment for foreign investors. It can take two to three months to obtain a work permit. The Ministry of Labor has established a fast-track procedure for foreigners who are registered in the court registry as authorized persons or representatives of companies, managers of branch offices, and foreigners who are temporarily sent to work in organizational units for foreign legal persons registered in Slovenia. More information on work permits and employment services can be found at http://www.ess.gov.si.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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Private enterprise and ownership are promoted and protected in Slovenia, both by statute and the Constitution. Slovenia's laws on foreign investment are fully harmonized with the EU legislation. As stated in the Law on Commercial Companies, all business activities within Slovenia are open to domestic and foreign natural and legal persons who may establish wholly or partially owned companies in any legal form provided by the Commercial Companies Act (Limited, General; Joint Stock Companies, Limited Liability Companies, and Partnerships Limited by Shares; and Economic Interest Groups). Foreign investors may freely invest in Slovene companies in most industries with the exception of banking and insurance industries, where a permit from the Bank of Slovenia or Insurance Supervision Agency is needed. Furthermore, current regulations limit the foreign ownership stake in gaming interests to 20%. Foreign investors are permitted to obtain concessions for the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural and public goods. In addition, foreign and domestic investors have the same reporting requirements to the Bank of Slovenia.

Some restrictions are also applied to foreign investment in the field of military supply. For example, direct investments made by non-residents in companies or other entities that are engaged in the production of, or trade in, weaponry and military equipment are allowed only if specifically authorized by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

Foreign investors are subject to the same legal treatment as domestic companies and enjoy the same rights and obligations. The registration process is rather simple and usually takes between three weeks and one month to complete. Registered foreign-owned companies may also become members of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange.

Foreign-owned companies are entitled to own property in Slovenia. All citizens and enterprises of the European Union or the United States have the same purchase rights and rights of use of land and natural resources as citizens and domestic enterprises. If a foreign citizen or legal person from a third (i.e., non-EU) country decides to establish a company in Slovenia, this company is considered a Slovenian legal person and as such can buy, own and sell real estate. However, while the law provides for these rights, some foreign companies have experienced unexplainable delays in obtaining land even after all the necessary paperwork was submitted.

Foreign shareholders are entitled to free and unrestricted transfer of their profits abroad in foreign currency, providing that they meet their tax obligations. The 17% corporate tax rate in Slovenia applies to domestic and foreign companies and is among the lowest in Europe.
Credits and guarantees between residents and non-residents are regulated by the Foreign Exchange Act. The law differentiates between commercial and financial credits.

Commercial credits are those credits relating to trade and rendering international services that involve a resident as one of the contracting parties. Commercial credits include contractual trade credits (deferred payments and/or advances) and financing by banks. Factoring operations are also considered to be commercial credits, on the condition that the underlying operations from which the claims arise have the nature of commercial credits. All other operations are considered to be financial credits, including mortgage-backed and consumer loans as well as financial leasing operations.

All credit transactions, except commercial credits with payment delay or prepayments less than 12 months, must be in written form and contain all obligatory parts of the credit business. Authorized banks can undertake credit operations with non-residents for their own accounts in their own name and for someone else's account as their proxy. Institutions, that are not banks, can undertake credit operations with non-residents for their own accounts and in their own name. Residents must report all credit operations with non-residents to the Bank of Slovenia within 10 days of signing the loan contract.

Larger banks in Slovenia also have specialized International Desks, which offer bank services to foreign companies and persons. The 1999 Law on Banking allows foreign banks to establish branch offices in Slovenia. Since 1999, local borrowers have faced no restrictions with regards to borrowing abroad, which was strictly regulated before the new legislation. Once Slovenia joined the EU, its banking regulation was entirely harmonized with the banking regulation of the EU.

As of June 2001, all restrictions on portfolio investments by foreigners in Slovenia have been abolished and the purchase of foreign equities by Slovenes has been fully liberalized.

There is no law, statute, or regulation that specifically deals with mortgage banking services in Slovenia. Since there is no specific mortgage instrument, borrowers take classic loans with certain specifics related to real estate. The government also adopted a law which increased consumer protection levels for loans with real estate collateral. However, the government has committed itself to creating a mortgage banking system to include property assessments and deeds that will replace the current Land Registry system. Currently, there are no special mortgage banks in Slovenia. Accordingly, only a few Slovenian banks offer mortgage loans, all of which are secured or backed by mortgages and frequently granted to corporate clients, entrepreneurs and private individuals.

In order for mortgages to be effective against any owner of real estate, the mortgage must be registered in the Land Registry Book at the Land Registry Office. The Land Registry Book was introduced within the present territory of Slovenia in the 19th century and serves to inform the general public on the ownership of land, buildings, and parts of buildings that individuals have. Within the legal system, the Land Registry Book is, in part, connected with substantive civil law, which regulates default procedures on real estate.

Even though many banks give priority to the cash flow statements before the collateral of the loan, using mortgages to finance real estate developments is common in Slovenia. Mortgages are used as collateral for corporate financing of development projects. The creditor often requires the debtor to own, in equity, one and a half to two times the amount of the loan, depending on the debtor's credit rating. Once the mortgage is organized between the creditor and debtor, it is registered in the Land Registry Book. If the debtor defaults on the loan, the law provides for a foreclosure procedure on the mortgaged property.

Banks also offer financial service programs for construction and development projects. Under this program, banks offer to finance up to 70% of the construction or development project while 30% of the project cost is usually paid for by the investor. The banks also offer advisory services pertaining to Slovenian regulations on building and sales of real estate as well as transfer of ownership of the mortgaged real estate. As collateral, banks usually require a mortgage on the building being constructed.

Protection of Property Rights

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Intellectual Property Rights

Slovenia has enacted highly advanced and comprehensive legislation for the protection of intellectual property that fully reflects the most recent intellectual developments in the TRIPS Agreement (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property) and various EU directives. Slovenia negotiated its TRIPS commitments as a developing country and implemented its commitments as of January 1, 1996. Slovenia is a full member of the TRIPS Council of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Slovenia has already ratified the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the Cyber Crime Convention.

Slovenia's Intellectual Protection Office actively participates in the Intellectual Property Working Party of the Council of Europe, the Trademark Committee and other EU working bodies in formulation of new EU legislation. The Copyright and Related Rights Act amended in 2001 and 2004 deals with all fields of modern copyright and other related laws, including traditional works and their authors, computer programs, audiovisual works, as well as rental and lending rights. The act also takes into account new technologies such as storage and electronic memory, original databases, satellite broadcasting, and cable re-transmission. The 2004 harmonization with the EU legislation introduced a new system of collective management of intellectual property rights following the latest directive.

The 1994 Law on Courts gives the District Court of Ljubljana exclusive subject matter jurisdiction over intellectual property disputes. The aim of the law is to ensure specialization of the judges and the speed of relevant proceedings. Concerning enforcement of the TRIPS Agreement provision, Slovenian law provides for a number of civil legal sanctions, including injunctive relief and the removal of the infringement, the seizure and destruction of illegal copies and devices, the publication of the judgment in the media, compensatory and punitive damages, border (customs) measures, and the securing of evidence and other provisional measures without the prior notification and hearing of the other party. Furthermore, these infringements also constitute a misdemeanor charge with fines ranging from 400 Euro ($550) to 45,000 Euro ($61,500) for legal persons and a range of fines, from 40 Euro ($55) to 2,000 Euro ($2,700), for supervisors of individual offenders, provided that the reported offenses are not criminal in nature. In such a case, the Slovenian Criminal Code would apply, which may result in fines or in extreme cases, imprisonment. While Slovene laws regarding intellectual property are clearly defined, there have been complaints by foreign investors regarding the slow nature of the court system.

Since the enactment of the Law on Copyright and Related Rights Act, there have been relatively few reported prosecutions regarding copy right infringements and violations. The most notable cases usually include computer software piracy. In 2004, a long-running software piracy court case ended with a prison sentence and monetary fine. With piracy prosecution still in the early stages of implementation, Slovenia has dedicated resources to training prosecutors and public authorities. Slovenia continues to address the preservation of evidence in infringement procedures and border measures by amending existing legislation. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture established the Intellectual Property Fund, the Slovene Copyright Agency, and the Anti-Piracy Association of Software Dealers (BSA) to combat the problem of piracy in a collective manner.

The Law on Industrial Property grants and protects patents, model and design rights, trademark and service marks, and appellations of origin. The holder of a patent, model, or design right is entitled to: exclusively work the protected invention, shape, picture, or drawing; exclusively market any products manufactured in accordance with the protected invention, shape, picture, or drawing; dispose of the patent, model, or design right; prohibit the use of a protected invention, model, or design, by any person without consent.

The holder of a trademark has the exclusive right to use the trademark in the course of trade to designate his products or services. The authorized user of a protected appellation of origin has the right to use the appellation in the course of trade for marking products to which the appellation refers.

The patent and trademark rights granted by the Law on Industrial Property take effect from the date of filing the appropriate applications. Patents are granted for twenty years from the date of filing and model and design rights are granted for ten years. Trademarks are granted for ten years, but may be renewed an unlimited number of times. The term of an appellation of origin is unlimited. All patents and trademarks are registered through the Slovenian Intellectual Property Office with all registers open to the public. Patent and trademark applications filed in member countries of the International Union for the Protection of Industrial Property are afforded priority rights in Slovenia. The priority period is 12 months for patents and six months for model and design rights.

Any person who infringes upon a patent or trademark right may be held liable for damages and prohibited from carrying on the infringing acts.

The Law on Industrial Property also provides for the contractual licensing of patents, model and design rights, and marks. All license agreements must be in writing and specify the duration of the license, the scope of the license, whether the license is exclusive or non-exclusive, and the amount of remuneration for the use if compensation is agreed upon.

Compulsory licenses may be granted to another person when the invention is in the public interest or the patentee misuses his rights granted under the patent. A misuse of a patent occurs when the patentee does not use or insufficiently uses a patented invention and refuses to license other persons to work the protected invention or imposes unjustified conditions on the licensee. If a compulsory license is granted, the patentee is entitled to compensation. Slovene industrial property legislation fully complies with EU standards.

Transparency of Regulatory System Return to top

Foreign companies conducting business in Slovenia have the same rights, obligations, and responsibilities as domestic companies. The principles of commercial enterprise, which include free operation and national treatment, apply to the operations of foreign companies as well. Their basic rights are guaranteed by the Law on Commercial Companies and the Law on Foreign Transactions.

Generally, the bureaucratic procedures and practices are sufficiently streamlined and transparent for foreign investors wishing to start a business in Slovenia. In order to establish a business in Slovenia, a foreign investor must produce a sufficient amount of capital of at least 10,000 Euro ($13,700) for a limited liability company and 25,000 Euro ($34,500) for a stock company). The investor must also establish a business address, and file appropriate documentation with the court. The entire process usually takes three weeks to one month, but may take longer in Ljubljana due to backlogs in the court.

Slovenia signed a reciprocal taxation treaty with the United States in June 1999. The rate of taxation of profits in Slovenia is lower than in the United States. Slovenia introduced the Value Added Tax (VAT) in July 1999 which has only two grades, 9.5% and 22%. The standard VAT is 22% with 9.5% for some specialty items such as food products.

In Slovenia, highly concentrated market structures are not illegal; however, the abuse of market power is. The Law on the Protection of Competition prohibits acts that restrict competition in the market, conflict with good business practices relating to market access, or involve prohibited speculation. The law, which is fully harmonized with EU legislation, is applicable to corporate bodies and natural persons engaged in economic activities regardless of their legal form, organization, or ownership. The law also applies to the actions of public companies.

Restriction of competition through cartel agreements, unfair competition (i.e., false advertising, promises/gifts in exchange for business, trade secrets, etc.), illicit speculation during times of irregular market situations, and dumping and subsidized imports are all prohibited. The Government may, however, prescribe market restrictions in the following instances: in cases of natural disasters, epidemics, or in a state of emergency; in cases of appreciable market disturbances due to the shortage of goods; or when necessary to satisfy requirements for the products, raw materials, and semi-finished goods of special or strategic importance to the defense of the nation.

The Competition Protection Office (CPO) is responsible for ensuring fair competition in the marketplace. Investigations can be initiated by the CPO or conducted at the request of private companies. The CPO can issue a decree against any company found to be violating the Law on the Protection of Competition, although the power to fine companies rests solely in the hands of the courts. Any party trading in goods or services on the market may initiate legal proceedings in cases of unfair competition. Injured parties are entitled to compensation and the injunction of the unfair acts.

The court may issue a penalty of 125,000 Euro ($171,500) to 1,000,000 Euro ($1,370,000) against companies found to have engaged in cartel agreements, abused a dominant market position, committed an act of unfair competition, or engaged in illicit speculation. The managers and directors of the sanctioned company may be liable for a minimum fine of 4,000 Euro ($5,500). Self-employed persons found to have committed any of the legally prohibited actions are liable to pay a fine of no less than 40,000 Euro ($55,000). There are also fines for noncompliance with the CPO in the range of 2,000 Euro to 4,000 Euro ($2,700 to $5,500) for every week that requested documentation is not submitted. The same range of fines also applies if the sanctions are not carried out.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

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The financial sector remains relatively underdeveloped for a country with Slovenia's level of prosperity and is significantly affected by the turmoil of the economic crisis. Enterprises rarely raise capital through the stock market and instead must rely solely on the traditional banking system to meet their needs. The shallowness of the banking sector hinders economies of scale which, along with the recent decline in bank lending, has severely hindered the growth of the real economy.

The banking sector in Slovenia is marked by a relatively high degree of concentration. The country's largest two banks, both under state ownership, account for almost 60% of the market share, while foreign-owned banks account for less than 30%. The banking sector also suffers from excessive competition, with 19 banks and 3 savings banks in a country of 2 million people. The total assets of the banking sector account for nearly EUR 50 billion, approximately 140% of GDP. At the onset of the worldwide economic crisis, the banking sector was largely able to avoid serious problems. However, the collapse of the Slovene construction sector, coupled with diminished demand for exports (nearly 70% of Slovenia's GDP is derived from exports), led to severe capital inadequacy issues, as many loans were not appropriately collateralized, and bank assets have been steadily in decline since December 2009.

In the past, a number of Slovene banks have been partially or fully taken over by foreign banks and a number of Slovene banks have announced mergers. In 2001, French Societe Generale took over Slovenia's largest private bank, SKB Banka. In October 2001, Italian banking group San Paolo IMI purchased 82% of the Bank of Koper, the fifth largest bank in Slovenia. In spring 2002, the Government sold 34% of the largest commercial bank, Nova Ljubljanska Banka (NLB), to the Belgian KBC Group, with another 5% sold to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). After nearly a decade, the Belgian-based KBC announced their withdrawal from NLB in December 2012, with the government later stepping in to recapitalize the bank.

The Slovenian banking sector has been hit hard by the recent economic crisis. The largest banks (NLB and NKMB, both state-owned) have been downgraded several times by credit rating agencies due to the large number of non-performing loans in their portfolios, the need for recapitalization, the unstable domestic political situation and the looming threat from the Eurozone. The GOS has announced that it is searching for a strategic investor for NKBM (Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor), the nation's second largest bank.

In 2013, the government established a Bank Asset Management Company (BAMC) with a management board compiled of financial experts from Western Europe as the key institution to promote stability of the Slovenian financial system and restore trust in its functioning. BAMC has agreed to take over non-performing assets of three major state banks in exchange for bonds. Three such operations were conducted from December 2013 through March 2014. The government also injected EUR 3.3 billion into three of the biggest banks (NLB, NKBM, and A Bank). One estimate shows that 16% of Slovenian banking assets have been non-performing at the end of 2013.

Banking legislation authorizes commercial banks, savings banks, and stock brokerage firms to purchase securities abroad. Investment funds may also purchase securities abroad provided that certain diversification requirements are met.

The Ljubljana Stock Exchange (LSE), established in 1990, is a member of the International Association of Stock Exchanges (FIBV). In 2008, the LSE was acquired by the Wiener Stock Exchange. However, the number of companies listed on the exchange is limited and their trading volume is very light, with annual turnover similar to a single day's trading on the NYSE.

In 1995, the Central Securities Clearing Corporation (KDD) was established. KDD runs the central registry securities and trade clearings conducted on the LSE electronic trading system. The Securities Market Agency (SMA), established in 1994, has powers similar to the SEC in the United States. The SMA supervises investment firms, the LSE, the KDD, investment funds, and management companies, and shares responsibility with the Bank of Slovenia for supervision of banking and investment services.

The LSE uses different dissemination systems, including real time online trading information via REUTERS or the BDS System. The LSE also publishes information on the Internet at http://www.ljse.si.

Slovenia's takeover legislation has been fully harmonized with EU regulations. Slovenia implemented EU Directive 2004/25/ES on takeover legislation in July 2006 by adopting a new takeover law. The law was amended in July 2008 to reflect the country's adoption of the Euro. The law defines a takeover as a party's acquisition of 25% of a company's voting rights and requires a takeover offer for all current shareholders be publicly announced. The acquiring party must publicly issue a takeover offer for each additional acquisition of 10% of voting rights until it has acquired 75% of voting rights. The law stipulates that the acquiring party must inform the share-issuer whenever its stake in the target company reaches, surpasses or drops below 5, 10, 20, 25, 33, 50 or 75%. The law applies to all potential takeovers. However, acquisitions are often blocked or delayed regularly and easily, and drawn out negotiations and stalled takeovers have impacted Slovenia's reputation as an investment destination.

Slovenia's insurance sector is characterized by its high level of concentration in a few companies, with the largest, state-owned Triglav d.d., holding 37% of the total market. The four largest insurance companies in Slovenia account for over 70% of the market, while foreign insurance companies hold less than 10% of the market. Insurance companies primarily invest their assets in non-financial companies, state bonds, and bank-issued bonds.

Since 2000, there have been significant changes in the legislation regulating the insurance sector. The Ownership Transformation of Insurance Companies Act, which seeks to privatize insurance companies, has been delayed several times due to ambiguity in the act concerning the estimated share of state-controlled capital. Although plans for insurance sector privatization have been discussed since 2005, nothing has been implemented.

Currently, Slovenia has three registered health insurance companies and a variety of companies offering other kinds of insurance. However, under EU regulations, any insurance company registered in the EU can market its services in Slovenia as well, so long as the insurance supervision agency of the company's country of origin has notified the Slovenian Supervision Agency of the company's intentions.

Foreign investors in Slovenia have equal rights as domestic investors, including the ability to obtain credit on the local market.

Competition from State Owned Enterprises

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Private enterprises compete on the same terms and conditions as public enterprises with respect to access to markets, credit, and other business operations.

State-owned and partially state-owned enterprises are present across most industries in Slovenia since the state retained significant ownership shares in many large companies since its independence. Some sectors are more likely to be dominated by state owned companies, such as energy, transport, banking, and insurance, which are considered to be of strategic national interest to Slovenia. Other sectors of the economy, including the retail, entertainment, construction, tourism, and manufacturing sectors, contain important firms that are either wholly state owned or in which the state maintains a controlling interest by virtue of holding the largest single block of shares.

Following OECD recommendations, the GoS established the Capital Assets Management Agency (AUKN) in November 2010 to increase transparency and promote more efficient management of State owned enterprises (SOE). More than 95% of AUKN funds are invested domestically. AUKN is an independent state authority that reports to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. AUKN provides the National Assembly with annual reports regarding the previous year’s implementation of the Annual Plan of the Corporate Governance of Capital Investments. The GoS then adopts the Annual Plan of the Corporate Governance of Capital Investments based on AUKN’s proposal.

AUKN has been heavily criticized for being ineffective since its inception and a previous government, elected in February 2012, prepared a plan to replace AUKN with a new Slovenian Sovereign Holding (SSH). Parliament formally approved SSH in January 2013, after the Constitutional Court rejected a request to hold a referendum on the establishment of SSH. However, SSH is not yet operational. The goal, according to the government, is to simplify and shorten the administrative process to privatize state assets.

SOEs are subject to the same laws as private companies. They must submit their books to be independently audited and publish annual reports if required, for example if the SOE is listed on the stock exchange or the size of the company meets the required threshold. The reporting standards are comparable to international financial reporting standards. SOEs fully comply with their legal obligations.

Corporate Social Responsibility

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Recently, there has been increased interest in the concept of corporate social responsibility. Larger companies have increasingly undertaken corporate social responsibility activities in order to raise their public profile and promote their firms, as such ventures are generally viewed favorably by Slovenian consumers; recent examples include sponsoring sports teams and community events. Slovenia’s tax code does not provide strong incentives for corporate social responsibility or philanthropy.

Political Violence
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Except for a brief, ten-day conflict in 1991, there have been no incidents of political violence in Slovenia since independence.

Corruption
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Perceptions of corruption remain widespread, potentially raising the costs and risks of doing business. Corruption has a corrosive impact on both market opportunities overseas for U.S. companies and the broader business climate. It also deters international investment, stifles economic growth and development, distorts prices, and undermines the rule of law. The Slovenian Independent Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (CPC) operates with a broad mandate to prevent and investigate corruption, breaches of ethics and integrity of public office. The CPC reports to the Parliament.

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Corruption, including bribery, raises the costs and risks of doing business. Corruption has a corrosive impact on both market opportunities overseas for U.S. companies and the broader business climate. It also deters international investment, stifles economic growth and development, distorts prices, and undermines the rule of law.

It is important for U.S. companies, irrespective of their size, to assess the business climate in the relevant market in which they will be operating or investing, and to have an effective compliance program or measures to prevent and detect corruption, including foreign bribery. U.S. individuals and firms operating or investing in foreign markets should take the time to become familiar with the relevant anticorruption laws of both the foreign country and the United States in order to properly comply with them, and where appropriate, they should seek the advice of legal counsel.

The U.S. Government seeks to level the global playing field for U.S. businesses by encouraging other countries to take steps to criminalize their own companies' acts of corruption, including bribery of foreign public officials, by requiring them to uphold their obligations under relevant international conventions. A U.S. firm that believes a competitor is seeking to use bribery of a foreign public official to secure a contract should bring this to the attention of appropriate U.S. agencies, as noted below.

U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: In 1977, the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which makes it unlawful for a U.S. person, and certain foreign issuers of securities, to make a corrupt payment to foreign public officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business for or with, or directing business to, any person. The FCPA also applies to foreign firms and persons who take any act in furtherance of such a corrupt payment while in the United States. For more detailed information on the FCPA, see the FCPA Lay-Person's Guide at: http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/

Other Instruments: It is U.S. Government policy to promote good governance, including host country implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption laws and policies pursuant to their obligations under international agreements. Since enactment of the FCPA, the United States has been instrumental to the expansion of the international framework to fight corruption. Several significant components of this framework are the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Antibribery Convention), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN Convention), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), the Council of Europe Criminal and Civil Law Conventions, and a growing list of U.S. free trade agreements. This country is party to [add instrument to which this country is party], but generally all countries prohibit the bribery and solicitation of their public officials.

OECD Antibribery Convention: The OECD Antibribery Convention entered into force in February 1999. As of March 2009, there are 38 parties to the Convention including the United States (see http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/13/40272933.pdf). Major exporters China, India, and Russia are not parties, although the U.S. Government strongly endorses their eventual accession to the Convention. The Convention obligates the Parties to criminalize bribery of foreign public officials in the conduct of international business. The United States meets its international obligations under the OECD Antibribery Convention through the U.S. FCPA. [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the OECD Convention.]

UN Convention: The UN Anticorruption Convention entered into force on December 14, 2005, and there are 158 parties to it as of November 2011 (see http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html). The UN Convention is the first global comprehensive international anticorruption agreement. The UN Convention requires countries to establish criminal and other offences to cover a wide range of acts of corruption. The UN Convention goes beyond previous anticorruption instruments, covering a broad range of issues ranging from basic forms of corruption such as bribery and solicitation, embezzlement, trading in influence to the concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption. The Convention contains transnational business bribery provisions that are functionally similar to those in the OECD Antibribery Convention and contains provisions on private sector auditing and books and records requirements. Other provisions address matters such as prevention, international cooperation, and asset recovery. [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the UN Convention.]

OAS Convention: In 1996, the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the first international anticorruption legal instrument, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), which entered into force in March 1997. The OAS Convention, among other things, establishes a set of preventive measures against corruption, provides for the criminalization of certain acts of corruption, including transnational bribery and illicit enrichment, and contains a series of provisions to strengthen the cooperation between its States Parties in areas such as mutual legal assistance and technical cooperation. As of December 2009, the OAS

Convention has 34 parties (see http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/b-58.html) [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the OAS Convention.]

Council of Europe Criminal Law and Civil Law Conventions: Many European countries are parties to either the Council of Europe (CoE) Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, the Civil Law Convention, or both. The Criminal Law Convention requires criminalization of a wide range of national and transnational conduct, including bribery, money-laundering, and account offenses. It also incorporates provisions on liability of legal persons and witness protection. The Civil Law Convention includes provisions on compensation for damage relating to corrupt acts, whistleblower protection, and validity of contracts, inter alia. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established in 1999 by the CoE to monitor compliance with these and related anti-corruption standards. Currently, GRECO comprises 49 member States (48 European countries and the United States). As of December 2011, the Criminal Law Convention has 43 parties and the Civil Law Convention has 34 (see www.coe.int/greco.) [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the Council of Europe Conventions.]

Free Trade Agreements: While it is U.S. Government policy to include anticorruption provisions in free trade agreements (FTAs) that it negotiates with its trading partners, the anticorruption provisions have evolved over time. The most recent FTAs negotiated now require trading partners to criminalize “active bribery” of public officials (offering bribes to any public official must be made a criminal offense, both domestically and trans-nationally) as well as domestic “passive bribery” (solicitation of a bribe by a domestic official). All U.S. FTAs may be found at the U.S. Trade Representative Website: http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements. [Insert information as to whether your country has an FTA with the United States: Country [X] has a free trade agreement (FTA) in place with the United States, the [name of FTA], which came into force. Consult USTR Website for date: http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements.]

Local Laws: U.S. firms should familiarize themselves with local anticorruption laws, and, where appropriate, seek legal counsel. While the U.S. Department of Commerce cannot provide legal advice on local laws, the Department’s U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide assistance with navigating the host country’s legal system and obtaining a list of local legal counsel.

Assistance for U.S. Businesses: The U.S. Department of Commerce offers several services to aid U.S. businesses seeking to address business-related corruption issues. For example, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide services that may assist U.S. companies in conducting their due diligence as part of the company’s overarching compliance program when choosing business partners or agents overseas. The U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service can be reached directly through its offices in every major U.S. and foreign city, or through its Website at www.trade.gov/cs.

The Departments of Commerce and State provide worldwide support for qualified U.S. companies bidding on foreign government contracts through the Commerce Department’s Advocacy Center and State’s Office of Commercial and Business Affairs. Problems, including alleged corruption by foreign governments or competitors, encountered by U.S. companies in seeking such foreign business opportunities can be brought to the attention of appropriate U.S. government officials, including local embassy personnel and through the Department of Commerce Trade Compliance Center "Report A Trade Barrier" Website at tcc.export.gov/Report_a_Barrier/index.asp.

Guidance on the U.S. FCPA: The Department of Justice's (DOJ) FCPA Opinion Procedure enables U.S. firms and individuals to request a statement of the Justice Department's present enforcement intentions under the anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA regarding any proposed business conduct. The details of the opinion procedure are available on DOJ's Fraud Section Website at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa. Although the Department of Commerce has no enforcement role with respect to the FCPA, it supplies general guidance to U.S. exporters who have questions about the FCPA and about international developments concerning the FCPA. For further information, see the Office of the Chief Counsel for International Counsel, U.S. Department of Commerce, Website, at http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html. More general information on the FCPA is available at the Websites listed below.

Exporters and investors should be aware that generally all countries prohibit the bribery of their public officials, and prohibit their officials from soliciting bribes under domestic laws. Most countries are required to criminalize such bribery and other acts of corruption by virtue of being parties to various international conventions discussed above.

Similar to many other European countries, Slovenia does not have a bribery statute equal in stature to the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. However, Chapter 24 of the Slovenian Criminal Code (S.C.C.) provides statutory provisions for criminal offenses in the economic sector. Corruption in the economy can take the form of corruption among private firms or corruption among public officials.

The S.C.C. provides for criminal sanctions against officials of private firms for the following crimes: forgery or destruction of business documents; unauthorized use or disclosure of business secrets; insider trading; embezzlement; acceptance of gifts under certain circumstances; money laundering; and tax evasion.

Specifically, Articles 241 and 242 of the S.C.C. make it illegal for a person performing a commercial activity to demand or accept undue rewards, gifts, or other material benefits that will ultimately result in the harm or neglect of his business organization. While Article 241 makes it illegal to accept gifts, Article 242 prohibits the tender of gifts in order to gain an undue advantage at the conclusion of any business dealings.

Public officials are held accountable under Article 261 of the S.C.C., which makes it illegal for a public official to request or accept a gift in order to perform or omit an official act within the scope of his official duties. The acceptance of a bribe by a public official may result in a fine or imprisonment of no less than one year, with a maximum sentence of five years. The accepted gift/bribe is also seized.

While Article 261 holds public officials accountable, Article 262 holds the gift's donor accountable. Article 262 makes it illegal for natural persons or legal entities to bribe public officials with gifts. Violation of this article carries a sentence of up to three years. However, if the presenter of the gift discloses such bribery before it is detected or discovered, punishment may be omitted. Generally, the gift is seized. However, if the presenter of the gift disclosed the violation, the gift may be returned to him/her.

The State Prosecutor's Office is responsible for the enforcement of the anti-bribery provisions. The number of cases of actual bribery is small and is generally limited to instances involving inspection and tax collection. Although the Prosecutor's Office may suspect bribery and related corruption practices in government procurement offices, obtaining evidence is difficult, thereby making it equally difficult to prosecute. In addition, in 2010 Slovenia established the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (CPC), an independent state body, with a broad mandate to prevent and investigate corruption, breaches of ethics, and integrity of public officials. The CPC is not part of the law enforcement or prosecution system of Slovenia and its employees do not have typical police powers. The CPC does, however, have broad legal powers to access and subpoena financial and other documents, question public servants and officials, conduct administrative investigations and proceedings and instruct different law enforcement bodies to gather additional information and evidence within the limits of their authority. While the CPC cannot prosecute cases (only recommend to the State Prosecutor's Office), it can issue fines for different violations (sanctions can be appealed to the Court).

In 2011, to combat Slovenia's ongoing problems with corruption and nontransparent procedures in public procurement, the GoS established a new government-wide Public Procurement Agency to carry out all public procurements over established EU thresholds (which vary from sector to sector, i.e. goods and services above 40,000 Euro and works above 80,000 Euros). The agency reports to the Ministry of Justice. By law, the National Review Commission also provides non-judicial review of all public procurements.

While corruption remains an important problem facing Slovenia, its prevalence remains relatively minor compared to other former-communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. In 2001, Slovenia convicted its first senior public official for accepting a bribe. The second such case occurred in 2010, resulting in the imprisonment of a member of parliament. The small size of Slovenia's political and economic elite contributes to a lack of transparency in government procurement and widespread cronyism in the business sector. Currently, multiple prominent national and local political figures have been charged or are on trial for corruption in public procurements. The CPC has instituted a new system for tracking corruption in public procurement at the municipal level and in one week discovered 61 violations involving seven municipalities and hundreds of suspect deals in 86 municipalities. As noted above (see first section), a CPC report was at the center of a January 2013 political crisis which led to the collapse of a former government.

Anti-Corruption Resources

Some useful resources for individuals and companies regarding combating corruption in global markets include the following:

- Information about the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), including a "Lay-Person's Guide to the FCPA" is available at the U.S. Department of Justice's Website at: http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa.

- Information about the OECD Antibribery Convention including links to national implementing legislation and country monitoring reports is available at: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_34859_1_1_1_1_1,00.html. See also new Antibribery Recommendation and Good Practice Guidance Annex for companies: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/40/44176910.pdf.

- General information about anticorruption initiatives, such as the OECD Convention and the FCPA, including translations of the statute into several languages, is available at the Department of Commerce Office of the Chief Counsel for International Commerce Website: http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html.

- Transparency International (TI) publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption in 180 countries and territories around the world. The CPI is available at: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009. TI also publishes an annual *Global Corruption Report* which provides a systematic evaluation of the state of corruption around the world. It includes an in-depth analysis of a focal theme, a series of country reports that document major corruption related events and developments from all continents and an overview of the latest research findings on anti-corruption diagnostics and tools. See http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr.

- The World Bank Institute publishes Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). These indicators assess six dimensions of governance in 213 countries, including Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. See http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp. The World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Surveys may also be of interest and are available at: http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/BEEPS.

- The World Economic Forum publishes the *Global Enabling Trade Report*, which presents the rankings of the Enabling Trade Index, and includes an assessment of the transparency of border administration (focused on bribe payments and corruption) and a separate segment on corruption and the regulatory environment. See http://www.weforum.org/s?s=global+enabling+trade+report.

- Additional country information related to corruption can be found in the U.S. State Department's annual *Human Rights Report* available at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/.

- Global Integrity, a nonprofit organization, publishes its annual *Global Integrity Report*, which provides indicators for 106 countries with respect to governance and anti-corruption. The report highlights the strengths and weaknesses of national level anti-corruption systems. The report is available at: http://report.globalintegrity.org/.

Bilateral Investment Agreements Return to top

Slovenia has signed Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with Albania, Austria, Belgium - Luxembourg Economic Union, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Kuwait, Lithuania, Macedonia (F.Y.R.), Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, and Serbia. Slovenia is currently negotiating BITs with Iran and Kazakhstan. Slovenia does not have a BIT with the United States.

14.1 Bilateral Taxation Treaties

Slovenia has signed Bilateral Taxation Treaties with Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Isle of Man, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (F.Y.R), Malta, Moldova, Monte Negro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan. The treaties with Egypt and Kosovo have not yet entered into force.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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Slovenia signed a bilateral agreement with the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) on April 24, 1994. There are currently a number of OPIC investment finance and insurance programs available in Slovenia, including loan guarantees, direct loans, and political violence and expropriation insurance.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank offers short-, medium-, and long-term private sector, as well as short-term public sector, programs in Slovenia. In July 1999, the Slovenian Export Corporation (SEC) and the U.S. Export-Import Bank signed a memorandum on cooperation in financing, insuring, and reinsuring exports to Southeast European countries. In January 2007, the SEC restructured to become the Slovenian Export and Development Bank. More information is available on their website www.sid.si.

Labor

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In September 2008, the unemployment rate stood at a record-low 4.4% (according to the ILO method). However, when the global financial crisis hit Slovenia in the last quarter of 2008, it pushed the unemployment rate up substantially. In 2012, the unemployment rate stood at 8.8% and rose to 10.7% in 2013. Youth unemployment is disproportionately high – around 15 percent. Since 2008, Slovenian companies have undertaken significant layoffs and bankruptcies, especially in the construction, automotive, textile and other sectors of industrial production. The government's economic reforms propose to address this problem through a combination of retraining and investment in new technologies. The regions where unemployment is the highest are primarily in the northeast.

Slovenia fully harmonized its labor legislation with the EU on May 1, 2004. In line with new legislation, Slovenia has retained strict rules on issuing work permits to non-EU applicants. The 2001 Employment of Aliens Act introduces a quota system for work permits and simplifies the procedure for obtaining work permits for foreigners who have worked and lived in Slovenia for an extended period of time.

Slovenia's wage-setting practice follows the "social partners" model, designed to contain upward pressure by centralizing wage decisions. In practice, however, high wage expectations have pushed Slovenia's wage levels far above those of its central European neighbors. In addition, growing labor unrest has placed pressure for wages to rise further. However, its well-educated labor force and position as a productive transition economy allows it to remain competitive in niche markets.

Slovenia adopted an Employment Relationship Act that entered into force in January 2003. The Act defines a full time workweek as 36 to 40 hours (made up of six to eight-hour days including a 30-minute lunch break). The act increases protection of critical working groups (including women and children), and eases the conditions under which an employer may terminate employees. The amendments to the Act in 2013 further ease the conditions for termination of employment, but Slovenia still needs to introduce major labor and education reform if the country wants to have a more flexible labor market in order to compete on the global economy.

Slovenia's labor force performs well in the higher value-added activities that utilize its skilled technicians and engineers at a somewhat lower cost than in the developed West. However, Slovenia would benefit from a workforce with stronger managerial skills, most notably in the banking and insurance sectors. Despite the introduction of greater labor market flexibility, the market for workers remains quite rigid and investors will find that termination of workers is more difficult than in the United States. In addition, the labor market remains relatively over-protected, and pay scales in public service are very complicated and do not reward performance.

In February 2010, the government implemented an increase to the minimum wage that was phased in over a 3 year period. The minimum wage rose in 2010 from € 597 per month ($776) to € 734 ($954), to € 748 ($972) in 2011, and to € 763 ($992) in 2012. In 2013 the minimum wage was € 783.66 ($1,017).

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

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There are two kinds of Free Trade Zones in Slovenia: Free Economic Zones and Free Customs Zones.

Free Economic Zones

Slovenia has phased out two Free Economic Zones (FEZ) in Koper and Maribor. The following activities were eligible to be performed within FEZs: production and services; wholesale trade; banking and other financial services; and insurance and reinsurance regarding the above mentioned activities. After obtaining an appropriate tax authority decision, users of FEZs were entitled to the following benefits:

(i)   VAT exemption for imports of equipment, production materials, and services necessary for export production or performance of other permitted activities;
(ii)   a reduction in corporate tax rates from the normal 21% to 10%;
(iii) a tax allowance amounting to 50% of invested resources on investments in tangible assets in the FEZ; and
(iv)   a reduction in the taxable base amounting to 50% of the salaries of apprentices and other workers formerly unemployed for at least 6 months.

While FEZ Koper was fully operational, there were only a few companies operating in FEZ Maribor. Despite the lack of success in Maribor, the government adopted an amendment to the Law on Free Economic Zones in January 2010, guaranteeing the FEZs' operations until December 31, 2013. In 2013, the government considered extending FEZs’ operations, but eventual decided against prolonging them and they were phased out.

Free Customs Zones

As of December 2009, the only free customs zone (FCZ) in Slovenia is the Port of Koper. Under the Customs Act, subjects operating in FCZs are not liable for payment of customs duties, nor are they subject to other trade policy measures until goods are released into free circulation.

Duties and rights of users include the following:

(i) Separate books must be kept for activities undertaken in FCZs;
(ii) Users may undertake business activities in a FCZ on the basis of contracts with the founders of FCZs;
(iii) Users are free to import goods (customs goods, domestic goods for export) into FCZs;
(iv) Goods imported into FCZs may remain for an indefinite period, except agricultural produce, for which a time limit is set by the government;
(v) Entry to and exit from FCZs is to be controlled;
(vi) Founders and users must allow customs, or other responsible authorities, to execute customs, or other, supervision; and
(vii) For the purposes of customs control, users must keep records of all goods imported into, exported from, consumed or altered in FCZs.

The Customs Act also allows the establishment of open FCZs that will allow for more flexible organization and customs’ authorities’ supervision.

In such FCZs, users may undertake the following activities:

(i) Production and service activities, including handicrafts, defined in the founding act or contract, and banking and other financial business transactions, property and personal insurance and reinsurance connected with the activities undertaken;
(ii) Wholesale transactions; and
(iii) Retail sales, but only for other users of the zone or for use within the FCZ.

Slovenia has recently developed land sites designed for Greenfield investments. Most of the newly developed industrial zones have direct access to highways and rail service and well developed infrastructure. Land prices can vary greatly. Municipalities and the State often subsidize infrastructure and land costs, as they would like to increase employment opportunities, reducing the rate for fully equipped land in industrial zones. In Lendava, a town located in the eastern part of the country, the price per square meter of land is roughly 5 Euro, while prices in the vicinity of Ljubljana can run to 50 Euro or more. Potential investors may also count on a full range of free services and concessions provided by local development agencies for start-ups. The assistance may also include help in completing all the necessary paper work (permits) and, in some cases, organizing and financing construction in line with investor requirements. Interested investors can contact the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana for further information.

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics Return to top

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Slovenia is fairly low, despite Slovenia's overall mix of qualities as an attractive investment location. Total FDI stock in Slovenia at the end of 2012 was € 11.7 billion. As with trade, the bulk of FDI in Slovenia is European in origin. U.S. FDI in Slovenia, as calculated by the U.S. Embassy, is around 5% of the total. N.B.: The Bank of Slovenia (BoS), in its official data, lists U.S. FDI at approximately $31 million or 0.3% of total FDI. However, this amount does not take into account significant investments by U.S. firms, notably Goodyear. This data is not listed as U.S. in origin by the BoS, as U.S. funds are often routed through a third country. Goodyear's investment in Sava Tires, for example, came to Slovenia via a bank in Luxembourg.

TABLE 2: Key Macroeconomic data, U.S. FDI in host country/economy

	Host Country Statistical source*		USG or international statistical source		USG or international Source of data (Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other)
Economic Data	Year	Amount	Year	Amount	
Host Country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (*Millions U.S. Dollars)*	2013 2012	46,848.4 45,377.43	2012	45,280	http://www.worldbank.org/en/country
Foreign Direct Investment	Host Country Statistical source*		USG or international statistical source		USG or international Source of data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
U.S. FDI in partner country (*Millions U.S. Dollars, stock positions)*	Insert 2012	Amount 41.30	Insert (Year)	Amount n/a	(BEA) click selections to reach. • Bureau of Economic Analysis • Balance of Payments and Direct Investment Position Data • U.S. Direct Investment Position Abroad on a Historical-Cost Basis • By Country only (all countries) (Millions of Dollars)
Host country's FDI in the United States (*Millions U.S. Dollars,*	Insert 2012	Amount 54.85	Insert 2012	Amount 18	(BEA) click selections to reach • Balance of Payments and Direct Investment Position Data

stock positions)					• Foreign Direct Investment Position in the United States on a Historical-Cost Basis • By Country only (all countries) (Millions of Dollars)
Total inbound stock of FDI as % host GDP (***calculate)***	Insert 2013 2012	Amount 31.3% 33.2%	Insert (Year)	Amount	

* Provide sources of host country statistical data used.

TABLE 3: Sources and Destination of FDI

Slovenia 2012

Direct Investment from/in Counterpart Economy Data					
From Top Five Sources/To Top Five Destinations *(US Dollars, Millions)*					
Inward Direct Investment			**Outward Direct Investment**		
Total Inward	12,109	100%	Total Outward	7,427	100%
Austria	4,323	36%	Croatia	2,000	27%
Switzerland	1,350	11%	Serbia, Republic of	1,834	25%
Italy	993	8%	Bosnia and Herzegovina	763	10%
Germany	869	7%	Macedonia, FYR	473	6%
France	787	6%	Russian Federation	417	6%
"0" reflects amounts rounded to +/- USD 500,000.					

Source: IMF, http://cdis.imf.org

TABLE 4: Sources of Portfolio Investment

Slovenia 2012

Portfolio Investment Assets								
Top Five Partners (Millions, US Dollars)								
Total			**Equity Securities**			**Total Debt Securities**		
All Countries	15,393	100%	All Countries	3,389	100%	All Countries	12,004	100%
Germany	3,033	20%	United States	856	25%	Germany	2,776	23%
France	2,220	14%	Luxembourg	459	14%	France	1,993	17%

Netherlands	1,211	8%	Austria	308	9%	Netherlands	1,161	10%
United States	1,183	8%	Germany	257	8%	Italy	1,003	8%
Italy	1,022	7%	France	227	7%	Austria	550	5%

Source: IMF, http://cdis.imf.org

Foreign Direct Investment in Slovenia by activity - Stock on 31.12. 2012

Activity	Total Value (Million Euros)	Share of Total (%)
Financial and insurance activities	4,855.7	41.4%
Manufacturing	2,859.7	24.4%
Wholesale and retail trade	1,827.8	15.6%
Real estate activities	722.1	6.2%
Electricity, gas, steam, air conditioning	288.2	2.5%
Total	11,724.3	100%

Slovene Foreign Direct Investment abroad by activity - Stock on 31.12.2012

Activity	Total Value (Million Euros)	Share of Total (%)
Manufacturing	1,675.4	29.9%
Wholesale and retail trade	1,189.0	21.2%
Financial and insurance activities	786.2	14.0%
Transportation and storage	317.8	5.7%
Professional, scientific, and tech activities	316.3	75.6%
Total	5,599.3	100%

Source: Bank of Slovenia

Major U.S.-based Investors:

The following is a short list in alphabetical order of U.S. firms holding investments or with a presence in Slovenia.

3M
Amway
AGB Nielsen
Caterpillar
Coca-Cola Corporation
Colgate-Palmolive
Cisco
Deloitte & Touche
DHL International
DuPont
Ecolab

Eli Lilly
Ernst & Young
Emerson Electronics
Goodyear
Hewlett-Packard Company
IBM
Johnson & Johnson
Liberty International
Marsh
Masterfoods
Merck, Sharp & Dohme
Microsoft
McDonald's
Motorola
Oracle Corporation
Pfizer Corporation
Philip Morris
PriceWaterhouse Coopers
Procter & Gamble
United Global Communications
Wrigley
Xerox

Other Major Foreign Investors in Slovenia:
Alcan, Canada
AmBev, Brazil
Belisce, Croatia
Bramac International, Austria
Brig & Bergmeister, Austria
Chiorino, Italy
Citroen, France
Danfoss, Denmark
Debitel AG, Germany
EGO, Switzerland
E. Leclerc, France
Faurecia, France
GKN, United Kingdom
Grammer Automotive, Germany
Grupo Bonazzi, Italy
Hella, Germany
Henkel Central, Austria
Horizonte Enterprise Development, Netherlands
IBRD, United Kingdom
Imperial Tobacco, United Kingdom
Inexia AB, Sweden
ISS Central Europe, Austria
IHC Holland, Netherlands
KBC, Belgium
KM Moebl, Germany
Lafarge Perlomooger, Austria
Mannesann Rexroth, Germany

Messer Griesheim, Germany
Mobilcom, Austria
Nijaz Hastor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Novartis, Switzerland (Sandoz Group)
Novem, Germany
Pfledider, Germany
Podravka, Croatia
Renault, France
Rexel, France
Roto Frank AG, Germany
San Paolo IMI, Italy
Safilo, Italy
Siemens AG, Germany
Societe Generale, France
Sodexho Alliance, France
Spar, the Netherlands
STE Troyes, France
Styria Federn, Austria
TCG Unitech AG, Austria
UNI Credito, Italy
Vogt, Germany
Wieneberger, Austria

Contact Point at Post Return to top

U.S. Commercial Service
Mr. Matjaž Kavčič, Senior Economic Commercial Specialist
Phone: +386 1 200 5500
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E-mail: DoingBusinessinSlovenia@state.gov

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Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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The usual methods of payment in Slovenia include cash, bank debit cards, and major credit cards. Many vendors offer payment by installment, especially for goods valued over USD 100. In cooperation with a local bank, vendors also offer on-the-spot "mini-loans" for purchases from approximately USD 500 to USD 1,500.

Other types of payment, such as wire transfer, letter of credit, documentary collections, and factoring, are also used.

Local credit rating company I d.o.o. is Dun & Bradstreet's partner in Slovenia. It provides credit rating of local companies within a few days: http://www.idoo.si.

How Does the Banking System Operate

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The banking sector in Slovenia remains fairly rudimentary. The two largest banks – NLB and NKMB are state owed and banks are limited to a narrow range of traditional activities and have yet to engage in new consumer services, investment banking, and management of more complex financial instruments. Nevertheless, the financial statements of Slovenian banks are in compliance with international standards and audited by internationally recognized auditors. Because of the relative immaturity of the banking sector, identifying financing for domestic projects can be problematic. Banks typically seek 100 percent or more collateral in most cases. Currently, there are no American banks registered in Slovenia.

Slovenia has taken some important steps to liberalize its financial markets. A combination of market forces and changes in the Bank of Slovenia's regulations and national legislation are moving this sector in a more globally oriented direction. In the future, it will likely become easier and more transparent to make both portfolio and direct investments in Slovenia and to conduct many financial operations, including banking, securities brokering, and undertaking various credit transactions. The global economic crisis badly hit Slovenian banking system. In addition, the banking sector was heavily exposed to many management buyouts for key Slovenian companies. Almost all management buyouts failed in the past few years and increased the volume of non-performing loans. Consequently, the banking sector became more careful and caused a huge credit crunch pushing Slovenian industry in financial difficulties. New loans are very difficult to obtain from the major banks whose portfolios are weighted down by bad assets.

The referential interest rate in Slovenia is EURIBOR. Interest rates are usually expressed as 3, 6 or 12-month EURIBOR + margin. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is used as a measure of inflation.

Other sources of financing are available, although only for a limited range of activities. The U.S. Export-Import Bank provides medium-term and long-term loans and guarantees, and OPIC offers loan guarantees and direct loans. The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the International Finance Corporation are involved in funding large infrastructure projects, while the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) provides financing for banking sector privatization as well as financing for the privatization of other sectors.

In July 1999, the Slovenian Export Corporation (SEC) and the U.S. Export-Import Bank signed a memorandum on cooperation in financing, insuring, and reinsuring exports to Southeast European countries.

Foreign-Exchange Controls

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Slovenia introduced the Euro as a national currency in January 2007. The Slovenian Central Bank is a member of European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt, Germany. The Slovenian Central Bank does not operate independently. As a member of the ECB, Slovenia operates under the guidelines of the EDB and follows all directives issued by ECB.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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Currently, there are no U.S. banks in Slovenia.

There are 18 banks in Slovenia. Larger correspondent banks are:

Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana
Trg republike 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Tel +386 1 476 3900
Email: info@nlb.si
Web: www.nlb.si

Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor d.d.
Vita Kraigherja 4, 2502 Maribor, Slovenia
Tel. +386 2 229 2290
Email: info@nkbm.si
Web: www.nkbm.si

SKB Banka d.d.
Ajdovscina 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Tel: +386 1 471 5555
Email: info@skb.si
Web: www.skb.si

Banka Koper d.d.
Pristaniška ulica 14, 6502 Koper, Slovenia
Tel +386 5 66 61 000 Email: info@banka-koper.si
Web: www.banka-koper.si

List of all banks in Slovenia: http://www.zbs-giz.si/en/zdruzenje-bank.asp?StructureId=530

Project Financing Return to top

Project financing is slowly developing as a form of financing larger scale (mostly construction) projects. Slovenia is lagging significantly behind the EU average as far as project financing of public infrastructure is concerned. Usually, public infrastructure projects come with state financial guarantees to the contractors, which is part of the reason for undeveloped project financing. Another reason for this situation is lack of public private partnerships (PPP), which often drive project financing in other countries. Involvement of private capital in public infrastructure projects in Slovenia is very rare.

Project financing for the private sector is somewhat more evolved. Slovene banks offer project financing services for construction and development projects. Under this program, the banks offer up to 70 percent financing (30 percent of the project cost is usually required from the investor’s own sources). The banks also offer (in some cases require) advisory services pertaining to Slovene regulations on building and sales of real estate as well as transfer of ownership of any mortgaged real estate. For transparency reasons, banks often require investors to establish a separate company and bank account that will manage the project and through which all cash flows pertaining to the project are funneled. As collateral, the bank usually requires a mortgage on the real estate being developed.

EU financial assistance programs provide a wide array of grants, loans, loan guarantees and co-financing for feasibility studies and infrastructure projects in a number of key sectors (e.g., environmental, transportation, energy, telecommunications, tourism, public health). From a commercial perspective, these initiatives create significant market opportunities for U.S. businesses, U.S.-based suppliers, and subcontractors.

The EU supports projects within its member states, as well as EU-wide "economic integration" projects that cross both internal and external EU borders. In addition, the EU provides assistance to accession countries in Eastern and Southern Europe, Iceland and Turkey, as well as some of the former Soviet republics.

The European Union provides project financing through grants from the European Commission and loans from the European Investment Bank. Grants from the Structural Funds are distributed through the member states’ national and regional authorities, and are only available for projects in the 28 EU member states. All grants for projects in non-EU countries are managed through the EuropeAid Cooperation agency in conjunction with various departments, called "Directorates-General."

The CSEU Tenders Database

The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union offers a tool on its website to help U.S.-based companies identify European public procurement opportunities. The database features all current public procurement tenders issued by all national and regional public authorities in the 28 member states of the European Union, plus four other European countries, and that are open to U.S.-based firms under the terms of the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) implemented in 1995. The database is updated twice weekly and is easy to Use with a range of search options, including approximately 20 Industry sectors. The database also contains tenders for public procurement contracts relating to structural funds. Readers may access the database at
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/index.asp

EU Structural Funds

The EU Structural Funds, including the European Regional Development Fund, were created in 1975 to assist economically depressed regions of the European Union that required industrial restructuring. The EU earmarked EUR 308 billion for projects under the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund programs for the 2007-2013 period for the EU-28. In addition to funding economic development projects proposed by member states or local authorities, EU Structural Funds also support specialized projects promoting EU socioeconomic objectives. Member states negotiate regional and "sectoral" programs with officials from the regional policy Directorate-General at the . For information on approved programs that will result in future project proposals, please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/index_en.htm

For projects financed through the Structural Funds, member state officials are the key decision-makers. They assess the needs of their country; investigate projects; evaluate bids; and award contracts. To become familiar with available financial support programs in the member states, it is advisable for would-be contractors to meet with local officials to discuss local needs.

Tenders issued by member states' public contracting authorities for projects supported by EU grants are subject to EU public procurement legislation if they meet the EU minimum contract value requirement for the eligible sector. Below this threshold, tender procedures are subject to national procurement legislation. There are no overt prohibitions against the participation of U.S. companies, either as developers or concessionaires of projects supported partially by the Structural Funds, or as bidders on subsequent public tenders related to such projects, but it is advisable to team up with a local partner. All Structural Fund projects are co-financed by national authorities and most may also qualify for a loan from the European Investment Bank. The private sector is also involved in project financing. For more information on these programs, please see the market research section on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/index.asp

The Cohesion Fund

The Cohesion Fund is another instrument of EU structural policy. Its EUR 352 billion (2014-2020) budget seeks to improve cohesion within the EU by funding transport infrastructure and environmental projects in Portugal, Spain, Greece and the thirteen new (since 2004) EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe. These projects are generally co-financed by national authorities, the European Investment Bank, and

the private sector. Link:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/cohesion/index_en.cfm

Other EU Grants for Member States
Another set of sector-specific grants offers assistance to EU member states in the fields of science, technology, communications, energy, environmental protection, education, training and research. Tenders related to these grants are posted on the various websites of the directorates-generals of the European Commission. Conditions for participation are strict and participation is usually restricted to EU firms or tied to EU content. Information pertaining to each of these programs can be found on:
http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm

External Assistance Grants
The EuropeAid Cooperation Office is the European Commission agency in charge of managing the EU's external aid programs. This agency is responsible for the management of the entire project cycle, from identification to evaluation, while the Directorates-General in charge of External Relations and Development, are responsible for the drafting of multi-annual programs. The EuropeAid website offers extensive information on the range of grant programs, the kind of projects that are eligible, as well as manuals to help interested parties understand the relevant contract law. However, participation to calls for tender for contracts financed by EuropeAid is reserved for enterprises located in the EU member states and requires that the products used to respond to these projects are manufactured in the EU or in the aid recipient country. But consultants of U.S. nationality employed by a European firm are allowed to form part of a bidding team. European subsidiaries of U.S. firms are eligible to participate in these calls for tender. Link:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

All tenders related to EU-funded programs outside the territory of the European Union (including the accession countries) are located on the EuropeAid Cooperation Office website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/index_en.htm

Two new sets of programs have been approved for the financing period 2014-2020. The EU provides specific Pre-Accession financial assistance to the accession candidate countries that seek to join the EU through the "Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance" (IPA). Also, the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will provide assistance to countries that are the Southern Mediterranean and Eastern neighbors of the EU.

IPA replaces the following programs: PHARE (Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy), ISPA (Instrument for Structural Pre-Accession financing transport and environment projects), SAPARD (projects in the agriculture sector), CARDS (aid to southern Balkans) and the Turkey Facility Fund. IPA focuses on priorities linked to the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* (the body of European Union law that must be adopted by accession candidate countries as a precondition to accession), i.e., building up the administrative and institutional capacities and financing investments designed to help them comply with European Commission law. IPA will also finance projects destined to countries that are potential candidate countries, especially in the Balkans. The budget of IPA II for 2014-2020 is €11.6 billionLinks:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/index_en.htm

ENPI: replaces the former TACIS and MEDA programs. The European Neighborhood Policy program covers the EU's neighbors to the east and along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean i.e. Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. ENPI budget is €11.9 billion for 2007-2013.
http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

Loans from the European Investment Bank

Headquartered in Luxembourg, the European Investment Bank (EIB) is the financing arm of the European Union. Since its creation in 1958, the EIB has been a key player in building Europe. As the EIB's lending practices evolved over the years, it became highly competent in assessing, reviewing and monitoring projects. As a non-profit banking institution, the EIB offers cost-competitive, long-term lending in Europe. Best known for its project financial and economic analysis, the Bank makes loans to both private and public EU-based borrowers for projects in all sectors of the economy, such as telecommunications, transport, energy infrastructure and environment.

While the EIB mostly funds projects within the EU, it lends outside the EU as well (e.g., in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe; Latin America; and Pacific and Caribbean states). In 2013, the EIB approved loans for projects worth EUR 21.2 billion, of which around 8 percent was approved for projects outside the EU. The EIB also plays a key role in supporting EU enlargement with loans used to finance improvements in infrastructure, research and industrial manufacturing to help those countries prepare for eventual EU membership.

Projects financed by the EIB must contribute to the socioeconomic objectives set out by the European Union, such as fostering the development of less favored regions; improving European transport and telecommunication infrastructure; protecting the environment; supporting the activities of SMEs; assisting urban renewal; and, generally promoting growth, competitiveness and employment in Europe. The EIB has created a list of projects to be considered for approval and posted the list on its website. As such, the EIB website is a source of intelligence on upcoming tenders related to EIB-financed projects: http://www.eib.org/projects/pipeline/index.htm

The EIB presents attractive business opportunities to U.S. businesses. EIB lending rates are lower than most other commercial rates. Like all EIB customers, however, U.S. firms must apply the loan proceeds to a project that contributes to the European objectives cited above.

The U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels has developed a database to help U.S.-based companies bid on EIB public procurement contracts in non-EU countries. The EIB-financed contracts that are open to U.S.-based companies are featured in this database. All the tenders in this database are extracted from the EU's Official Journal. The EIB database contains on average 50 to 100 tenders and is updated twice per week.Link:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/index.asp

Web Resources Return to top

EU websites:
Future project proposals:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm.

The EU regional policies, the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

EU Grants and Loans index: http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm
EuropeAid Co-operation Office: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm
IPA: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/index_en.htm

The European Investment Bank: http://www.eib.org

EIB-financed projects: http://www.eib.org/projects/index.htm?lang=-en.

U.S. websites:
CSEU Tender Database:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/index.asp

Market research section on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU:
http://export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp

European Union Tenders Database:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/

Export-Import Bank of the United States: http://www.exim.gov

Country Limitation Schedule: http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

OPIC: http://www.opic.gov

Trade and Development Agency: http://www.tda.gov/

SBA's Office of International Trade: http://www.sba.gov/oit/

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ccc/default.htm

U.S. Agency for International Development: http://www.usaid.gov

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Chapter 8: Business Travel

Business Customs

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Slovenian business managers apply market-based, Western-style economic philosophies and customs. The management style in Slovenia tends to concentrate decision-making at the senior levels. The delegation of authority in companies is relatively poor. In principle, a negotiation should not be considered concluded until confirmed by the general manager or a clearly acknowledged decision maker. Slovenes place a premium on personal contacts and correspondence, and visits play significant roles in conducting business. Clarity and continuity in communication are important.

Travel Advisory

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No travel advisories have been issued for Slovenia. More information on travel to Slovenia is available at http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/slovenia.html

Visa Requirements

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Slovenia is a party to the Schengen Agreement. As such, U.S. citizens do not need a visa for business or tourist stays up to 90 days in a six-month period. (Note: The 90 day timeline starts on the date of first entry into the Schengen Zone.) For other types of travel, a residence permit must be acquired at a Slovene Embassy or Consulate.

For American citizens residing in the United States, an application for the initial residence permit should be filed at the Slovene Embassy in Washington DC or the Consulate in Cleveland. For American citizens residing outside the U.S., the application may be filed at the Slovene Embassy with jurisdiction over the individual's country of residence.

More information is available on the website of the Ministry of Interior at: http://www.mnz.gov.si/en/services/slovenia_your_new_country/residence_permit_for_th

e_third_country_national/temporary_residence_permit/ or
http://www.infotujci.si/index.php?setLang=EN&t=&id=1

For additional details on the entry and visa requirements for Slovenia as well as additional information for travelers, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information page for Slovenia. Travelers should also refer to the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana's website and U.S. citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/

http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/consular2.html

Telecommunications

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Slovenia has efficient postal and telephone services. Fax machines and email communication is widely used. Local telephone calling card services are not available in-country and long-distance charges tend to be high, even by European standards. In many areas, tone-dialing has become more common than pulse telephone lines.

The dialing code for Slovenia is 386, followed by the appropriate area code: Ljubljana (1), Maribor (2), Celje (3), Kranj (4), Nova Gorica (5), and Novo mesto (7) followed by a seven-digit telephone number. Codes for GSM mobile phones are 30, 31, 40, 41, 51, 70. When dialed within Slovenia, the codes are 030, 031, 040, 041, 051, and 070 followed by a six-digit telephone number. To dial internationally from Slovenia, you must dial 00 plus the country code.

Mobile telephony is widespread. Every business person has a mobile phone and many companies also have a general (reception/information desk) mobile number, because calling from a mobile phone to a stationary line is substantially more expensive than calling mobile-to-mobile phone. There are three major service providers for mobile telephones in Slovenia: Telekom Slovenije, Si.mobil, and Tušmobil. Each company offers a range of services and packages, and it is recommended to compare tariffs and conditions carefully before entering into a contract.

Directory assistance is 1188.

Transportation

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Ljubljana is easily accessible by air. Joze Pucnik Airport is an international airport located 27 kilometers (approx. 17 miles) outside of Ljubljana, the capital city. The airport is serviced by the national carrier, Adria Airways (a Star Alliance member), as well as other international airlines including AirSERBIA, Air France, Finnair, Montenegro Airlines, Lufthansa Cargo, Turkish Airlines, EasyJet and Wizzair. (More info on Airport Ljubljana at http://www.lju-airport.si/eng/default.asp)

There are other airports in the general vicinity of Slovenia. The distance by car is listed in parentheses.

Graz, Austria (45 minutes to Maribor)
Venice, Italy (2.5 hours to Ljubljana)
Vienna, Austria (3 hours to Maribor)
Trieste, Italy (1.5 hours to Ljubljana)
Zagreb, Croatia (2 hours to Ljubljana)
Klagenfurt, Austria (1 hour to Maribor)

Slovenia's transportation system is very good. Highways connect most cities and numerous border crossings into neighboring countries are easily accessible. Air travel within Slovenia is not available, but is also not necessary given the small size of the country. Major cities in Slovenia have efficient public transportation systems, relying mainly on buses and taxis. Bus fares in Ljubljana must be paid with a prepaid card called "Urbana", which can be purchased at newspaper stands or post offices. Taxi service is readily available at designated taxi stands or can be requested by telephone. While taxis are metered, taxi companies have the right to set their own rates, which can vary widely. Be sure to check the posted rate before using a taxi. It is usually cheaper to call a cab than to take a cab waiting at a hotel or a stand.

On December 21, 2007 Slovenia joined the Schengen zone. Land border check points with Austria, Italy and Hungary were removed. Slovenia implemented Schengen for air travel in March 2008. With Croatian accession to the EU on July 1, 2013, the Slovenian-Croatian border is no longer the external border of the EU customs territory. This means that the movement of goods across the Slovenian-Croatian border is now free and no customs formalities are required.

Language

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The official language in Slovenia is Slovene, a southern Slavic language with some resemblance to Croatian and Serbian. Slovene is written in the standard Roman alphabet with a few additional letters. Most businessmen in Slovenia speak at least one foreign language, English being the most common. German is also useful in some parts of the country and Italian is sometimes spoken in the Italian border area. When necessary, translators and interpreters can be hired at the Slovene Association of Conference Interpreters (phone: +386(0)41-648-416, email: zkts@zkts.si)

The EU has 24 official and working languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Gaelic, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, Swedish.

Health

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There is no immunization or special health concerns related to Slovenia.

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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Local time is GMT + 1

Daylight savings time is between March 31 and October 27, 2014.
To check local time at this moment, click on http://www.export.gov/slovenia/index.asp

Business Hours
Typical business operating hours in Slovenia are Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 4 PM.

Date	**Day**	**Holiday**	**Country**
January 1	Monday	New Year's Day	U.S./Slovenia
January 20	Monday	Martin Luther King Day	U.S.
February 8	Saturday	Slovenian Culture Day	Slovenia
February 17	Monday	Washington's Birthday/ President's Day	U.S.
April 20 & 21	Sun/Mon	Easter, Easter Monday	Slovenia
April 27	Sunday	Resistance Day	Slovenia
May 1 & 2	Thu/Fri	Labor Day	Slovenia
May 26	Monday	Memorial Day	U.S.
June 25	Wednesday	Proclamation Day	Slovenia
July 4	Friday	Independence Day	U.S.
August 15	Friday	Assumption Day	Slovenia
September 1	Monday	Labor Day	U.S.
October 13	Monday	Columbus Day	U.S.
October 31	Friday	Reformation Day	Slovenia
November 1	Saturday	Remembrance Day	Slovenia
November 11	Tuesday	Veterans Day	U.S.
November 27	Thursday	Thanksgiving	U.S
December 25	Thursday	Christmas Day	U.S./Slovenia
December 26	Friday	Independence Day	Slovenia

Please note that Slovenian business and agencies only observe Slovenian holidays.

Business travelers to the European Union seeking appointments with officials in the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium, should contact the Commercial Service in advance. The Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union can be reached by telephone at +32-2 811-4817, fax at +32-2 811-5151, or e-mail at Office.BrusselsEC@trade.gov. A current directory of staff and locations worldwide may be accessed on the Commercial Service website http://www.export.gov/

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For information on this topic please consult the Commerce Department's Country Commercial Guides on EU member states: EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides.

Alternatively, search the Commerce Department's Market Research Library, available from: http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp under Country and Industry Market Reports.

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Market Research Library
http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp

EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides:
EU Member States' Country Commercial Guides

State Department Visa Website
http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union General E-mail Address
brussels.ec.office.box@trade.gov

Current directory of Commercial Service staff and locations worldwide
http://www.export.gov/

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research and Trade Events

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U.S. and Country Contacts

Embassy of the United States of America

Ambassador– Joseph Mussomeli
David Burger, Deputy Chief of Mission

Joshua Harris, Political/Economic/Commercial Chief
Matjaz Kavcic, Senior Economic/Commercial Specialist
Mirjana Rabic, Economic/Commercial Specialist
Prešernova ulica 31, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-200-5500
Fax: +386-1-200-55-29, 200-5555
Web: http://slovenia.usembassy.gov/; http://export.gov/slovenia/

U.S. Department of Commerce
The Advocacy Center
14th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW, Rm. 3814-A
Washington, DC 20230
Office No.: (202) 482-3896
Fax No.: (202) 482-3508

U.S. Department of Commerce
Adam G. Klein, Desk Officer for Slovenia
Washington, DC 20230
Tel: (202) 482-0903 Fax: (202) 482-4505
Email: Adam.Klein@trade.gov

Business Associations

American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia
Ms. Ajsa Vodnik, Executive Director
Dunajska cesta 156, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-8 205-1351
Fax: +386-1 564-7204
E-mail: office@amcham.si
Web: http://www.amcham.si/en-us/

SPIRIT SLOVENIA – Public Agency for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Development, Investment and Tourism
Mr. Tomaz Klemenc, Acting Director
Dimiceva ulica 13, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386- 1-589-8550
Fax: +386- 1-589-8560
Email: info@spiritslovenia.si
Web: http://www.spiritslovenia.si/en

Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr. Samo Hribar Milic, President
Dimiceva 13, 1504 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-589-8000
Fax: +386-1-589-8100
Email: info@gzs.si
Web: http://www.gzs.si/eng/

Slovene Government

Bank of Slovenia
Governor Bostjan Jazbec
Slovenska 35, 1505 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-471-9000
Fax: +386-1-251-5516
Web: https://www.bsi.si/en/

Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington D.C.
Ambassador Bozo Cerar
2410 California Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
Phone: (202) 386-6601
Fax: (202) 386-6633
E-mail: vwa@gov.si
Web: http://washington.embassy.si/

Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development
Dr. Bostjan Vasle, Director
Gregorciceva 27, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-478-1012
Fax: +386-1-478-1070
Email: gp.umar@gov.si
Web: http://www.umar.gov.si/en

Ljubljana Stock Exchange
Mr. Andrej Sketa, President of the Management Board
Slovenska 56, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-471-0211
Fax: +386-1-471-0213
Email: info@ljse.si
Web: http://www.ljse.si/cgi-bin/jve.cgi?doc=1468

Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment
Mr. Dejan Zidan, Minister
Dunajska 22, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-478-9000
Fax: +386-1-478-9021
Email: gp.mko@gov.si
Web: http://www.mko.gov.si/en/

The Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary and Plant Protection
Dr. Vida Cadonic Spelic, General Director
Dunajska 22, 1000 Ljubljana
Phone: + 386-1-300 -1300
Fax: +386-1-300-1356
Email: gp.uvhvvr@gov.si
Web: http://www.uvhvvr.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Defense
Roman Jakic, Minister
Vojkova 55, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-471-2211
Fax: +386-1-471-2978
Email: glavna.pisarna@mors.si
Web: http://www.mo.gov.si/en

Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
Mr. Metod Dragonja, Minister
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Phone: +386-1-400-3311
Fax: +386-1-400-1031
Email: gp.mgrt@gov.si
Web: http://www.mg.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport
Dr. Jernej Pikalo, Minister
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Phone: +386-1-400-5400
Fax: +386-1-400-5329
Email: gp.mizs@gov.si
Web: http://www.mss.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning
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Email: gp.mzip@gov.si
Web: http://www.mzip.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Finance
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Phone: +386-1-369-5200
Fax: +386-1-369-6659
Email: gp.mf@gov.si
Web: http://www.mf.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Karl Erjavec, Minister
Presernova 25, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-478-2000
Fax: +386-1-478-2340
Email: info.mzz@gov.si
Web site: http://www.mzz.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Health
Ms. Alenka Bratušek, Acting Minister
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Fax: +386-1-478-6058
Email: gp.mz@gov.si
Web: http://www.mz.gov.si/en/

Ministry of the Interior
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Web: http://www.mnz.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Justice
Dr. Senko Plicanic, Minister
Zupanciceva 3, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-369-5342
Fax: +386-1-369-5783
Email: gp.mp@gov.si
Web: http://www.mp.gov.si/en/

Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs
Dr. Anja Kopac, Minister
Kotnikova 28, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-369-7700
Fax: +386-1-369-7832
Email: gp.mddsz@gov.si
Web: http://www.mddsz.gov.si/en/

National Customs Administration
Mr. Rajko Skubic, Director General
Smartinska 55, 1523 Ljubljana

Phone: +386-1-478-3800
Fax: +386-1-478-3900
Email: carina@gov.si
Web: http://carina.gov.si/index.htm

Competition Protection Agency
Mr. Andrej Krasek, Director
Dunajska 58, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-478-3597
Fax: +386-1-478-3608
Email: gp.avk@gov.si
Web: http://www.varstvo-konkurence.si/en/

Office for Protection of Intellectual Property (SIPO)
Vesna Stankovic Juricic, Director
Kotnikova 6, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-620-3100
Fax: +386-1-620-3111
Email: sipo@uil-sipo.si
Web: http://www.uil-sipo.si/sipo/office/tools/home/

Slovenian Export and Development Bank (SID Bank)
Mr. Sibil Svilan, President
Josipine Turnograjske 6, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-200-7500
Fax: +386-1-200-7575
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Web: http://www.sid.si/home

Slovenian Institute for Standardization (SIST)
Ms. Marjetka Strle Vidali, Director
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Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
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Deloitte revizija d.o.o. (Auditing firm)
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Web: http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_SI/si/index.htm?lgtog=lgtog

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Web: http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_SI/si/index.htm?lgtog=lgtog

KPMG Slovenija d.o.o. (Audit and Tax Advisory Service)
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Web: http://www.kpmg.com/si/en/Pages/default.aspx

United States Department of Commerce - Contacts at the U.S. Mission to the EU

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Deputy Senior Commercial Officer
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Commercial Attaché (including standards)
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NOAA Fisheries Representative
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United States Department of Agriculture - Contacts at the U.S. Mission to the EU**:**

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B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
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E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov
Website: http://www.usda-eu.org/

Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs
Mr. Maurice House
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maurice.house@fas.usda.gov

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Fax: +32-2-295-0138 (also 295-0139 and 295-0140)
Websites: http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm (European Commission)
http://eeas.europa.eu/us/index_en.htm (EU-U.S. relations)

Delegation of the European Commission to the United States
2175 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
Tel: (202) 862-9500
Fax: (202) 429-1766
Website: http://www.eurunion.org/

EFTA – European Free Trade Association
Rue Joseph II, 12-16
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-286-1711
Fax: +32-2-286-1750
Website: http://www.efta.int/

For Information on Customs-related Matters within the European Union

Taxation and Customs Union Directorate General
European Commission
Mr. Heinz Zourek, Director General
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
Tel: +32-2-295-4376
Fax: +32-2-296-9046
Website: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/index_en.htm

Standards Contacts

National Centers for Standards and Certification Information (NCSCI)
National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST)
100 Bureau Dr.
Mail Stop 2100
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899
Tel: (301) 975-4040
Fax: (301) 926-1559
Email: ncsci@nist.gov
Website: http://www.nist.gov/director/sco/ncsci/

CEN – European Committee for Standardization
Avenue Marnix 17
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-550-0811
Fax: +32-2-550-0819
Website: http://www.cen.eu/

CENELEC – European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
Avenue Marnix 17
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-519-6871
Fax: +32-2-519-6919
Website: http://www.cenelec.eu/

ETSI - European Telecommunications Standards Institute
Route des Lucioles 650
F-06921 Sophia Antipolis Cedex, France
Tel: +33 4 92 94 42 00
Fax: +33 4 93 65 47 16
Website: http://www.etsi.org/

Enterprise and Industry Directorate General
European Commission
Avenue d'Auderghem 45
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-299-5672
Fax: +32-2-299-1675
Website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/index_en.htm

NORMAPME – European Office of Crafts Trades and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for Standardisation
Rue Jacques de Lalaing 4
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-282-0530
Fax: +32-2-282-0535
Website: http://www.normapme.com/

ANEC - European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation
Avenue de Tervueren 32, Box 27
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-743-2470
Fax: +32-2-706-5430
Website: http:/www.anec.org

ECOS – European Environmental Citizens Organization for Standardisation
Rue d'Edimbourg 26
B-1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-894-4668
Fax: +32-2-894-4610
Website: http://www.ecostandard.org/

EOTA – European Organization for Technical Approvals (for construction products)
Avenue des Arts 40
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-502-6900
Fax: +32-2-502-3814
Website: http://www.eota.be/

Private Sector Associations

AmchamEU
53 Avenue des Arts
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-513-6892
Fax: +32-2-513-7928
Website: http://www.amchameu.eu/

Business Europe
Avenue de Cortenbergh 168
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32-2-237-6511
Fax: +32-2-231-1445
Website: www.businesseurope.eu

Trans-Atlantic Business Council (TABC) – EU Office
Avenue de Cortenbergh 168
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-514-0501
Website: http://transatlanticbusiness.org/

Trans-Atlantic Business Council (TABC) – U.S. Office
919 18th Street NW Suite 220
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 828-9104
Fax: (202) 828-9106
Website: http://transatlanticbusiness.org/

TechAmerica Europe
Rue de Namur 16
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Website: http://www.techamerica.org/europe

The European Institute
1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 220
Washington DC, 20036
Tel: (202) 895-1670
Fax: (202) 362-1088
Website: http://www.europeaninstitute.org/

Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
1 Place du Congres
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-229-3911
Fax: +32-2-219-4151
Website: http://www.ceps.eu/

The European Policy Centre
Residence Palace
155 Rue de la Loi
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-231-0340
Fax: +32-2-231-0704
Website: http://www.epc.eu/

European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT)
Place des Carabiniers 18a
B-1030 Brussels
Tel: +32-2-534-3100
Fax: +32-2-534-7348
Website: http://www.ert.eu/

The Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN)
Rue Froissart 115, 1st floor
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-230-6149
Fax: +32-2-230-5896
Website: http://www.tpnonline.org/

Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)
Rue d'Egmont 11
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-511-3470
Fax: +32-2-511-6770
Website: http://www.tepsa.be/

Key EU-related websites

For general information on the European Union

The EU's portal website
http://www.europa.eu/

Resource for EU news, policy positions and actors
http://www.euractiv.com/

A to Z index of European Union websites
http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euindex.htm

For information on topics related to doing business in the European Union

EU's "One Stop Internet Shop for Business" (EU funds, technical standards, intellectual property law, and free access to public procurement tender notices via the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) database):
http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm

EU Member State Chambers of Commerce in the U.S.
http://www.eurunion.org/states/doingbizweu.htm

EU market access database (information on tariffs and other trade information)
http://madb.europa.eu/

EURLEX – Access to EU law
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm

CORDIS – Community Research and Development Information Service (EU research and innovation website)
http://cordis.europa.eu/

European Commission Statistical Office (Eurostat)
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/

EU Office of Official Publications

http://publications.europa.eu/

EU official website on the euro
http://ec.europa.eu/euro/index_en.html

European Central Bank, Frankfurt
http://www.ecb.int/

European Investment Bank, Luxembourg
http://www.eib.org/

Council of the European Union
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/

European Parliament
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/

European Court of Justice
http://curia.europa.eu/

EU Who is Who – The Official Directory of the European Union
http://europa.eu/whoiswho/public/

Market Research Return to top

To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, and is free.

Companies that perform market research in Slovenia:

ACNielsen d.o.o.
Simon Staric, Managing Director
Smartinska cesta 106, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1- 600-5200
Fax: +386-1- 600-5201
Email: vesna.druzanovic@nielsen.com
Web: http://en-si.nielsen.com/

RM PLUS d.o.o.
Branko Znuderi, Managing Director
Glavni trg 19a, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia
Phone: +386-2-234-2521
Fax: +386-2-252-3783
Email: info@rmplus.si
Web: http://www.rmplus.si

FRONTAL, d.o.o., Druzba za komunikacijski management

Kristjan Magdic, Director
Ciril-Metodova 34, 9000 Murska Sobota, Slovenia
Phone: +386-2-530-8910
Faks: +386-2-530-8911
Email: frontal@frontal.si
Web: http://www.frontal.si

Fit Media d.o.o.
Vanesa Canji, Director
Kidričeva 25, 3000 Celje, Slovenia
Phone: +386-3-426-6700
Fax: +386-3-426-6702
Email: info@fitmedia.si
Web: http://www.fitmedia.si

GFK Slovenija d.o.o.
Peter Damisch, Director
Verovškova 55a, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-472-0300
Fax: +386-1-472-0334
Email: info-si@gfk.com
Web: http://www.gfk.com/Countries/Europe/Pages/slovenia.aspx

PRISTOP d.o.o.
Primoz Pusar , CEO
Trubarjeva 79, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-239-1200
Fax: +386-1-239-1210
Email: pristop@pristop.si
Web: http://www.pristop.si/en

AGENCIJA NET d.o.o.
Robova 6, 1360 Vrhnika, Slovenia
Phone: +386-1-750-2081
Fax: +386-1-750-2082
Email: info@agencijanet.si
Web: http://www.agencijanet.si

Trade Events Return to top

Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events.

http://www.export.gov/tradeevents/index.asp

For a listing of all fairs in 2014 in Slovenia, visit this web site:
http://www.sloveniapartner.eu/business-environment/trade-fairs-in-slovenia/

Fair grounds that organize trade shows:

- Ljubljana Fair Grounds: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/
  List of events: http://www.ljubljanafair.com/fairs/

- Celje Fair grounds: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en
  List of events: http://www.ce-sejem.si/en/fairs/

- Portoroz: http://www.internautica.net/

Gornja Ragdona: http://www.pomurski-sejem.si/ang-kzs/kzs.htm

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The President's National Export Initiative marshals Federal agencies to **prepare U.S. companies to export successfully**, **connect them with trade opportunities** and **support them once they do have exporting opportunities**.

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help U.S. exporters, particularly small and medium sized businesses, successfully expand exports to new markets. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers
- Gain access to the full range of U.S. government trade promotion agencies and their services, including export training and potential trade financing sources

To learn more about the Federal Government's trade promotion resources for new and experienced exporters, please click on the following link: www.export.gov

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers to U.S. exporters, please click on the following link: (Insert link to Products and Services section of local buyusa.gov website here.)

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information can also contact the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRAD(E).**

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