

## o. Introduction

The territory of Slovenia (SI) covers 20,273km<sup>2</sup>. The country has nearly 2 million inhabitants and is divided into 193 municipalities, of which 11 are urban. The largest municipality is that of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, that has slightly more than 250,000 inhabitants. Other major cities are Maribor and Koper/Capodistria. The Republic of Slovenia [*Republika Slovenija*] is a parliamentary democracy. The president (head of State) is elected for a five-year term on a popular vote. The parliament consists of a State Assembly (with 90 members that are elected every four years) and a State Council (with 40 members that are elected every four years). The State Assembly makes the republic's laws, the State Council can propose laws or can request reconsideration of a vote in the assembly. The State Assembly elects the prime minister for a four-year term. Slovenia's economy has adapted smoothly to a market economy. Over the past eight years the average economic growth was 4.3%. Apart from manufacturing, tourism is one of the most important industries.



## 1. General aspects

The ancestors of the present-day Slovenians settled in the area in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AC. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Western Slavic tribes formed an alliance with the Slavic Duchy of Carantania (the centre of today's Austrian Carinthia), which fell under the rule of the Frankish Empire in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century most of Slovenia came under the power of the Hapsburg dynasty and later became part of the Austro-Hungarian-Empire. In 1918, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovenia joined the Serbs and Croats in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. After World War II Slovenia became part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, from which it became independent on 25 1991. Slovenia joined NATO on 29 March 2004 and the European Union on 1 May 2004.

## 2. Demographic data

- 2.1 According to the 2002 census Slovenia has 1,964,036 inhabitants. 1,631,363 (i.e. 83.1%) of them are Slovenes. The Hungarians (6,243) and the Italians (2,258) are considered autochthonous minorities in the Slovenian Constitution and have special rights ( $\Rightarrow$  3.1.). Also the Roma (3,246), who are not considered to be an indigenous minority, enjoy special rights ( $\Rightarrow$  *Romany in Slovenia* for details on the Roma community). Other ethnic groups include Albanians (6,186), Bosniacs (21,542), Montenegrins (2,667), Croats (35,642), Macedonians (3,972), Muslims (10,467), Germans (499), Serbs (38,964), Yugoslavs (527) and Bosnians (8,062) ( $\Rightarrow$  Table 1). The majority of the current members of these ethnic groups (with the exception of the Germans) arrived in Slovenia as economic immigrants after World War II and after the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

**Table 1: Population by Ethnic Affiliation, 2002 census**

<b>Ethnic Affiliation</b>	<b>Number</b>
Slovenes	1,631,363
Italians	2,258
Hungarians	6,243
Roma	3,246
Albanians	6,186
Bosniacs	21,542
Montenegrins	2,667
Croats	35,642
Macedonians	3,972
Muslims*	10,467
Germans	499
Serbs	38,964
Others declared	3,933
Yugoslavs**	527
Bosnians	8,062
Regionally declared**	1,467
Ethnically undeclared	12,085
Did not want to reply	48,588
Unknown	126,325
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,964,036</b>

Source: Census 2002

\* The ethnic category 'Muslim', which was introduced in the post-war censuses of the Yugoslav population, mostly incorporated people from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who today mostly declare themselves 'Bošnjaks'. (Novak-Lukanovič 1999, 6)

\*\* From 1971 onwards, population censuses envisaged the possibility of regional determination of the identity of an individual, which is not necessarily defined ethnically, but is linked to the narrower region of residence, such as Istria, Primorska, Dolenjska, etc. (ibid.)

- 2.2 Table 2 lists the population by mother tongue. Most people (1,723,434) have declared Slovenian to be their mother tongue: 54,079 people have indicated Croatian, 36,265 Serbo-Croatian, 31,499 Bosnian and 31,329 Serbian. 7,713 have stated Hungarian and 3,762 Italian as their mother tongue.

**Table 2: Population by Mother tongue, 2002 census**

<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Number</b>
Slovenian	1,723,434
Italian	3,762

Hungarian	7,713
Romany	3,834
Albanian	7,177
Bosnian	31,499
Montenegrin	462
Croatian	54,079
Croatian-Serbian	126
Macedonian	4,760
German	1,628
Serbian	31,329
Serbo-Croatian	36,265

Out of 1,631,363 ethnic Slovenians 1,601,156 have Slovenian as their mother tongue. Out of 2,258 ethnic Italians 1,832 indicate Italian to be their mother tongue and out of 6,243 Hungarians 5,963 indicate Hungarian to be their mother tongue ( $\Rightarrow$  *Italian in Slovenia* and *Hungarian in Slovenia*). A full [comparison of figures on ethnic affiliation and mother tongue](#) as well as a full list of [mother tongues used in Slovenia](#) can be found on the website of the Slovenian Statistical Service.

### 3. Language policy

- 3.1 Art. 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia [*ustava republike slovenije*] (1991) specifies that Slovene is the official language of Slovenia. However, in the areas where Italian or ethnic Hungarian communities reside, the official language is also Italian or Hungarian. These areas are the so-called ethnically mixed areas. They are determined by the statutes of the municipalities according to the regulations of the Law on the Formation of Municipalities and on the Determination of Their Territories [*zakon o ustanovitvi občin ter o določitvi njihovih območij*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 60/94 and no. 56/98 ( $\Rightarrow$  *Italian in Slovenia* and *Hungarian in Slovenia*)). Art. 61 and 62 of the Slovenian Constitution guarantee all citizens of the Republic of Slovenia the right to freely express affiliation with their nation or national community, to foster and give expression to their culture and to use their language and script. Art. 64 of the Slovenian Constitution specifically deals with special rights for the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian communities in Slovenia. It guarantees the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian communities the right to freely use their national symbols, the right to establish their own organisations, education and schooling in their own languages, the right to foster economic, cultural, scientific, and research activities, as well as activities associated with the mass media and publishing. It also gives them the right to foster contacts with the Italian and Hungarian communities living outside Slovenia and it ensures financial support and encouragement to the implementation of these rights.
- 3.2 For the implementation of special rights, the promotion of their needs and interests, and for organised participation in public matters, members of the Italian and Hungarian minorities establish self-governing ethnic communities in the regions of their autochthonous settlement. That is stated in Art. 1 of the Law on Self-Governing Ethnic Communities [*zakon o samoupravnih narodnih skupnostih*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 65/94). According to Art. 12 of this law, self-governing ethnic communities submit to self-governing local communities proposals, initiatives and opinions on matters regarding the status of ethnic communities and the preservation of characteristics of ethnically mixed territories. It is the obligation of self-governing local communities to deal

with these matters and to take a stand towards them. The interaction between the self-governing ethnic communities and the self-governing local communities is also mentioned in the Law on Local Self-Government [*zakon o lokalni samoupravi*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 72/93). Art. 5 of this law points out that in territories inhabited by members of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities, municipalities shall be formed that give effect to the special rights of ethnic communities. Art 39. states that in ethnically mixed areas the two national communities must have at least one representative in the municipal council. The Statutes of the municipalities in which the Italian and Hungarian national minorities reside give a detailed account of the rights that are granted to the minorities.

3.3 At the national level, the Italian and Hungarian national communities are represented by the Coastal Italian Self-governing National Community and the Hungarian National self-governing Community of Pomurje. These national communities act as partners in deliberations with the government and other state bodies and coordinate the attitude of both ethnic communities towards all issues concerning their status on the regional and national level. On the national level one deputy each represents the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities in the National Assembly. They have the right to use their language and they also have the right to exercise the veto on acts and regulations of the National Assembly that deal with minority issues. So far, the veto has not been exercised. The Slovenian government has a Government Office for Nationalities that primarily deals with matters concerning the national communities and the Roma.

3.4 Education in Slovenia is regulated among others by the Preschool Institutions Act [*zakon o vrtcih*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 12/96), the Elementary School Act [*zakon o osnovi šoli*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 12/96), and the Gymnasium Act [*zakon o gimnazijah*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 12/96). These acts show that two models of bilingual education are practiced in the ethnically mixed areas. In the Hungarian Prekmurje region a Slovene-Hungarian bilingual educational system has been operative since 1959 ( $\Rightarrow$  *Italian in Slovenia and Hungarian in Slovenia*). In the Italian region Italian minority children attend pre-school institutions and primary and secondary schools with Italian as the language of instruction and Slovene as an obligatory subject. In educational institutions with Slovene as the language of instruction Italian is an obligatory subject ( $\Rightarrow$  language report on Italian for more details). Furthermore there is a Law on the Implementation of Special Rights for Members of the Italian and Hungarian National Minorities in the Field of Education [*Zakon o posebnih pravicah italijanske in madžarske narodne skupnosti na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 12/82). This law stresses that the education of members of the Italian and Hungarian national minorities is a composite part of a unified education system (Art. 2), pre-school education must be adapted in such a way that children, apart from the development of their mother tongue, are allowed to learn the basics of Slovene or the language of the national minority (Art. 7), special historical, geographical and other achievements of the Italian and Hungarian nation must be considered in education and that the national sentiment of the students has to be respected (Art. 8). The law goes on to point out that educational institutions shall cooperate with corresponding institutions in their nation of origin in compliance with their annual work plan (Art. 15). And it also contains directives on the language fluency of school personnel (e.g., Art. 17 – 19). So far the schools of the national communities are all public schools. Both the Italian and the Hungarian minority are entitled to participate in the planning of the curricula, in educational policies and in the management of the educational institutions. The highest expert

body in the field of education is the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education that has a Commission for Minority Education. Higher education and teacher training are discussed in the language reports (⇒ *Hungarian in Slovenia* and *Italian in Slovenia*).

- 3.5 The use of languages in court is regulated by the Law on Courts [*zakon o sodiščih*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 19/94). Art. 5 of this law states that the business of court is conducted in Slovene. It is, however, possible to use Italian or Hungarian in the court in the territories in which the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities live. The details of the operation of the courts in areas where the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities reside are explained in chapter five (Art. 60-69) of the *Court Rules* (Official Gazette RS, no. 17/95, last amendment in 2003). Art. 69 of the Court Rules mentions that the bonus for the qualification of judges and court personnel for conducting bilingual proceedings shall be determined by the judicial council.
- 3.6 The official language used in public administration is Slovene. Art. 4 of the Public Administration Act [*zakon o upravi*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 67/94), however, states that Italian or Hungarian is the second official language in areas where original Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities reside. The Slovenian government has worked out measures of positive discrimination to encourage the use of Italian and Hungarian in public administration on the territory of local communities where the Italian and Hungarian communities reside. The Ordinance on Quotients for the Basic Remuneration of Officials Appointed by the Republic of Slovenia and Other Employees in Slovene Government Services, Administrative Bodies and Administrative Units (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 82/94) provides for an increase of the basic salary by 6% for those persons who have active knowledge of the language of the national community and an increase by 3% for those persons who have passive knowledge of the language of the national community. Further details on the use of the language in public life or documents can be found in the Law on Personal Identity Cards [*zakon o osebni izkaznici*] (Official Gazette no. 75/97), the Law on Passports of the Citizens of the Republic of Slovenia [*zakon o potnih listinah državljanov republike slovenije*] (Official Gazette, no. 1/91), the Law on the Naming and Registering of Settlements, Streets and Buildings (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 5/80), and the Central Register of Population Act [*zakon o matičnem registru*] (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 37/03).
- 3.7 In practice, the right to use one's mother tongue is fulfilled to varying degrees in individual institutions. As a rule, bilingual communication is better provided for in the courts of law and at the level of communal administration, political assemblies, and public signs. In public and private enterprises and factories it is less satisfactory. Employees in administrative agencies and schools who according to the job requirement should be proficient in Italian or Hungarian in addition to Slovene are awarded a supplement to their salary. This often is a source of dispute.
- 3.8 The Slovenian media landscape is regulated primarily by the Law on Mass Media [*zakon o javnih glasilih*] (Official Gazette RS, no. 36/94). Art. 3 of this law among others states that the Slovenian state supports the development of mass media meant to inform the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities. Following Art. 3 of the Law on Radio Television Slovenia [*zakon o radioteleviziji slovenija*] (Official Gazette RS, no. 36/94) the Slovenian public radio and television (RTV – *radioteleviziji slovenija*) comprises the creation of one radio programme (at least two hours daily) and one television programme (at least 30 minutes daily) for the

Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities. Radio and television programmes in the Italian and Hungarian languages are part of the national programme broadcast by the national radio and television. Within that programme, full autonomy is guaranteed to editorial boards responsible for programmes in the Italian and Hungarian languages. Both the Italian and the Hungarian national community have one representative in the Council of RTV Slovenia, which is the supreme managing body of the national radio and television.

- 3.9 The Slovenian legal framework offers both the Italian and the Hungarian national communities high protection in the so-called ethnically mixed areas and also contains provisions for the Roma community ( $\Rightarrow$  *Romani in Slovenia*). The legal standard that goes back to the time when Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia fails, however, to recognize other groups like the Germans, Croats, Serbians and Bosnians that have been present on Slovenian territory for a considerable period of time. In this respect the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Slovenia recommends the authorities of Slovenia to reconsider its position on the Croatian language from the point of view from the Charter, to clarify the issue of the traditional presence of the Serbian, has encouraged the Slovenian government to reconsider the position of the Serbian language and of the Bosnian language in Slovenia, and to apply part II of the Charter to German as a regional or minority language in Slovenia within the meaning of the Charter ( $\Rightarrow$  Other languages in Slovenia).
- 3.10 The Institute for Ethnic Studies, the Scientific Research Center of SASA (Slovenian Academy of Arts and Science) and the European Center for Regional Studies study different dimensions of inter-ethnic relations within Slovenia.

#### **4. The European dimension**

Slovenia signed the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) on 3 July 1997, which was ratified on 4 October 2000 and came into force on 1 January 2001. Slovenia has also signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) on 1 February 1995, which was ratified on 25 March 1998 and has been in force since 1 July 1998. Slovenia has signed bilateral agreements with Italy and Hungary. With the Act of Notification of Succession of Agreements between Former Yugoslavia and Italy (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 40/92), the Treaty of Osimo regulating the status of the Slovene minority in Italy and the Italian minority in Slovenia remained in force. With the Republic of Hungary there is an Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 6/93). On 30 April 2001 Slovenia signed an Agreement on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science with the Republic of Austria.