U.S. Country Commercial Guides

Slovenia

2020

U.S. Department of Commerce | International Trade Administration

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Doing Business in Slovenia

Market Overview

Strategically located between Central Europe and the Western Balkans, with excellent infrastructure and a well-educated labor force, Slovenia is an attractive trade and investment partner for companies across a wide range of sectors. On gaining independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Slovenia rapidly registered dramatic gains in per capita and aggregate wealth, established a stable and well-functioning democracy, and significantly raised Slovenians' standard of living. Slovenia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) in 2004, the Eurozone and the Schengen Zone in 2007, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Europe (OECD) in 2010. In recent years, Slovenia's economic growth has outpaced that of most other EU member states, and it has enjoyed rising incomes, growing domestic consumption, falling unemployment, low inflation rates, and burgeoning consumer confidence. Slovenia's GDP grew by an estimated 2.4 percent to EUR 48 billion in 2019, and while the economy is expected to contract by six to eight percent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic forecasters predict a return to economic growth in 2021. With a small domestic market of just over two million people, Slovenia's economy is heavily dependent on foreign trade and susceptible to international price and currency fluctuations and economic conditions among its larger trading partners.

Slovenia is not a major trading partner for the United States, accounting for less than 0.1 percent of U.S. exports (USD 344.6 million) and less than 0.1 percent of U.S. imports (USD 963.9 million) in 2019. Seventy-five percent of Slovenia's foreign trade is with the EU, primarily Germany, Italy, Austria, Croatia, and France. Slovenia also has extensive trade ties with non-EU Western Balkans and Eastern European countries. Outside the EU, Serbia and Russia are Slovenia's largest export markets, and China its most important import partner. U.S. exports to Slovenia consist primarily of mineral fuels and oils, nuclear reactor components, mechanical appliances, measuring equipment, and machinery, while Slovenia exports pharmaceuticals, electrical machinery and equipment, steel, glass, and glass products to the United States. The United States was Slovenia's 14^{th} largest export market and eighth largest source of imports in 2018.

Taking into account both direct and indirect investment, Bank of Slovenia data indicated U.S. companies accounted for almost ten percent of total inward foreign direct investment in 2018, with EUR 72 million (USD 81.5 million) invested directly and an additional EUR 1.41 billion (USD 1.65 billion) invested indirectly through U.S. subsidiaries in other European countries. This combined investment of EUR 1.48 billion (USD 1.68 billion) placed the United States as Slovenia's third largest source of direct and indirect foreign investment, behind Austria (EUR 2.041 billion) and Germany (EUR 2.278 billion).

Market Challenges

More than 25 years after abandoning communism, Slovenia has yet to complete vital structural economic reforms and reduce state involvement in the economy, although recent governments have made progress by privatizing most of the banking sector. Many Slovenians remain resistant to privatization and foreign acquisitions of state-owned firms, despite general awareness of foreign direct investment's (FDI) importance to economic growth, job creation, and innovation. Potential investors in Slovenia still face significant challenges, including a lack of transparency in economic and commercial decision-making, time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, opaque public tender processes, and heavy tax and regulatory burdens. Key reforms, such as privatization, increased openness to foreign investment, more transparency in public procurement, pension reform, and business and investor-friendly changes to the labor and taxation code, would make Slovenia's economy more competitive and increase opportunities for trade and investment.

The workforce is highly skilled and educated, but relatively high social welfare and income taxes can make it expensive to hire new workers. Slovenia has taken positive steps to privatize some state-owned companies and implement limited tax reform, but many private sector contacts assess the pace of the reforms as too slow. Judicial backlogs sometimes prevent timely resolution of legal disputes, although a March 2018 European Commission assessment noted that the total backlog decreased by 13 percent in 2017 compared to 2016.

Market Opportunities

Several factors make Slovenia an attractive location for trade and investment. An established parliamentary democracy with stable legal and regulatory frameworks, Slovenia has excellent and fully-modernized communication and transportation infrastructure with a major port on the Adriatic Sea, offering easy access and proximity to Central European and Balkan markets. The government is in the early stages of constructing a second railway line from the Port of Koper to the inland town of Divača, significantly increasing its capacity to move goods into Central Europe. It has a well-educated and professional workforce with high levels of English language proficiency and a number of firms specialized in high-tech fields. As a member of the Schengen Area, the EU, and the Eurozone, Slovenia is well integrated into greater European and regional markets. Slovenia's banking sector is increasingly open, as the government sold most of its stake in Nova Ljubljanska Banka (NLB), Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor (NLB), and Abanka in recent years. Major growth industries include the high-tech sector, information and communication technology (ICT), energy, financial services, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and logistics/transport.

Market Entry Strategy

Slovenia is a small country where personal relationships are an asset to doing business. Finding a local partner and/or establishing a permanent presence have proven valuable strategies for entering the market. Increasingly, firms may demonstrate their seriousness about entering Slovenia's market through commitments to and evidence of corporate social responsibity. The government often offers financial incentives for investments, especially greenfield investments, that create jobs or transfer technology, assuming they meet certain criteria.

Additional information on doing business in Slovenia is available through the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia .

Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports and Investment

Energy

- **Overview:**

Roughly one-third of Slovenia's electricity comes from hydroelectric sources, one-third from thermal sources, and one-third from nuclear power (with non-hydro renewables constituting two percent of the total). Almost half of Slovenia's total energy consumption consists of imported petroleum purchased on global markets. Russia provides most of Slovenia's natural gas, which accounts for 12 percent of overall energy consumption. Slovenia uses approximately 0.8 billion cubic meters of gas annually.

The government approved a new energy strategy in February 2020 to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, support renewables, and increase efficiency, although a new government took over the following month and the National Assembly has not yet approved the strategy. The framework document envisions meeting EU objectives to reduce greenhouse gases by at least 80 percent by 2050 through improved energy efficiency, public awareness campaigns, developing new sustainable energy technologies and advanced energy systems, and transitioning away from fossil fuels toward low-carbon renewables such as solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear energy. However, the strategy failed to include specific recommendations or concrete proposals as to which energy options – coal, nuclear, natural gas, solar, hydro, etc. – should be developed to meet Slovenia's future energy needs consistent with its Paris Agreement commitments.

Slovenia is seeking to gradually transition to low-carbon energy sources by focusing on efficient energy consumption, increased use of renewable energy sources, and the development of active electricity-distribution networks. This strategy will likely envisage a strong continued reliance on nuclear energy and further development of hydroelectric power. Energy experts warn Slovenia's energy producers must optimize, digitalize, become more efficient, and develop products and services for export to meet its 2030 carbon emission goals, which are anticipated to cost between EUR 600 million and EUR 2.5 billion.

Increased hydroelectric power generation will likely be an important part of the government's energy policy. Plans include further upgrades of the upper stations on the Sava River and completing a chain of six new plants on the lower Sava. The government has invested in a series of hydropower plants since 2004 and recently announced construction of new hydropower plants on the middle Sava River, with expected investments of EUR 1.7 billion. There are also plans to upgrade three plants on the Drava River, and feasibility studies are underway for additional small hydroelectric power projects. Together with the new plants, these renovations will create an additional 470 MW of hydroelectric capacity by 2022.

Plans for conventional coal-fired thermal power generation are contingent on maintaining production at existing plant locations and building new facilities, primarily for combined heat and power generation. Investments will be required to improve pollution controls to meet environmental standards, increase rapid response and peaking capacity, and renovate control systems at existing plants. The government also plans construction of two gas-powered facilities, including a 60 MW unit in Sostanj. One new unit in Brestanica went online in 2018.

While the gas and oil markets have made progress toward privatization, electricity production remains largely in state hands. Holding Slovenske Elektrarne (HSE) owns and manages a series of electricity production plants, primarily hydropower. GEN Energija manages a nuclear plant as well as several hydropower units. GEN Energija has prepared tentative plans for a second nuclear production facility at the Krško nuclear power plant to provide 1,000-1,600 MW by 2030. However, any government decision on the timing of such an expansion will depend on energy needs, available financing, and public sentiment regarding nuclear energy. Despite Krško's recent lifecycle extension through 2043, forecasts show Slovenia will be unable to meet domestic energy production needs by 2025. Westinghouse supplies Krško's fuel rods, Urenco supplies its fuel, and in 2017 the U.S. firm Holtec won the contract to develop a dry cask nuclear waste storage facility.

Slovenia uses approximately 0.8 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually, accounting for about 11 percent of the country's energy consumption, most of which is based on a take-and-pay contract with Russia's Gazprom. The state-owned gas company Geoplin signed a five-year natural gas supply contract with Gazprom in 2018 to import 600 million cubic meters of Russian natural gas per year. Gas storage facilities are limited, however, with companies dependent on infrastructure in Austria and Croatia. Slovenia's natural gas infrastructure company Plinovodi hopes to work with Hungary's FGSZ to construct a new gas interconnector to link Hungary and Slovenia, a project the EU has designated as a Project of Common Interest and which qualifies for funding through the Connecting Europe Facility. Investment plans in the transmission and distribution system also 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 with Hungary. However, a lack of financial resources has postponed these projects.

Slovenia also plans to build three wind-operated power plants in the Primorska region, where the Bora wind could produce significant quantities of electrical power. Each of the three plants would consist of 150 wind-powered turbines. The government is currently in the midst of a lengthy approval process complicated by local community opposition efforts.

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
    - Fuels and lubricants (wholesale)
    - Motor fuels (retail)
    - Distribution of electricity, gas, heat, and hot water
    - Mining

- **Opportunities**

Slovenia increasingly imports power to meet growing domestic consumption and could face shortfalls in the near future, particularly in view of its limited financial resources and the long regulatory approval process required for new hydroelectric or nuclear capacity. Slovenia has an effective electricity grid and is pursuing opportunities to partner with neighboring countries to build and strengthen natural gas interconnections, as well as opportunities to increase access to and markets in Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and the Western Balkans. Slovenia's energy companies are active in developing innovative electricity transmission and distribution solutions, while the country's energy infrastructure is among the strongest in the region. Slovenia's electricity prices are among the lowest in Europe, providing the country's companies with important advantages over foreign competitors.

- **Resources**

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Pharmaceuticals

- **Overview**

Slovenia's pharmaceutical market is very competitive. Once dominated by two local domestic generic producers, Lek and Krka, the market is now increasingly open to competition from foreign competitors. Innovative drug producers enjoyed favorable market conditions in Slovenia until 2007, when the government decreased spending on pharmaceuticals. Since then, the government has changed its pharmaceutical purchase process, worsening the position of established pharmaceutical companies. According to the Slovenian National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia spent approximately EUR 530 million on pharmaceuticals in 2019. Each Slovenian spends an average of EUR 258 each year to purchase an average of 8.7 prescription medications.

The Ministry of Health is the primary actor in Slovenia's pharmaceutical market. The ministry develops health care policies, proposes the government's health care budget, and monitors spending in the national health care fund, with an eye toward keeping medical costs as low as possible. Slovenia has introduced therapeutic reference pricing schemes similar to those of other EU member states, which have made market conditions difficult for producers of brand-name pharmaceuticals.

Experts forecast seven percent annual growth for the pharmaceutical market over the next two years, despite downward pressure on certain therapeutic products. Almost three quarters of all pharmaceuticals approved for sale in Slovenia are imported, accounting for nearly 16 percent of total health care spending. Around 70 percent of health care spending is publicly financed, and international comparisons show that drug consumption in Slovenia is higher than EU average and growing by 1.5 percent per year. Increased life expectancies and the growth in private health care insurance are expected to have a positive impact on the market.

Slovenia's premier research institution, the Jozef Stefan Institute, is very involved in chemical and pharmaceutical research and development, including therapeutic nanotechnology and biotechnology products.

Unit: EUR millions	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Local Production	1.500	1.500	1.600	1.700
Total Exports	1.380	1.340	1.400	1.500
Total Imports	320	320	300	200
Imports from the US	240	220	220	200
Total Market Size	520	480	500	520
Exchange Rates	1.11	1.11	1.11	1.11

(Source: Statistical Office of Slovenia, National Institute of Public Health)

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
  - Drugs for cardiovascular illnesses
  - Branded products for cancer treatments
  - Pharmaceuticals for psychotherapy
  - AIDS medications
  - Vitamins
- **Opportunities**

The best prospects for American-made pharmaceutical companies are in the fields of cancer medications, cardiovascular medications, and bio-technologically-produced medications.

- **Resources**

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Medical Equipment

- **Overview**

As a result of limited and/or highly specialized domestic production, Slovenia's health care equipment market is dependent on imports from Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the United States. U.S. exporters account for between 15 and 20 percent of Slovenia's USD 450 million medical equipment market. The medical equipment market has grown over the last ten years, but the real potential lies ahead, as much of the medical equipment in Slovenia's public hospitals is outdated and expensive to maintain. Slovenia is currently considering how to restructure the health care sector, optimize its health care budget, and consolidate several public health agencies. The government has increased investments in specialized hospitals in recent years, including the Oncology Institute and the Pediatric Clinic, and there will likely be increased demand for innovative instruments and equipment in the years ahead.

The Ministry of Health is the main player in Slovenia's medical equipment market. The Ministry develops health care policies, proposes the government's health care budget and the sector's investment program, and monitors the work of state-owned hospitals and health care institutions. Due in part to fiscal problems with the national health account, the Ministry was forced in recent years to take over purchasing programs and centralize hospital tenders, resulting in increased public procurement transparency.

Some distributors of U.S.-made medical equipment have raised concerns over public procurement tender processes by hospitals that appear to favor some companies over others. In some cases, procurement tenders appear to be written in such a way as to favor one company's products over another's, or specifications are revised during the bid preparation phase to eliminate some companies from the tender.

Most dental services are private practices.

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

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
  - Diagnostic equipment
  - Scanners, CTI devices, magnetic resonance devices
  - Laboratory equipment

- **Opportunities**

The best opportunities in Slovenia's health care sector are for producers and distributors of diagnostic and imaging equipment as hospitals and clinics upgrade aging technology. Digital imaging and medical records management software also represent promising opportunities.

- **Resources**

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Logistics & Distribution

- **Overview**

Slovenia's geographical location at the intersection of the 5th and 10th Pan-European corridors makes 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 transshipment point, while Ljubljana's Jože Pučnik Airport, located in the center of the country, hosts a number of airway and land cargo logistics and transport companies. Operated by the German transport company Fraport, Jože Pučnik Airport has expanded its cargo and passenger terminal capacity and plans to develop a new intermodal center, including a railway connection, to improve distribution capacities. In 2019, 1.7 million passengers and 11.3 million tons of cargo passed through Jože Pučnik Airport, although that number is expected to decline in 2020 due to travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 crisis and the 2019 bankruptcy of Slovenia's national air carrier Adria. Two international logistics companies, UPS and DHL, also operate hubs at the airport. In addition to Jože Pučnik Airport, Maribor Airport mostly handles cargo transportation. Slovenia has approximately 2,500 companies in the logistics and distribution sector, with EUR 3.6 billion in turnover and EUR 1.6 billion in export sales.

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
  - Air cargo shipping
  - Ship cargo transport
  - Storing of goods
  - Maritime and inland logistics
  - Services at terminals
- **Opportunities**

Slovenia's investment promotion agency SPIRIT has promoted the country as a logistics hub for foreign companies interested in entering the EU market. One of the most important commercial ports in the Northern Adriatic, the Port of Koper features modern and flexible infrastructure and the shortest route for goods between Asia and Central Europe. In addition, nine business facilitation zones located throughout the country offer foreign business partners a chance for public-private partnership projects. Slovenia's Country Development Plan includes a thorough upgrade of railway networks in both the 5th and 6th European corridors, construction of a second railway line between the Port of Koper and Divača, and additional highway projects in the next few years, subject to funding. Slovenia has earmarked EUR 17 billion to improve logistics and transportation facilities through 2030 and has also adopted a transport development strategy, a national traffic development plan, and an alternative fuels strategy. The government is also encouraging further digitalization in transport and logistics to eliminate red tape and reduce costs.

Leading companies in the sector include:

- BTC, d.d.:
- Eurotek:
- Intereuropa:
- Airport Ljubljana:
- Luka Koper:
- Slovenske Železnice:

- **Resources:**

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Information & Communications Technology

- **Overview**

With more than 3,000 companies employing more than 20,000 people, Slovenia's information and communications technology (ICT) sector presents numerous opportunities for investment and partnerships. Slovenia is home to well-developed IT companies with established services and R&D capability. Information systems outsourcing has grown to become the largest market in Slovenia, followed by systems integration and hardware support. IT services sales in 2019 were strongest in the finance, insurance industry, auto-cluster sector, retail trade, and government sectors. There are also vibrant start-up and entrepreneurial communities with young companies seeking investment and joint venture opportunities. Many start-up companies are concentrated in technology parks such as Technology Park Brdo-Ljubljana.

In 2018, Slovenian startups with at least one Slovenian founding member raised EUR 324 million, mostly from venture capital (EUR 240 million) followed by Slovenian state funds, crowdfunding, angels, and accelerators. Most investment start-up funds originated in the EU, United States, Slovenia, and China. The IT sector is expected to grow more slowly in 2020, however, due primarily to the COVID-19 crisis and expected reductions in investments from EU firms.

According to Slovenia's Statistical Office, one in four enterprises provided training to develop e-skills in 2019, while 28 percent of enterprises with at least 10 employees employed ICT specialists. Six percent of enterprises recruited or tried to recruit ICT specialists in 2019, and 59 percent of such vacancies were difficult to fill.

Slovenia's cyber security market continues to expand as well, largely in response to the rapidly-changing nature of threats and vulnerabilities to businesses and government. Industry representatives forecast a continued need for security services, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The market for security software grew by 11 percent in 2019, with growth expected to continue through 2021. In response to ongoing budget pressures, however, the government has made significant cuts to IT expenditures. Existing IT platform upgrades and continued investment in a three-tiered cloud-computing infrastructure should provide for some short-term growth.

The cloud computing sector is the IT industry's fastest growing segment, growing by 40 percent in 2019. In 2019, more than 41 percent of enterprises with 10 or more employees purchased cloud computing services such as e-mail, computer software, electronic file storage space, and computing power, up from 15 percent in 2014. Such services are purchased primarily by large enterprises, followed by medium-sized and small enterprises. Slovenia's Chamber of Commerce projects the potential for up to 3,000 new IT jobs in Slovenia through 2020, due primarily to cloud solutions targeted towards the public sector as well as SMEs.

	2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019 (Estimated)**

Total Local Production	320	320	320	320
Total Exports	180	180	180	180
Total Imports	560	560	570	550
Imports from the U.S.	440	430	440	440
Total Market Size	680	680	700	680
Exchange Rates: 1 USD	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90

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

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
  - Planning and implementation of communicating networks
  - Broadband infrastructure
  - Security systems
  - E-banking
  - CMS software
  - Software systems for back-up files
  - IT Solutions
  - Logistics
- **Opportunities**

Slovenia's Ministry of Public Administration has allocated EUR 38 million to develop a cloud computing system. The best opportunities for U.S. software sales in Slovenia include internet systems engineering, application development, consulting, database and communications software/office automation, security, systems integration, archiving, content and document management, and business intelligence. Primary end-users are industry, financial services, public administration, trade, health, energy, production, distribution, and electronic banking.

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Chemicals

- **Overview**

Slovenia's chemical sector is among the country's most successful enterprises, thanks to the industry's long tradition in this part of Europe. Production is substantial and requires consistent supplies of raw materials. More than 780 companies are active in Slovenia's chemical industry, with more than 27,000 employees, while 26 companies manufacture pharmaceutical products. Pharmaceuticals account for most of the sector's exports, followed by vehicle tires, inner tubes, and plastics.

USD thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Market Size	4,941,932	5,320,384	5,742,337	6,044,600
Exchange Rates	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9

(Source: Statistical Office of Slovenia)

- **Leading Sub-Sectors**
  - 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**

The chemical and pharmaceutical sectors offer significant opportunities to U.S. suppliers of raw materials. Leading companies in the sector include:

- Belinka
- Cinkarna Celje
- Helios
- Atotech
- Sava

- **Resources**

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Customs, Regulations and Standards

Trade Barriers

Slovenia joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, and to date there have been no cases of Slovenia violating WTO rules. As a WTO member country, Slovenia is required by 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. Slovenia is a signatory to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and has implemented all TFA requirements.

As an EU member state, Slovenia's regulatory system is based on two principles: the supremacy of EU laws and the principle of direct effect. In areas subject to EU responsibility, EU laws override any conflicting member state laws. Direct effect enables Slovenians and other EU citizens to use EU laws in national courts against the government or private parties.

For information on existing trade barriers, please see the USTR's National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's website.

To report existing or new trade barriers and request assistance in removing them, contact either the Trade Compliance Center or the U.S. Mission to the European Union.

Import Tariffs

Slovenia adopted the EU's customs legislation when it joined the union in 2004. EU regulation establishes an overall legal foundation, and Slovenia has adapted some parts of EU customs regulations through national legislation. The basic legal framework of the Republic of Slovenia's Customs System is based on the Customs Law, the Customs Service Law, and the Customs Tariff Law (OG RS 66/00). Additional information on customs legislation is available here.

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 to be paid for the goods to be imported), including all duties and taxes paid outside Slovenia. For more than 95 percent of imports, a product's customs value is established based on transaction value. In addition to customs duties paid according to rates provided by the Customs Tariff or preferential agreements, imports are also subject to VAT.

Import Requirements and Documentation

The European Union's Integrated Tariff of the Community, or TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), provides rules applying to specific products imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a particular product requires a license, consult the TARIC.

The TARIC may be searched by country of origin, Harmonized System (HS) Code, and product description through 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 lists of goods subject to import licensing. For additional information on member state import licenses, please consult the appropriate EU member states' Country Commercial Guides.

Import Documentation

Non-agricultural Documentation

The European Union Customs Code, which defines the legal framework for customs rules and procedures in the EU customs territory, entered into force on May 1, 2016, repealing and replacing the Community Customs Code, the EU's previous customs legislation. The Single Administrative Document (SAD) is the primary form used for customs declarations in the EU, including Slovenia. The SAD is used for trade between EU member states and non-EU countries and for the movement of non-EU goods within the EU. Traders and agents may use the SAD to declare import, export, or transit, and for community status declarations. Additional information is available through the European Union Customs Code and the Single Administrative Document.

Customs authorities may allow a period for lodging the declaration, which may not extend beyond the first working day following the day on which the goods are presented to customs. Importers may submit the Entry Summary Declaration (ENS) on a form corresponding to the model prescribed by the customs authorities, although customs authorities may also accept any commercial or official document that contains the particulars necessary for identification of the goods.

The summary declaration is to be lodged electronically 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 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 warrant, the customs authorities may set a shorter period or authorize an extension of the period.

In 2013, the European Parliament and European Council approved Council Regulation 952/2013 establishing the Union Customs Code (UCC) to modernize EU customs and serve as the framework regulation on customs rules and procedures throughout the EU. The UCC was intended to streamline customs legislation and procedures, provide greater legal certainty and uniformity, simplify customs rules and procedures, transition to a paperless and fully electronic and interoperable environment, and implement faster customs procedures for compliant and trustworthy importers. Although the UCC began operations on May 1, 2016, a transition period is in place until December 31, 2020 to allow time to develop and implement the necessary IT systems to fully implement the legal requirements. More information regarding the UCC is available here.

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). The updated directive applies to all batteries and accumulators sold on the EU market, including automotive, industrial, and portable batteries. The directive also protects the environment by restricting the sale of batteries and accumulators containing mercury or cadmium (with exemptions for emergency and alarm systems, medical equipment, and cordless power tools) and promoting collection and recycling. Under the directive, producers are responsible for 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.

REACH

The EU controls chemicals through its European Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorization, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) program, which entered into force in 2007 through Council Regulation 1907/2006. REACH shifts the responsibility for assessing and managing risks posed by chemicals and providing appropriate safety administration from public authorities to industry in order to protect human health and the environment. REACH requires chemicals produced or imported into the EU in amounts exceeding one ton per year to be registered in the European Chemicals Agency's (ECHA) central database, including information on the chemicals' properties, uses, and safe means of handling. U.S. companies not present in Europe may not register directly with ECHA and must have their chemicals registered through their importer or an EU-based "Only Representative of non-EU manufacturer." A list of such "Only Representatives" (ORs) is available through the U.S. Mission to the EU.

Safety data sheets must be REACH compliant.

U.S. exporters to the EU should carefully consider the REACH 'Candidate List' of substances of very high concern, which are subject to additional communication requirements and may require additional authorizations for the EU market. More information is available through ECHA.

WEEE & RoHS

While not requiring special customs or import paperwork, EU rules on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) may entail a financial obligation for U.S. exporters and may require U.S. exporters to register their products with a national WEEE authority directly or through a local partner. The WEEE Directive establishes the responsibilities of EEE producers for the collection and recycling of their products at the end of their lifecycles. The EU's revised WEEE Directive, also known as the WEEE Recast Directive, was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on July 24, 2012.

The EU's Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) Directive restricts the use of certain chemicals and prohibits the use of lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, and some polybrominated flame retardants in electrical and electronic equipment. The revised ROHS Directive, published in the Official Journal of the European Union on January 7, 2011, is commonly known as the "ROHS II Directive." By July 2019, ROHS will apply to all EEE products "dependent on electric current or electromagnetic fields for at least one intended function."

Additional information on WEE and RoHS regulations is available here.

Cosmetics

The EU does not assess customs duties on many cosmetic products, including hair products, manicure and pedicure products, lip and eye makeup, and many essential oils. However, U.S. exporters of cosmetic products to the EU must comply with the provisions of the EU Cosmetics Regulation (EUCR), including designation of a professional "Responsible Person," a Product Information File, registration on the Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP), and appropriate labeling. By default, the EUCR designates the importer as the Responsible Person, although many U.S. exporters choose to designate a specialized consultant or law firm for strategic commercial reasons.

EU rules regulating ingredients commonly found in cosmetics may differ from those in the United States. For example, the EU requires all products including nano-scale ingredients to identify such substances and prohibits the sale of any product containing ingredients tested on animals to acquire safety data if such testing occurred after March 11, 2013. Such restrictions are listed in the EUCR's Annexes II, III, IV, V, and VI, and are often updated. Therefore, U.S. exporters should ensure they are complying with the most up-to-date provisions.

Agricultural Documentation

Goods imported into the EU must meet EU sanitary and phytosanitary requirements to protect human and animal health.

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

Sanitary Certificates: For commodities composed of animal products or by-products, EU countries require that shipments be accompanied by a sanitary certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country. This requirement applies regardless of whether the product is intended for human consumption, pharmaceutical use, or strictly non-human purposes (e.g., veterinary biologicals, animal feeds, fertilizers, research, etc.). Although the harmonization process is not yet complete, the vast majority of such certificates are uniform throughout the EU. 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 through EU legislation, certify product origin for customs purposes and certain quality attributes. The Foreign Agricultural Service offers up-to-date information on harmonized import requirements here.

Sanitary Certificates (Fisheries)

The EU is the world's largest importer of fish, seafood, and aquaculture products, and import rules are harmonized for all EU countries. In 2006, the EU declared the U.S. seafood inspection system equivalent to its own. As a result, U.S. seafood imports into the EU must be accompanied by a public health certificate specific to the type of product. Commission Decision 2006/199/EC established the conditions on imports of fishery products from the United States.

Unlike for fishery products, the U.S. shellfish sanitation system is not equivalent to that of the EU. The EU and the United States continue to negotiate a veterinary equivalency agreement on shellfish. Until such an agreement is concluded, however, the EU bans 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 EU's second Hygiene Package, aquaculture products entering the EU from the United States must be accompanied by a public health certificate, per 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.

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 must provide a catch certificate certifying that the products in question have been caught legally. Additional information on import documentation for seafood is available here.

Labeling and Marking Requirements

The EU has a number of mandatory and voluntary requirements pertaining to the marking, labeling, and packaging of different types of products. A mark is a symbol or pictogram appearing on a particular product or its packaging to provide information concerning safety, health, energy efficiency, or environmental concerns related to a product, while labels refer to written text or numerical statements with more specific information on a product such as measurements or materials found in the product. Some mandatory marking requirements are left to individual member states, while some voluntary marks and labels are used as marketing tools in some member states. An overview of EU mandatory and voluntary labeling requirements is available here.

In Slovenia, the following labeling information must be included in Slovene on the original package of products subject to quality control:

- Name of the product
- Manufacturer's full address
- Importer's full address
- Net quantity/weight/volume

- Information regarding ingredients, where applicable
- Use and storage instructions
- Other warnings important for the customer.

Technically complicated products must also include instructions for use, manufacturer specifications, warranties, a list of authorized maintenance offices, and other applicable data. All information must be in Slovene and attached to each product before it reaches customers. Additional information on Slovenia's labeling and marketing requirements is available through the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

U.S. Export Controls

U.S. companies may export most technology from the United States to Slovenia under general export licenses, although some equipment still requires validated export licenses from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security and/or the Department of State. The Department of 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. Items subject to BIS regulations are often referred to as "dual use," since they have both commercial and military applications. Additional information on U.S. export controls and licensing requirements is available at http://www.bis.doc.gov and https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/commerce-control-list-ccl.

The United States imposes export controls to protect national security interests and promote foreign policy objectives. BIS's Office of Export Enforcement (EE) is responsible for the enforcement of the EAR. BIS works closely with U.S. embassies, foreign governments, industry, and trade associations to ensure that exports from the United States are secure. In accordance with the EAR, BIS officials conduct site visits, also known as End-Use Checks (EUCs), globally with end-users, consignees, and/or other parties to transactions involving items subject to the EAR, to verify compliance.

An EUC is an on-site verification of a party to a transaction to determine whether it is a reliable recipient of U.S. items. EUCs are conducted as part of BIS's licensing process, as well as its compliance program, to determine if items were exported in accordance with a valid BIS authorization or otherwise consistent with the EAR. Specifically, an EUC verifies the bona fides of recipient(s) of items subject to the EAR, to include: confirming their legitimacy and reliability relating to the end use and end user; monitoring their compliance with license conditions; and ensuring such items are used and/or re-exported or transferred (in-country) in accordance with the EAR.

BIS officials rely on EUCs to safeguard items subject to the EAR from diversion to unauthorized end uses/users. The verification of a foreign party's reliability facilitates future trade, including pursuant to BIS license reviews. If BIS is unable to verify the reliability of the company or is prevented from accomplishing an EUC, the company may receive, for example, more regulatory scrutiny during license reviews or be designated on BIS's Unverified List or Entity List, as applicable.

BIS has developed a list of "red flags", or warning signs, intended to discover possible violations of the EAR.

Also, BIS has "Know Your Customer" guidance.

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. Check a list of upcoming seminars and webinars.

BIS also provides online training.

The EAR does not regulate transactions involving all U.S. goods, services, and technologies. Other U.S. government agencies regulate more specialized exports. For example, the U.S. Department of State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls has authority over defense articles and services. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the BIS website or in Supplement No. 3 to Part 730 of the EAR.

The EAR is available on the BIS website and on the e-CFR (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations).

The Consolidated Screening List (CSL) is a list of parties for which the United States government maintains restrictions on certain exports, reexports or transfers of items. The CSLconsolidates a number of smaller lists of restricted parties that are maintained by a variety of U.S. Government agencies, including the Department of Commerce, as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of potential parties to regulated transactions.

Temporary Entry

Slovenia is a signatory to the World Customs Organization's ATA Convention on Temporary Imports and Exports, which allows for simplified procedures for the free movement of some types of goods across borders and into customs territories without being subject to duties and taxes. The ATA Carnet allows for a product's temporary import and export, and also serves as a transit document for the transit of goods to a country of temporary importation. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia is Slovenia's ATA System Guarantee Association, and is also licensed to issue ATA carnets.

Under some circumstances, products may be imported into Slovenia on a temporary basis and be exempt from customs duties, including:

- 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 required for artistic, sports, or other events and the production of motion pictures;
- Packaging materials, freight, 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 condition that they are temporarily imported by companies or individual entrepreneurs registered for the rental of foreign yachts, sailing ships, and other sea vessels or through contracts concluded with foreign sport clubs and their associations permitting 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 temporarily imported by permanent correspondents or editorial offices of foreign media registered in the customs territory.

Time limits for temporary imports vary based on the purpose for which goods are temporarily imported, but may not exceed a period of 12 months. Partial exemption from customs duties may be granted for the temporary import of goods not mentioned above if they remain the property of foreign persons. The duty to be paid for temporary imports of goods with a partial exemption from customs duty is three percent of the duty that would have to be paid for these goods if they were released for free circulation.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

The TARIC provides rules applying to specific products imported into or out of the EU customs territory. 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

Customs Regulations

For information on Customs regulations, check the website of the EU's Customs and Taxation Union Directorate.

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

Electronic Customs Initiative – The ECI deals with major EU Customs modernization developments to improve and facilitate trade in the EU member states, based on the following three pieces of legislation:

- The Security and Safety Amendment to the Customs Code, providing for full computerization of all procedures related to security and safety;
- The Electronic Customs Decision on the paperless environment for customs and trade, establishing the basic framework and major deadlines for electronic customs projects;
- The modernized Union Customs Code, providing for the computerization of customs documents.

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

The EU imported more than EUR 1.9 trillion worth of goods in 2018 and seeks to accurately measure the value of its commerce 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.

To meet these objectives, the EU applies an internationally-accepted concept of "customs value."

Determining the customs debt, the technical term for the duty to be paid on imported goods, is based on three elements of taxation: the value of the imported goods, the origin of the imported goods, and the customs tariff on the imported goods.

Customs Security – The EU amended the Community Customs Code and the Customs Code Implementing Provisions in 2005 and 2006 to implement a new security management model for the EU's external borders through Commission Regulation 648/2005 and 1875/2006. Through these amendments, the EU introduced a number of measures to tighten security around goods crossing international borders. These measures include:

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

Additional information on mechanisms for setting uniform Community risk-selection criteria for controls supported by computerized systems is available here.

Standards for Trade

Overview

Based on the European Commission's 2015 Single Market Strategy and the June 2016 EU Standardization Package, the EU's Joint Initiative on Standardization establishes a shared vision for European standardization and determining the legal nature of standards and technical regulations. According to the Joint Initiative, standards must be timely, market-driven, and produced in an inclusive way that supports EU policies and international standardization, with most European standards market driven and initiated by businesses. Under the EU standardization package, standards are optional and voluntary and do not become a binding requirement unless so designated by a competent ministry. Slovenia recognizes all EU and international standards for trade.

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

All technical goods and consumer durables imported into Slovenia must include technical instructions, a written guarantee statement, and, if necessary, instructions for use. In addition, the importer must guarantee product servicing and the supply of spare parts. A declaration including the name and type of product, name of manufacturer, and other prescribed data should be attached to the product. All such documents and declarations must be 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 must 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 may have to be re-tested and re-certified to EU requirements due to the EU's different approach to protecting the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are subject to the EU's General Product Safety Directive as well as to possible additional national requirements. Products in controlled product categories may not be legally sold in the EU unless they have met the necessary standards to receive the European Conformity (CE) marking.

European Union standards are harmonized across the 28 EU member states and European Economic Area countries to allow for the free flow of goods. While EU harmonization may facilitate access to the EU Single Market, manufacturers should be aware that mandatory regulations and voluntary technical standards might also function as barriers to trade if U.S. standards differ from those of the European Union. Additional information is available on EU harmonization standards and the New Legislative Framework.

Standards

EU standards setting is 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. Non-governmental organizations, including environmental and consumer groups, play an important role in European standardization. Many EU standards are adopted from international standard setting bodies such as the International Standards Organization (ISO). EU standards are formally drafted by three European standards organizations:

- CENELEC, European Committee for Electro Technical Standardization:
- ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute:
- CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards:

The EU recognized CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI as European Standardization Organizations through EU Regulation 1025/2012, which entered into force in 2013. EU standards are established or modified by experts in technical committees or working groups. CEN and CENELEC work with the national standards bodies of EU member states, which have "mirror committees" that monitor and participate in ongoing European standardization. When possible, CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI are encouraged to reference international standards and to include societal stakeholders to improve efficiency in terms of delivery through European standardization.

CEN, CENELEC, and their national members and committees work jointly to develop and define standards to facilitate cross-border trade and support the implementation of European legislation. ETSI allows direct participation in its technical committees from non-EU companies with interests in Europe and offers some of its individual standards at no charge on its website. After the publication of a European standard, each national standards body or committee is obligated to withdraw any national standard conflicting with the new European standard, thereby ensuring harmonization.

In addition to the three standards developing organizations, the European Commission plays an important role in standardization by funding and encouraging small- and medium-sized companies and non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups, to participate in the standardization process. The Commission also provides money to the standards bodies when it delegates standards development to the European Standards Organization for harmonized standards to be linked to EU technical legislation.

Given the EU's vigorous promotion of its regulatory and standards system as well as generous development funding, the EU's standards regime is broad and extends well beyond the EU's political borders to include affiliate members such as Albania, Belarus, North Macedonia, and Morocco, among others. In addition, the standards organizations of countries such as Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and Australia, which are not likely to become CEN members or affiliate members for political and geographical reasons, are recognized as "partner standardization bodies."

The CEN and CENLEC websites include information on current EU standardization requirements. In addition to their respective annual work plans, CEN's "what we do" page provides an overview of standards activities by subject. Both CEN and CENELEC allow databased searches. Additional information on the European Standardization System is available here.

- **Testing, Inspection and Certification**

Conformity Assessment

The European Union requires all manufacturers to submit their products to conformity assessment procedures to ensure they meet all applicable EU requirements and to prevent unsafe or noncompliant products from entering the market. EU product legislation provides manufacturers a number of options regarding conformity assessment, depending on the level of risk involved in the use of their product, ranging from self-certification, type examination, and production quality control systems to full quality assurance systems. Conformity assessment bodies in individual member states are listed in the European Commission's New Approach Notified and Designated Organizations (NANDO) Information System.

A number of voluntary conformity assessment programs are available to promote market acceptance of final products, including CENELEC's conformity assessment program, CEN's Keymark system, CENCER mark, and workshop agreement (CWA) Certification Rules. ETSI does not offer conformity assessment services.

Product Certification

To sell products in the EU's 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 options to determine which safety/health concerns need to be addressed, which conformity assessment module is best suited to their manufacturing process, and whether to use EU-wide harmonized standards.

Products manufactured to standards adopted by CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI and referenced 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. Products designated accordingly can be marketed and circulate freely within the EU. Manufacturers that choose not to use the harmonized EU standards must demonstrate their product meets the essential safety and performance requirements. Trade barriers may arise when European standardization organizations adopt design rather than performance standards and when U.S. companies without a European presence do not have access to the appropriate standardization process.

The EU adopted the New Legislative Framework in 2010 to strengthen market surveillance of regulated products throughout the EU and to establish a blueprint for all CE marking legislation, harmonize definitions, and establish responsibilities for European accreditation. National control authorities of EU member states are primarily responsible for CE marking, which simplifies the task of essential market surveillance of regulated products. CE marking is not intended to require detailed technical information on the product, but should include sufficient information to enable inspectors to trace the product back to the manufacturer or the local contact established in the EU. Such 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 produce at any time, along with the product's technical file or the documents accompanying the product.

Accreditation

Competent national authorities may officially accredit independent testing and certification laboratories as notified bodies to test and certify products as meeting EU requirements. "European Accreditation" (EA) is an association of national accreditation bodies officially recognized by national governments to assess and verify international standards organizations carrying out evaluation services such as certification, verification, inspection, testing, and calibration. 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**

The official gazette of the European Union, the Official Journal is published online daily and consists of two series covering draft and adopted legislation as well as case law, committee reports, and other information on technical regulations. The Official Journal also includes the standards reference numbers linked to legislation.

The Commission publishes national technical regulations on its website.

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to notify to the WTO proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that could affect trade. **Notify U.S**. (www.nist.gov/notifyus) is a free, web-based e-mail registration service that captures and makes available for review and comment key information on draft regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Users receive customized e-mail alerts when new notifications are added by selected country or countries and industry sector(s) of interest and can also request full texts of regulations. This service and its associated web site are managed and operated by the USA WTO TBT Inquiry Point housed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Contact Information

The Slovenian Standards Institute (SSI) is responsible for national technical and quality standards in Slovenia. Information on specific local standards and certification requirements is available through SSI, by email at sist@sist.si, by telephone at +386-1-478 3013, or by fax at +386-1-478 3094).

Trade Agreements

Slovenia has been a member of WTO since 1995.

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

Slovenia's trade agreements with the EU and its member states, as well as concise explanations, are listed here.

Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

Slovenia does not recognize U.S. legal accreditation, and regulations regarding licenses to practice in-country are restrictive. Some Slovenian law firms conduct business in English and are familiar with U.S. law. Information on local service providers specializing in EU law, consulting, and business development is available through the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union.

Resources

Information on Slovenian customs legislation:

More on EU customs

Information on excise duties

National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, published by USTR:

Agricultural trade barriers

Trade Compliance Center

U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Mission to the European Union

EU's Customs website

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/home_en

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

Information on batteries

REACH

WEEE and RoHS

Up-to-date information on harmonized import requirements

U.S. export controls

EU mandatory and voluntary labeling and marking requirements

Slovenian Standards Institute

Foreign Agricultural Service

Labeling

European Accreditation

Trade agreements with the EU and its Member States

More resources offering up-to-date information pertaining to Slovenia's legal and regulatory framework in Slovenia.

EU websites:

Online customs tariff database (TARIC)

Modernized Community Customs Code (MCCC)

ECHA

Taxation and Customs Union

Security and Safety Amendment to the Customs Code - Regulation (EC) 648/2005:

Electronic Customs Initiative: Decision N° 70/2008/EC

Modernized Community Customs Code Regulation (EC) 450/2008):

Legislation related to the Electronic Customs Initiative:

International Level:

What is Customs Valuation?

Establishing the Community Customs Code: Regulation (EC) n° 648/2005 of 13 April 2005

Pre Arrival/Pre Departure Declarations:

AEO: Authorized Economic Operator:

Contact Information at National Customs Authorities:

New Approach Legislation:

Cenelec, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization:

ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute:

CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards:

Standardization – Mandates

ETSI – Portal – E-Standardization

CEN – Sector Fora

Nando (New Approach Notified and Designated Organizations) Information System:

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)

European Cooperation for Accreditation

Eur-Lex – Access to European Union Law

European Standards

National Technical Regulations

NIST - Notify U.S.

Metrology, Pre-Packaging – Pack Size

European Union Eco-label Homepage

Eco-Label Catalogue

U.S. websites:

National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers

Agricultural Trade Barriers

Trade Compliance Center

U.S. Mission to the European Union

The New EU Battery Directive

The Latest on REACH

WEEE and RoHS in the EU

Overview of EU Certificates

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

EU Marking, Labeling and Packaging – An Overview

Trade Agreements

Selling US Products and Services

Distribution & Sales Channels

- **Overview**

Several distribution channels are open to U.S. goods in the Slovenian marketplace, including wholesaling and retailing, franchising, joint ventures, and licensing. A wide variety of merchants, agents, intermediaries, wholesalers, and retailers are 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, located on the Adriatic Sea, is Slovenia's only seaport. Jože Pučnik Airport in Brnik is the nation's largest commercial airport, 20 kilometers north of the capital and largest city, Ljubljana. Smaller distribution centers are also available in major cities such as Ljubljana and Maribor, Slovenia's second largest city.

- **Using an Agent or Distributor**

A carefully selected local agent or distributor may be cheaper and more efficient than direct sales by a U.S. exporter unfamiliar with Slovenia's market. The U.S. Embassy in Slovenia can assist American companies in screening potential Slovenian partners. More information on how the U.S. Embassy can help companies seeking to do business in Slovenia is available at http://export.gov/slovenia/.

Late payments to suppliers are not uncommon in Slovenia. U.S. firms are advised to obtain a confirmed irrevocable letter of credit when conducting business with a new local partner. Credit rating agency Bisnode (phone: +386-1-080-3903; email: info.si@bisnode.com) or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (email: info@gzs.si, phone: +386-1-5898-000; fax: +386-1-5898-100, attn: INFOLINK Office) may be helpful in assessing the creditworthiness of a potential local partner.

Well-known American companies with a local agent/distributor or representative offices include Goodyear, Merck, Sharp & Dohme, Coca-Cola Amatil, UPS, IBM, Nike, Philip Morris, Oracle, 3M, McDonald's, Apple, Microsoft, Pfizer, Wrigley, Deloitte, Cisco, Chrysler, Ernst & Young, Johnson & Johnson, Masterfoods, Proctor & Gamble, Schering Plough, and Eli Lilly.

In Slovenia, non-citizens may establish any legal organizational structure described in the Companies Act, including limited-liability companies, joint-stock companies, limited partnerships with share capital, limited partnerships, general partnerships, and silent partnerships. Non-citizens may be exclusive or part owners of such companies.

All companies registered in Slovenia acquire the status of a legal person upon entry into the court register. Prior to entry into the court register, a number of formalities must be performed. In some instances, it may be beneficial to consult a lawyer early in the process to avoid difficulties that may arise while establishing a company, from adopting the memorandum and articles of association to certification by a notary public and entry into the court register.

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

- 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, and 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.

Certain commercial activities, such as road transport, catering, and other professions, require government certification. Find more detailed information here on the types of legal entities in Slovenia.

Companies intending to enter into distribution, franchising, and agency arrangements must ensure the agreements they put into place are in accordance with EU and member state national laws. The EU's 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. 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, European courts will likely rule invalid the inclusion of a clause specifying an alternate body of law to be applied in the event of a dispute.

The European Commission's Directorate General for Competition enforces legislation concerned with the effects of "vertical agreements" on competition in the internal market. U.S. small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are exempt from these regulations because their agreements generally qualify as "agreements of minor importance," meaning they are considered incapable of affecting competition at the EU level but are 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. In addition, the EU has indicated that agreements affecting less than 10 percent of a particular market are generally exempt from such regulations as well (Commission Notice 2001/C 368/07).

EU Directive 2000/35/EC addresses issues regarding payment delays in regard to all commercial transactions within the EU, public or private. Consumer transactions do not typically fall within the scope of this Directive. When a seller does not receive payment for goods and services rendered within 30 days of the payment deadline, EU Directive 2011/7/EU entitles the seller to collect interest at a rate of eight percent above the European Central Bank rate as well as EUR 40 as compensation. 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.

Agents and distributors of companies registered in the EU and subjected to inefficient management by an EU institution or body may take their complaints to the European Ombudsman. The Ombudsman acts upon such 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.

- **Establishing an Office**

Establishing a company in Slovenia may take up to 30 days. Slovenia's Companies Act recognizes the following types of businesses:

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

- Limited partnership
- General partnership
- Silent partnership

Corporate forms:

Persons wishing to establish a commercial enterprise in Slovenia may choose from the following types of business organizations:

- *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, in which the parent company is responsible for all liabilities arising from the operations of its branch)

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

Establishing a Limited Liability Company

Founders/shareholders: Such entities have a minimum of one and a maximum of 50 shareholders. The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology must grant approval for a limited liability company to have more than 50 shareholders.

Capital: The minimum founding capital requirement for a limited liability company is EUR 7,500. Each shareholder must contribute a minimum of EUR 50. Before registration, at least 25 percent of each shareholder's cash contribution must be paid, and the sum of all paid contributions must be at least EUR 7,500. Contributions in kind must be transferred in full before registration. Where the value of contributions in kind exceeds EUR 100,000, their value must be assessed by a certified independent accountant.

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

The agreement of incorporation must include the following information:

- a list of all shareholders, including names and addresses;
- the name, address, and activities of the company;
- the amount of founding capital and a list of particular shareholders' contributions;
- duration;
- 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 governed by the agreement of incorporation. In the absence of such provisions in the agreement of incorporation, the authority of shareholders is established by the Companies Act. The shareholders' meeting is the limited liability company's primary organizing body. Normally, each shareholder has one vote for each EUR 50 contributed, but the agreement of incorporation may stipulate otherwise. The agreement of incorporation may also provide for the establishment of a supervisory board. A limited liability company typically 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 domestic commercial bank to open a temporary account into which the foreigner will transfer the capital required to establish a company;
- 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 the court registration is approved, documentation must be forwarded to the Statistical Bureau to obtain an identification number;
- Production of the company's official rubber seal.
- Commercial bank order to transfer resources to the permanent account, at which time the company may freely dispose of such assets.

Dissolution:

A limited liability company may be dissolved in the following cases:

- expiration of the term of duration;
- upon a vote by three-quarters of the shareholders;
- invalidation of court registration;
- bankruptcy;
- if the capital is reduced below the level required by the law; or
- merger, amalgamation, or transformation into another corporate structure. A new company may be established by an individual or legal entity directly, by a notary, through one of the Slovenia Business Point offices, known as SPOT or VEM offices ("all in one place"), or even on the web. A list of SPOT/VEM offices is available here.

The Ministry of Interior's web portal offers information on how to establish a company in Slovenia, including legal sources and other useful links.

Detailed information about Slovenia's status corporation rules to establish and operate companies is located in and through Invest Slovenia.

- **Franchising**

Franchising opportunities are limited only by Slovenia's small market size. The best known U.S. franchises in Slovenia are McDonald's, Subway, Burger King, KFC, and Re/Max. No special legal requirements are necessary to acquire a franchise license, although for local tax reporting purposes a legal entity must be the holder of the franchise license.

U.S. businesses interested in franchising within the EU will find the market quite robust and friendly. A number of laws govern the operation of franchises within the EU, but the legislative requirements are broad and do not generally affect or restrict the competitive position of U.S. businesses. Potential franchisees should familiarize themselves not only with EU regulations but also local laws concerning franchising.

- **Direct Marketing**

A wide range of EU legislation affects 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 depth of the information they provide to consumers prior to purchase and on their approaches to collecting and using customer data. The following provides 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.

Distance Selling of Financial Services

EU Directive 2002/65/EC ensures customers are appropriately protected with respect to financial transactions taking place in which the consumer and the provider are not face-to-face. In addition to prohibiting certain abusive marketing practices, the Directive establishes criteria for contract information and withdrawal.

Direct Marketing Over The Internet

The EU's eCommerce Directive (2000/31/EC) imposes specific requirements on direct marketing businesses. For example, such businesses may not mislead customers through promotional offers and terms to qualify for such offers must be easily accessible and clear. The Directive further stipulates that marketing e-mails must be identified as such to the recipient and that companies targeting customers online must regularly consult national opt-out registers where they exist. When orders are placed, service providers must acknowledge receipt quickly through electronic means, although the legal effect of placing and acknowledging an order is a matter of national law and not covered by the Directive. Vendors of electronically-supplied services (such as software, which the EU considers a service and not a good) must also collect VAT (see Electronic Commerce section below).

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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. While the Directive may read like a set of onerous "do's" and "don'ts," in many ways it represents a list of best practices for customer relations with legal effect. Direct marketers must provide clear information on their corporate identity as well as their suppliers, full details on prices including delivery costs, and the period for which an offer remains valid before the conclusion of a contract. 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. Similarly, the Doorstep Selling Directive (85/577/EEC) is designed to protect consumers from sales occurring outside of a normal business premises (e.g., door-to-door sales) and 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 apply to contracts concluded after June 13, 2014. The Directive includes provisions on core information to be provided by traders prior to the conclusion of consumer contracts, regulates the right of withdrawal, provides rules on the costs for the use of means of payment, and bans pre-ticked website boxes. Companies are advised to consult the information available via the hyperlinks, to check the relevant sections of national Country Commercial Guides, and to contact the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union for more specific guidance. Additional information is available at the websites below:

EU Consumer Affairs

Distance Selling

Door-to-Door Selling:

Consumer Rights:

Distance Selling of Financial Services

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- **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

In addition to establishing their own companies, foreigners may 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 less dependent on the individual partners/shareholders, as the shares are quoted on the Stock Exchange, although this does not apply to shares of closed companies.

Takeovers may be accomplished through mergers or acquisitions. Slovenia's Law on Takeovers and the Companies Act regulate takeovers and establish 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 are possible for 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 must inform the issuer of shares, the Securities Market Agency (SMA), and the Stock Exchange within seven days of the date it acquires a majority stake. Per Official Gazette no. 47/97, issuers who receive such a notice must publish it within ten days in daily newspapers or on the premises of the Stock Exchange.

Both domestic and foreign legal and natural persons may freely conclude all types of commercial contracts, including agency contracts, distribution contracts, and license contracts. Slovenian law does not require 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 or arbitration tribunal of competent jurisdiction that will hear disputes.

- **Express Delivery**

All major international express delivery firms are present in Slovenia, including UPS, DHL, TNT, and FedEx. UPS and DHL have the largest market share, followed by TNT. All providers are reliable, with routine delivery times of one to two working days for documents and small packages up to two kilograms and four to six working days for larger packages. Customs clearance takes place at Ljubljana's Jože Pučnik Airport, generally within one working day. Slovenia has no special express delivery restrictions.

- **Due Diligence**

Product safety testing and certification is mandatory in the EU market. U.S. manufacturers and sellers of goods must perform due diligence in accordance with mandatory EU legislation prior to importing into the European Union.

U.S. companies doing business in Slovenia are advised to perform appropriate due diligence on their business partners and agents. The U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana offers an "International Company Profile" service, which provides detailed information on a company, its financials, and possible media exposure.

The following firms operating in Ljubljana may also assist in performing due diligence on potential Slovenian partners:

BISNODE d.o.o.

Likozarjeva 3

1000 Ljubljana

Tel: +386-080-39-03

Fax: +386-1- 62-02-708

Web: http://search.bisnode.si/dnb/sl-si/

Email: info.si@bisnode.com

Creditreform d.o.o.

Emonska cesta 8

1000 Ljubljana

Tel: +386-1-438-16-71

Fax: +386-1-438-16-70

Web: https://www.creditreform.com/en/contact/creditreform-slovenia/our-country-office.html

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: http://www.coface.si/

Email: office@coface.si

eCommerce

Online sales of consumer goods have grown substantially in Slovenia in recent years, as has the use of credit cards for in-person and online transactions. Approximately 90 percent of Slovenians aged 10-74, as well as almost all companies with ten or more employees, have broadband internet access. According to recent statistics, more than 48 percent of Slovenian internet users make monthly web purchases, while the average amount per purchase has doubled. ECommerce growth has been most pronounced in the food & beverage, automotive, and pet food and product markets. Seventy-six percent of websites in Slovenia have developed online versions of their webpages optimized for mobile devices.

The EU's Electronic Commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) establishes rules for online services throughout the EU. The Directive requires providers to abide by the relevant rules and regulations in the country in which they are established. Online providers must respect consumer protection rules such as including contact details on websites, clearly identifying advertising, and protecting against spam. The Directive also exempts companies from legal liability for unknowingly hosting illegal content or when third-party intermediaries transmit illegal content. In 2012, the European Commission issued its work plan to facilitate cross-border online services and reduce barriers.

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

U.S. businesses affected by the 2003 rule change are primarily those based in the United States and selling ESS to EU-based, non-business customers or to businesses that are EU-based and selling ESS to customers outside the EU who no longer need to charge VAT on these transactions. Such businesses have a number of compliance options. The Directive established a special scheme simplifying registration with each member state and allowed companies to register with a single VAT authority in the country of their choice. Companies may 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 other EU VAT authorities. Additional information on this process is available at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/vat_en.

Slovenia's telecommunications infrastructure is well developed, and broadband internet is readily available at a reasonable price. ECommerce market revenue is expected to be approximately EUR 323 million in 2019 (USD 366 million), with an annual growth rate of more than eight percent. The largest eCommerce market is in electronics and media, with an expected 2019 sales volume of EUR 145 million (USD 164 million). The average revenue per user is currently approximately EUR 276 (USD 313).

Domestic eCommerce is expanding rapidly in Slovenia due to lower prices and an increasing variety of products. Online purchases within the EU are not subject to customs duties. Despite global competition, almost half of Slovenian online buyers (49 percent) shop only at domestic online stores. Popular Slovenian eCommerce sites include: www.ceneje.si, www.mimovrste.si, www.nakupovanje.net, www.enaa.com, www.mercator.si, and www.trgovine.net. Cross-border eCommerce is growing as more Slovenians purchase goods and services online from other EU countries and the United States. Slovenian consumers use all major international eCommerce sites, including www.amazon.com, although many Slovenians choose to purchase online from EU-based websites of popular American online companies such as Amazon UK to avoid duties. The most common items purchased online include electronic goods, fashion products, housing equipment, books, medicines, health supplements, travel bookings, and airline tickets.

Business-to-business (B2B) eCommerce is still in its infancy in Slovenia, as many companies continue to rely on more established systems with relatively outdated processes and limited sales channels. Slovenia's automobile industry, with significant sales to Germany, France, and Italy, is in the process of expanding its B2B commerce infrastructure.

Online payments are generally handled through international credit cards such as MasterCard, VISA, or Diners Club, although Pay Pal is also growing in importance. Moneta, a Slovenian secure payment provider, is often used for payments relating to domestic purchases.

Approximately 47 percent of Slovenians used some form of social media in 2017. Facebook and Twitter are the most popular social media sites, but there are several Slovenian sites targeted toward younger users (16-24). Online networks are used primarily for instant messages, chats, forums, and blogs.

Selling Factors & Techniques

- **Overview**

Operating hours for most businesses in Slovenia are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m, and the majority of retail stores close by 7 or 8 p.m., with a few staying open until 9 p.m. Most stores are open on Saturday mornings, and several shopping centers are open all day on SaturdaysMost businesses are closed on Sundays.

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

By law, user manuals for technical equipment and content declaration, with appropriate labeling requirements for goods, must be presented in the Slovene language.

- **Trade Promotion & Advertising**

All normal means of advertising are available and 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 campaigns, and trade fairs.

Truth in Advertising

The EU Directive on Misleading and Comparative Advertising establishes minimum and objective criteria regarding truth in advertising, including comparative advertising. Per 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." Comparative advertising is defined as "advertising which explicitly or by implication identifies a competitor or goods or services by a competitor." EU member states may also authorize more extensive protections against misleading or comparative advertising through national legislation. According to the European Council's Directive on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees (1999/44/EC), product specifications presented in advertising are legally binding on the seller.

The EU Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices (2005/29/EC) several aggressive or deceptive marketing and advertising practices, including pyramid schemes, "liquidation sales" when a business is not actually closing down, and artificially high prices as the basis to offer discounts. The Directive also regulates advertising directed toward children. Additional in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).

Medical Advertising

Per European Council Directive 2001/83/EC, as amended by Directive 2004/27/EC, advertising medicinal products or prescription drugs is generally forbidden in the EU without market authorization. EU directives prohibit advertisers from distributing free samples of pharmaceuticals to the general public or recommending therapeutic self-medication where such medication is not suitable. Advertising text must be compatible with the characteristics listed on the product label and should encourage the product's responsible use. Advertising of medicinal products directed toward medical professionals should include information on the product's essential characteristics and appropriate classifications. Pharmaceutical companies and representatives are prohibited from offering inducements to physicians or medical professionals to prescribe or supply a particular medical product, and the provision of free samples to physicians and medical professionals is limited.

Nutrition and Health Claims

EU Regulation 1924/2006 dictates EU-wide criteria for product nutrition claims such as "low fat" or "high in vitamin C," as well as health claims such as "helps lower cholesterol." These regulations apply to any food or drink product produced for human consumption marketed in the EU. Only foods meeting certain nutrient profiles (for example, certain levels of salt, sugar, and/or fat content) may carry such claims. Manufacturers and marketers may only include such nutrition and health claims on food labels if they are on one of the EU's positive lists. Food products carrying such claims must comply with the provisions of the EU's nutritional labeling directive 90/496/EC and subsequent amendments.

Per EU directives, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) authorizes on a case-by-case basis functional health claims, disease reduction claims, and claims related to the health and development of children for particular products to be marketed in the EU, following the submission of a scientific dossier. Health claims based on new scientific data must be submitted to EFSA for evaluation, although simplified authorization procedures have been established. Additional information is available at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/.

Food Information to Consumers

EU Directive 1169/2011 regulates food labeling and nutrition declaration requirements for consumer food products.

Food Supplements

EU Regulation 1925/2006 harmonizes rules on the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods and lists the vitamins and minerals that may be added to foods. This list was most recently revised in 2017. The EU has yet to develop a positive list of substances other than vitamins and minerals that may be added to consumer food products. Until then, member state laws will govern the use of these substances.

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, while tobacco advertising on television has been banned since the 1990s per the EU's TV Without Frontiers Directive. Advertising in cinemas, on billboards, and through merchandising is allowed, although several member states limit or prohibit these mediums as well. The EU revised the Tobacco Products Directive in 2014 to require plain packaging and larger, double-sided health pictorial warnings on cigarette packaging.

Media Outlets

Slovenia's major newspapers include *Delo* (circulation 30,000)*, Dnevnik* (ciculation 25,000), *Slovenske Novice* (circulation 50,000), and *Vecer* (circulation 20,000). Newspapers and magazines are used most often for print as well as internet-based advertising on their webpages. Major business periodicals include *Finance*, (circulation 7,000), *Manager* (circulation 10,000), *Podjetnik*, and *Slovenian Business Report*.

Major television stations include Radio Televizija Slovenija, PLANET TV, and POP TV. Proreklam Europlakat is the major "outdoor" advertiser for billboards and bus stations. The EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive regulates television broadcasting activities within the EU. Television advertising is limited to 12 minutes per hour. The Directive also limits junk food advertising during television programming for children.

Trade and Business Fairs

A list of upcoming business and trade fairs in Slovenia in 2020-21.

Fair grounds that organize trade shows include:

- Ljubljana Fair Grounds
- Celje Fair grounds
- Portoroz
- Gornja Ragdona

- **Pricing**

Prices for goods and services in Slovenia are generally lower than in Western Europe but higher than in neighboring Western Balkans countries, due primarily to the high cost of labor and lack of competition in certain sectors. Prices are generally based on free market forces, although the government controls the prices of oil, natural gas, and railway transport. As much as a third of the economy is government owned or controlled, and the government may also influence the pricing policies of companies under its direct or indirect control. The price of gasoline is based on a pricing model which adjusts for global prices every two weeks.

Purchases of most goods and services generally include a 22 percent VAT, although food items and certain other goods and services are subject to a 9.5 percent VAT. VAT for books, newspapers, music works, and maps was reduced to 5 percent in January 2020.

- **Sales Service/Customer Support**

Customer support, sales service, and post-sale services are relatively recent innovations in Slovenia and remain poorly developed. The EU has launched a number of initiatives to harmonize national legislation to address consumer frustration over sales service and support, including product labeling, language usage, legal guarantees, and liability. Suppliers inside and outside the EU should remain aware of existing and pending legislation affecting sales, service, and customer support.

Per the EU's Product Liability Directive, producers of goods are liable for damages resulting from product defects. Victims of such damages must prove both the existence of the defect as well as the causal link between the defect and any bodily or material injury. The manufacturer's liability may be reduced in cases of negligence on the part of the victim. Find additional information on EU product liability regulations.

The European Commission's Directive on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees requires professional sellers to provide a minimum two-year warranty on all consumer goods sold to consumers, as defined by the Directive. Remedies available to consumers for noncompliance include:

- Repair of the good(s) in question;
- Replacement of the good(s);
- Price reduction;
- Recission of the sales contract

- **Local Professional Services**

Slovenia does not recognize U.S. legal accreditation, and regulations regarding licenses to practice law in-country are restrictive. Some Slovenian law firms conduct business in English and are familiar with U.S. law. Information on local service providers specializing in EU law, consulting, and business development is available through the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union.

For information on professional services in other EU member states, please see the EU Member State Country Commercial Guides.

- **Principal Business Associations**

Slovenia's most important business association is the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIS). CCIS provides a number of essential services for companies operating in Slovenia and is an important local partner for foreign investors. With 7,000 member companies of all sizes from all regions, CCIS is a non-profit, non-governmental, independent business organization representing the interests of its members. CCIS is also an important negotiating partner in national collective bargaining agreements on minimum wages and workers' rights.

Other important Slovenian business associations include the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (CCSB) and the American Chamber of Commerce, Slovenia (AmCham). CCSB is an umbrella organization that works with 62 regional chambers of craftsmen and small businesses. With more than 300 domestic and foreign company members, AmCham is one of Slovenia's most active and influential business communities offering a number of services and networking opportunities.

- **Limitations on Selling U.S. Products and Services**

There are no significant restrictions on selling U.S. products and services in Slovenia.

Trade Financing

- **Methods of Payment**

The primary means of payment in Slovenia are cash, bank debit cards, and major credit cards. Many vendors offer payment by installment, especially for goods valued over USD 100. Through cooperative agreements with local banks, many 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, letters of credit, documentary collections, and factoring, are also used.

The local credit rating company Bisnode d.o.o. provides credit rating information for local companies within a few days.

Additional information about methods of payment or other trade finance options is available through the Department of Commerce's Trade Finance Guide.

Banking Systems

The 2008-12 global economic crisis had a devastating impact on Slovenia's banking sector and heavily exposed it to management buyouts of key Slovenian companies, most of which failed, thereby increasing the ratio of non-performing loans. Consequently, the banking sector tightened credit, resulting in a huge credit crunch, especially for SMEs. Although the financial environment has improved dramatically since 2012 as major banks have shed bad assets, new loans are often difficult to obtain. Slovenia's largest bank, NLB, was privatized in 2018 and 2019, although the government remains a major shareholder with a 25 percent stake. Of NLB's remaining shares, 56 percent are distributed among several international investors on fiduciary account at the Bank of New York, while eight percent are held by a number of Slovenian institutional and private investors. In 2016, an American investment fund and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) purchased Slovenia's second largest bank, Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor (NKBM). In 2019, NKBM purchased the country's third-largest bank, the state-owned Abanka. As a result of the sale, NKBM will have a 22.5 percent market share, rivaling NLB, which has approximately 26 percent of the country's market share.

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 comply with international standards and are audited regularly by internationally-recognized auditors. Identifying financing for domestic projects can be problematic, with banks typically seeking 100 percent or more collateral in most cases.

Slovenia has taken some important steps to liberalize its financial markets, and a combination of market forces, national legislation, and Bank of Slovenia regulations are moving the banking sector toward greater compliance with global expectations. In the future, portfolio and direct investments will likely become more straightforward and transparent, while banking, securities brokering, and complex credit transactions will become more commonplace.

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

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

Foreign Exchange Controls

Slovenia introduced the euro as its national currency in 2007. The Slovenian Central Bank is a member of the European Central Bank (ECB), based 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 ECB directives.

U.S. Banks & Local Correspondent Banks

Slovenia hosts 12 banks and three savings houses. Larger correspondent banks include:

Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d. (NLB), Ljubljana, Trg republike 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tel +386 1 476 3900

Email: info@nlb.si

Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor d.d. (NKBM), Vita Kraigherja 4, 2502 Maribor, Slovenia

Tel. +386 2 229 2290

Email: info@nkbm.si

SKB Banka d.d., Ajdovscina 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tel: +386 1 471 5555

Email: info@skb.si

Banka Koper d.d., Pristaniška ulica 14, 6502 Koper, Slovenia

Tel +386 5 66 61 000

Email: info@intesasanpaolobank.si

List of all banks in Slovenia

Protecting Intellectual Property

Slovenia has adopted all EU eCommerce directives pertaining to intellectual property right (IPR) protections. Enforcement of such directives, however, is relatively lax and illegal downloading of music and video content is common. The Slovenian Intellectual Property Office oversees eCommerce intellectual property protections.

In any foreign market, companies should consider several general principles for effective protection of their intellectual property. For background, please link to our article on Protecting Intellectual Property and Stopfakes.gov for more resources.

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Selling to the Public Sector

- **Selling to the Government**

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

The public procurement process in Slovenia can be a frustrating experience for American and other foreign companies. The most frequent complaints include insufficient time to prepare bids, extremely strict language requirements, lack of transparency as to 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 has committed to a goal of spending two percent of GDP for military expenditure but has yet to meet this goal. The current government has proposed spending an additional EUR 780 million on defense modernization and capacity building over the next six years, which should bring Slovenia into compliance with its NATO obligations by 2026. 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, constitutes approximately 16 percent of its GDP. 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 to 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, U.S. suppliers are subject to restrictions 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 apply a three 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 is free of charge and also includes a database of all European public procurement tenders open to U.S.-based firms by virtue of the GPA.

Many EU member state governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks. Please refer to "Project Financing" Section in "Trade and Project Financing" for more information.

U.S. companies bidding on government tenders may also qualify for U.S. government advocacy. A unit of the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, the Advocacy Center coordinates U.S. Government interagency advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters bidding on public sector contracts with international governments and government agencies. The Advocacy Center works closely with our network of the U.S. Commercial Service worldwide and inter-agency partners to ensure that exporters of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance of winning government contracts. Advocacy assistance can take many forms but often involves the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government agencies expressing support for the U.S. bidders directly to the foreign government. Consult Advocacy for Foreign Government Contracts for additional information.

- **Project Financing**

Private capital investment in public infrastructure projects is rare, and project financing as a means of financing larger scale (mostly construction) projects is developing slowly in Slovenia, which lags behind the EU average in terms of project financing for public infrastructure projects. Public infrastructure projects are generally accompanied by state financial guarantees to the contractors, which in part helps explain Slovenia's underdeveloped project financing system. Slovenia's lack of public private partnerships, traditional drivers of project financing in other countries, also hinders the development of project financing for public infrastructure projects.

Project financing for the private sector is somewhat more evolved, with Slovenian banks routinely offering project financing services for construction and development projects. Under such financing, banks generally offer up to 70 percent financing, with 30 percent of the project cost typically required from the investor's own sources. Banks also offer, and in some cases require, advisory services pertaining to Slovenian regulations on building and real estate sales as well as ownership transfers of mortgaged real estate. To ensure transparency, banks often require that investors establish a separate company and bank account to manage the project, through which all cash flows pertaining to the project are funneled. As collateral, banks usually require a mortgage on any real estate under development.

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

The EU itself also 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 project financing 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. Structural Fund grants are distributed through the member states' national and regional authorities, and are available only 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 EU's 28 member states, as well as four other European countries open to U.S.-based firms under the terms of the 1995 Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). The database is updated twice weekly and features a range of search options, including approximately 20 industry sectors. The database also includes tenders for public procurement contracts relating to structural funds.

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 with industrial restructuring. For the 2014-20 period, the EU earmarked EUR 352 billion for projects under the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund programs 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.

Member state officials are the key decision-makers for projects financed through EU Structural Funds. These officials assess their countries' needs, investigate proposed projects, evaluate bids, and award contracts. To become familiar with the available EU member state financial support programs, would-be contractors are advised 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 participation by U.S. companies in such tenders, as either 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 many also qualify for loans from the European Investment Bank. The private sector is also involved in project financing. Additional information on these programs is available through the market research section on the U.S. Mission to the EU website.

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 13 EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe that have joined since 2004. These projects are generally co-financed by national authorities, the European Investment Bank, and the private sector.

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-general of the European Commission. Conditions for participation are strict, and participation is usually restricted to EU firms or tied to EU content.

External Assistance Grants

The EuropeAid Cooperation Office is the European Commission agency in charge of managing the EU's external aid programs. This agency manages the entire project cycle, from identification to evaluation, while the directorates-general in charge of external relations and development are responsible for drafting multi-year programs. The EuropeAid website offers extensive information on the range of grant programs available, the kinds of projects that are eligible, as well as manuals to help interested parties understand the relevant contract law. However, participation in calls for tenders for contracts financed by EuropeAid is reserved for enterprises located in the EU member states and requires that the projects use products manufactured in the EU or in the aid recipient country. 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.

All tenders related to EU-funded programs outside the European Union, including accession countries, are located on the EuropeAid Cooperation Office website.

The EU has approved two new types of programs for the 2014-2020 financing period: the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In providing specific pre-accession financial assistance to accession candidate countries, the 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 accession candidate countries must adopt as a precondition to accession, to assist them in building up the administrative and institutional capacities and financing investments necessary to comply with European Commission law. IPA also finances projects in potential EU candidate countries, such as in the Balkans. IPA's budget for 2014-2020 is EUR 11.6 billion. The European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) also provides assistance to southern Mediterranean and eastern neighbors of the EU. Additional information is available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/index_en.htm.

European Investment Bank Loans

Headquartered in Luxembourg, the European Investment Bank (EIB) is the European Union's financing arm. Since its creation in 1958, the EIB has played a key role 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, including telecommunications, transport, energy infrastructure, and the environment.

While the EIB mostly funds projects within the EU, it lends outside the EU as well, primarily in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, Latin America, and Pacific and Caribbean states. The EIB also plays a key role in supporting EU enlargement through loans to finance infrastructure improvements, 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 in urban renewal, and promoting growth, competitiveness, and employment in Europe. The EIB has posted on its website a list of projects eligible for approval, with invaluable information on upcoming tenders related to EIB-financed projects.

The EIB offers attractive business opportunities to U.S. businesses, often with lending rates 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 with information on EIB-financed contracts open to U.S.-based companies. On average, the EIB database contains 50 to 100 tenders extracted from the EU's Official Journal and is updated twice per week.

U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank)

The U.S. Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries toward projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and promoting infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help businesses that create U.S. jobs learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects and how to connect to other parts of the International Trade Administration, including the U.S. Field; the overseas network of Commercial Service offices; and, in Washington, desk officers, sectoral experts, and the Advocacy Center. Learn more by contacting the Commercial Liaison Offices to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank.

Financing Web Resources

Commercial Liaison Office to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development:

Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank

EU regional policies/EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

EU Grants and Loans index

IPA

The European Investment Bank

EIB-financed projects

Trade Finance Guide: A Quick Reference for U.S. Exporters, published by the International Trade Administration's Industry & Analysis team:

Export-Import Bank of the United States

OPIC

Trade and Development Agency

SBA's Office of International Trade

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation

U.S. Agency for International Development

Business Travel

In general, business managers in Slovenia take a market-based approach to business. Management in Slovenia tends to concentrate decision-making at the senior levels, with relatively little delegation of authority or decision-making to middle management. In principle, one should not consider negotiations concluded until confirmed by the general manager or a clearly acknowledged decision maker. Slovenians place a premium on personal contacts and correspondence, and personal visits are important in conducting business. Clarity and continuity in communication are important.

Travel Advisory

The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to consult its Slovenia travel guidance for information on the latest travel advisories.

Visa Requirements

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 within the immediate prior 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 visa or residence permit must be acquired at a Slovenian embassy or consulate.

American citizens seeking a stay between three and 12 months may apply for a long-term "D" visa, while those seeking a stay longer than 12 months may apply for a temporary residence permit. In both cases, U.S. citizens in the United States should begin the process with the Slovenian Embassy in Washington DC or the Slovenian Consulate in Cleveland. For American citizens residing outside the United States, the application may be filed at the Slovenian embassy with jurisdiction over the individual's country of residence.

For information on travel to Slovenia, see the Department of State's Slovenia travel guidance. Travelers should also refer to the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana's website. U.S. citizens in Slovenia are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Slovenia's entry and visa requirements and 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. U.S. citizens in Slovenia are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

U.S. companies that require foreign businesspersons to travel to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should consult the State Department Visa Website and the U.S. Embassy Ljubljana visa page.

Currency

Slovenia is a member of the Eurozone and has used the euro since January 2007.

Telecommunications/Electronics

Slovenia has efficient postal and telephone services. Email communication is widely used, and faxes are rarely used. Local telephone calling card services are not available in-country, and long-distance charges tend to be high, even by European standards. In most areas, tone-dialing has become standard.

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, and 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, one must dial 00 plus the country code. Directory assistance is 1188.

Mobile telephone use is widespread. Virtually every businessperson has a mobile phone, and many companies also have a general mobile number for the reception or information desk, because calling from a mobile phone to a stationary line is considerably more expensive than calling from one mobile phone to another. Three major service providers offer mobile telephone service in Slovenia: Telekom Slovenije, A1, and Telemach. Each company offers a range of services and packages, and consumers are recommended to compare tariffs and conditions carefully before entering into a contract.

Transportation

Ljubljana is easily accessible by air. Jože Pučnik Airport is an international airport located 27 kilometers (approximately 17 miles) outside of Ljubljana, the capital city. The airport is serviced by international airlines including Air Serbia, Air France, Finnair, Montenegro Airlines, Lot, Lufthansa Cargo, Turkish Airlines, EasyJet, Transavia, and Wizzair. Additional information here.

Other airports in Slovenia and neighboring countries are listed below, with the distance and travel time to Ljubljana by car in parentheses:

Graz, Austria (186 km; approx. 2.25 hrs)

Venice, Italy (229 km; approx. 2.5 hrs)

Vienna, Austria (391 km; approx. 4 hrs)

Trieste, Italy (121 km; approx. 1.5 hrs)

Zagreb, Croatia (150 km; approx. 2 hrs)

Klagenfurt, Austria (88 km; approx. 1.5 hrs)

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 country's small size. Major cities in Slovenia have efficient public transportation systems, relying mainly on buses and taxis. In Ljubljana, buses require a prepaid "Urbana" card, which may be purchased easily at newspaper stands or post offices. Taxi service is readily available at designated taxi stands or by telephone. While taxis are metered, taxi companies have the right to set their own rates, which may vary widely. Be sure to check the posted rate before using a taxi. It is usually cheaper to call a taxi by telephone than to take a taxi waiting at a hotel or a stand.

Slovenia joined the Schengen zone in 2007. With Slovenia's accession to the Schengen zone, land border check checkpoints with Austria, Italy, and Hungary were removed. Slovenia implemented Schengen zone rules for air travel in 2008. Since Croatia's accession to the EU in 2013, the Slovenian-Croatian border is no longer an external border of the EU customs territory, although it is still an external Schengen border. This means the movement of goods across the Slovenian-Croatian border is now free, with no customs formalities required, but movement of people is subject to customs and passport control.

The Schengen Borders Code allows member states to temporarily restore border controls at internal borders in the event of a serious threat to public safety or internal security. For example, as a result of the 2015-16 refugee crisis, Austria reintroduced border controls on some of its land borders with Slovenia and Hungary.

Language

Slovenia's official language is Slovene, a southern Slavic language with some resemblance to Croatian and Serbian. Slovene is written in the standard Roman alphabet, with several additional letters. Most businesspeople in Slovenia speak at least one foreign language, with English being the most common. German is also useful in some parts of the country, and a number of people in areas bordering Italy speak Italian. When necessary, translators and interpreters may be hired through the Slovenian Association of Conference Interpreters (telephone: +386(0)41-648-416, email: zkts@zkts.si).

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

Health

The Department of State has issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory for Slovenia and advises U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel, including to Slovenia, due to the global impact of COVID-19.

Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays

Local time is GMT + 1.

Daylight savings time is between March 29, 2020, and October 25, 2020.

Typical business operating hours in Slovenia are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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 U.S. Commercial Service in advance by telephone at +32-2 811-4817, by fax at +32-2 811-5151, or email at brussels.ec.office.box@trade.gov. A current directory of staff and locations worldwide is accessible on the U.S. Commercial Service website.

Holidays

In 20120, the following holidays will be observed in Slovenia. Most businesses in Slovenia will be closed on these days. In addition, many Slovenians take several weeks of vacation in late summer, and most businesses are lightly staffed in August.

January 1-2—New Year's Day

February 8—Prešeren Day

April 13—Easter Monday

April 27—Resistance Day

May 1-2—May Day

June 25—Statehood Day

August 15—Assumption Day

October 31—Reformation Day

November 1—All Saints Day

December 25—Christmas Day

December 26—Independence and Unity Day

The U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana observes both American and Slovenian holidays. A full list of all 2020 Slovenian and American holidays is available at https://si.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/.

Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings

Personal or household items temporarily imported by domestic and foreign natural persons entering Slovenia for a temporary sojourn are generally exempt from customs duties. For more information, please consult the Commerce Department's Market Research Library or the Country Commercial Guides.

Travel Related Web Resources

Market Research Library

Country Commercial Guides:

State Department Visa Website

U.S. 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

Investment Climate Statement (ICS)

Slovenia's 2020 Investment Climate Statement is available at the Department of State's Investment Climate Statement website.

Political Environment

Information on Slovenia's political and economic environment is available at the Department of State's Countries & Areas website.