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Discover Slovenia

April 2019



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Discover Slovenia

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April 2019

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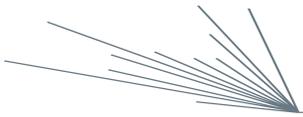
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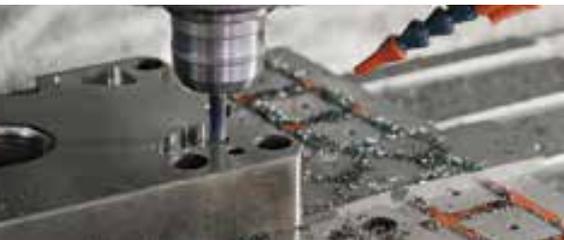


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Bold Enough to Enter Distant Markets

It is a pleasure to introduce this issue of Discover Slovenia magazine, which aims at readers from both American continents.

You might not know very much about Slovenia or its economy – but even if you do, I would like to help you on your way by outlining a few business and other opportunities that our country and its economy can offer you.

Slovenia is a European Union member state, uses the euro (the common European currency) and is part of the Schengen area. Although we in Slovenia believe that we have an orderly business and investment environment and the legislation to match, we also know that we could be better and more active – as a country and as an economy. Accordingly, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), the country's largest trade and business organization, spends a great deal of time and resources on searching for new business opportunities for Slovenian entrepreneurs at home and, above all, abroad.

While the single European market is undoubtedly the Slovenian economy's most important market, it is clear that our country should, in response to global competitiveness and the global market, look more widely outwards. We have always been an explicitly export-oriented country and it is only by diversifying exports and investments that we can spread the risk of economic crisis and mitigate its effects on our economy and economic outlook. Slovenian enterprises and the institutions that support them, and that includes the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, are well aware of this. This is one reason why Slovenia is becoming increasingly active on the markets of both Americas. I am happy to note that we already have a few tales to tell, and a few more "in the pipeline". We will be presenting a few of these in this issue of Discover Slovenia.

Slovenian companies have found their opportunities, and particularly their advantages, within narrower, flexible frameworks - they are important link in global supply chains thanks to professionals and innovators hard at work at home and across the globe. These companies have turned long years of experience in doing business internationally into reliable, development-oriented partnerships, but there are plenty more still searching for the chance to prove themselves on the world stage.

Slovenian enterprises are bold enough to enter more distant markets – and indeed, have the knowledge and skills to do so. It is more than likely that Slovenian products, services or both are already available where you are. But brand perception tends to be stronger than knowledge of where something comes from. Even if that is the case, it can still fill us

with pride – and give us extra motivation to work even harder.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia is undoubtedly one of the key players when it comes to creating new tales of collaboration between Slovenian and other foreign companies. We believe that the Slovenian economy has great potential, which has led us, in cooperation with other trade promotion organizations, to lay out two objectives that we would like to achieve, in tandem with Slovenian entrepreneurs, by 2025: national exports of EUR 50 billion (up from EUR 39 billion in 2018) and value added per employee of EUR 60,000 (up from EUR 44,000 in 2018).

We are extending our hand to you in the spirit of cooperation, in the hope that we can do something together that is of mutual benefit to our economies. I urge you to take advantage of the possibilities and opportunities that Slovenia and its economy, its intriguing range of products and services and its wonderfully innovative technological solutions offer you. And don't forget: one of our country's chief advantages is that it has the most northerly port on the Adriatic, making it the perfect jumping-off point for the wider European region and the Balkans.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue and that it gives you food for thought, encourages you to take the initiative or even just gets you asking more questions. In that spirit, I would be delighted to answer your questions or engage in debate, so please feel free to write to me at ante.milevoj@gzs.si.

Welcome to Slovenia!



Foto: Barbara Reja

Ante Milevoj, Director, Centre for International Relations



Photo: Depositphotos

Slovenia

Official name: Republic of Slovenia

Capital city: Ljubljana

Government: Parliamentary republic

State President: Borut Pahor

Prime Minister: Marjan Šarec

Local government: 212 municipalities, of which 11 have urban status; 12 statistical regions, which are grouped into two cohesion regions – Western and Eastern Slovenia

Area: 20,273 km²

Population: 2,067,595 (1 October 2018)

Location: bordered by Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia; excellent connections with all European markets

Currency: Euro

GDP per capita: EUR 21,182

Growth in 2018: 4.5%

Projected growth for 2019: 3.2%

(Consensus Economics, April 19)

Time zone: CET (GMT+1), and CEST (GMT+2) in summer

Official languages: Slovene, together with Italian and Hungarian, in the areas with Italian and Hungarian minorities.

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia



Photo: Depositphotos

Official gateway to information on Slovenia



Top Business Data

Ease of doing business, openness to trade, education and innovations remain the strongest pillars of success.

Bojan Ivanc, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

1st

(out of 140) Macro-economic stability
(WEF)

10th

(out of 63)
Prices (IMD)

10th

(out of 190)
Resolving insolvency (DB)

12th

(out of 28) Innovation
Union Scoreboard

19th

(out of 190)
Getting electricity (DB)

27th

(out of 140)
Product market (WEF)

28th

(out of 140)
Innovations capability (WEF)

29th

(out of 140)
Skills (WEF)

34th

(out of 63) IMD World Digital
Competitiveness Ranking

35th

(out of 140)
Infrastructure (WEF)

55th

(out of 160) Logistics
Performance Index

Sources: Doing Business (DB), IMD - World Competitiveness Rankings, IMD - World Digital Competitiveness Rankings, WEF - The Global World Competitiveness Report, Logistics Performance Index, Innovation Union Scoreboard





Photo: Depositphotos

Slovenia, the European Union’s Current Star Performer

The highest growth in a decade retains a good balance between domestic and foreign demand.

Bojan Ivanc, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

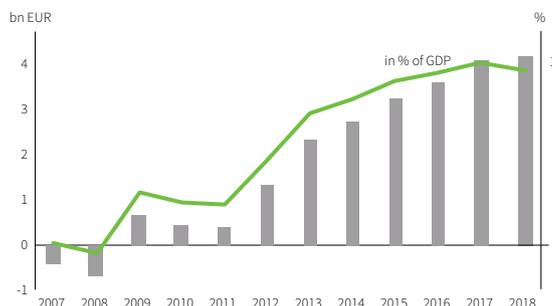
The Slovenian economy has been growing over the last five years. Real economic growth stood at 4.5% in 2018 (seasonally and calendar adjusted), which is double the long-term growth assessment. This growth is more than double the average for the EU-28 (1.9%) and among the six highest in the EU-28. In the second half of 2017, Slovenia exceeded the development level of 2008. Following the growth in consumption, only investments in fixed assets remain below the pre-crisis level, which are 29% lower in real terms than ten years ago, when Slovenia was in the midst of a residential construction boom. According to the most recent current forecasts by Eastern European Consensus, economic growth is expected to reach 3.3% in 2019 and 2.8% in 2020. The estimates for 2019 are in the 2.5–3.7% range. The cooling of the euro area’s economy has thus had a moderate impact on this estimate.

The likelihood of moderate to high economic growth in 2019 is based on the creation of jobs and growth of wages, and also on consumer optimism. Lower interest rates stimulate domestic sales, particularly of durables (vehicles) and real estate, as well as construction. Trade will slow slightly due to slightly worsened conditions for exports to the main

European markets, but growth in exports in 2019 will remain at 5%. A significant increase in the minimum wage (+4.5%), public sector salaries due to the relaxation of crisis restrictions, and increasing salaries in the private sector, as well as comprehensive relief of taxes and contributions (to the level of the average salary already in 2019), should further stimulate the growth of private sector consumption. Slovenian consumers are otherwise a bit less optimistic this year, but the optimism level remains above the average for the last several years.

Growth in 2018 equalled 4.5% of GDP, and is forecast to reach 3% in 2019.

Trade balance (goods & services)



Export Growth Double That of the EU Overall

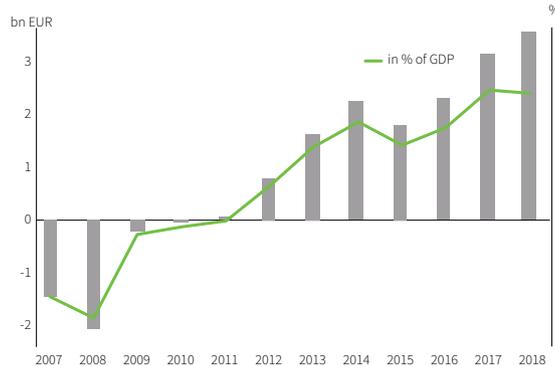
The Slovenian economy is primarily focused on EU markets on the export side, as they account for more than three-quarters of its exports, which represent more than 85% of GDP. Growth in goods exports stood at 9.4% in 2018, more than double that recorded overall by the euro area and the EU-28, and 4.5 percentage points lower than in 2017. Industrial production rose by 6.4%, which is 2 percentage points lower than in 2017. Growth in exports of services stood at 10.2 percent, primarily as a result of a successful tourism season, good performance by the transport sector and new business abroad for construction firms.

Slovenia's Economy Is Solvent, with Low Levels of Debt

Slovenian firms have tightened up their balance sheets and improved their organizational structures over the last decade. The net debt to EBITDA ratio fell from 6 to less than 3, while cash now accounts for 6% of assets. Value-added per employee exceeded EUR 43,000, primarily as a result of lower prices of the input commodities that Slovenia's export economy needs for production. ROE was over 8%, while companies earmarked 5.2% of sales revenues for investment in 2017. Further increases can be expected in investment activity, after a long period of being more than one percentage point down on its long-term average. In addition to investments in machinery and transport equipment, investments in commercial real estate will also increase considerably.

Labor productivity rose from EUR 34,000 to over EUR 43,000 over ten years.

Current account balance



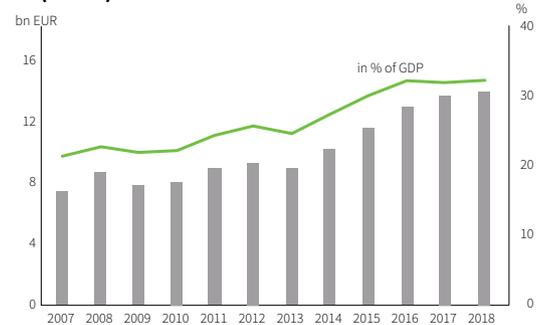
Consumers Have Woken Up

After a two-year lag relative to the EU overall, domestic consumption in Slovenia is again increasing, which is primarily attributable to more favourable dynamics on the labor market. According to survey figures, the active workforce increased by 2.2% in 2018, which is just below the previous year. The employment of foreign nationals is increasing, which coincides with rapid growth in construction, manufacturing and other services.

An increasing number of companies (40% of all enterprises) are citing problems with hiring qualified workers and are planning to increase recruitment

levels in the coming months. The surveyed unemployment rate (ILO methodology) fell to 5.2% in December 2018, 2.6 percentage points lower than the figure for the euro area and the lowest rate since 2009. The unemployment rate stood at 4% before the crisis, and rose to 11% at the peak of the crisis.

FDI (stock)



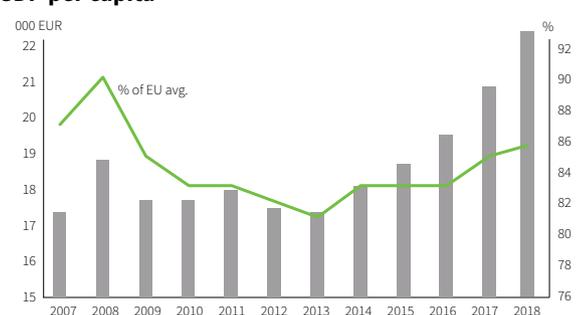
Wage Growth Increasing, Real Estate Prices Rising

Average gross wages in 2018 were 3.4% higher, and net wages were 2.9% higher. Gross wages in the public sector rose by 2.3% and by 4% in the private sector. This was partially on account of higher additional payments (performance bonuses) due to good overall corporate performance in the last year, and the further disencumbering of certain bonuses (the '14th month') from income tax (up to the level of the average salary).

The increase in household consumption is mainly attributable to increased employment and higher levels of remuneration, while household deposits are also increasing (+6.8% in 2018). Lending growth remains moderate (2.2% for corporate borrowing and 7% for household borrowing, which is less than the nominal GDP growth). Year-on-year growth in housing loans stood at 4.7% in December, while growth in consumer loans stood at 11.8%.

After four years of growth in residential real estate prices, particularly in the last two years (average rate 12%), we can once again speak of record prices on the residential real estate market, which have reached the level of prices achieved in 2008 (although still 10 percent lower in real terms). Over the full year 2018, real estate prices grew by 15%. The EU average for the year was 4.4%. Household debt is also still below average, as the average household is able to repay its mortgage debt from its half-year earnings, while households across the euro area require their full annual earnings.

GDP per capita



R&D expenditure (mio EUR)



Budget Surplus Achieved

The Slovenian national budget surplus is growing faster than forecast due to fast growth of nominal GDP. The budget surplus for 2018 stood at EUR 302.9 million, or 0.7% of GDP. The government’s consolidated gross debt decreased to EUR 32.2 billion, or to 70.1% of GDP from 74.1% in 2017. This decrease was mainly a consequence of expected growth in nominal GDP in 2018. Slovenia has reported a primary surplus (surplus revenues to expenditure before payment of interest) since 2015, and a secondary surplus since 2017. Nevertheless, according to estimates by the European Commission and the Slovenian Fiscal Advisory Council, the structural deficit is expected to increase further, as the current high level of economic growth masks a lack of serious long-term reforms in pensions and healthcare.

Inflation remained low in 2018, despite the positive domestic economic climate. Prices (HICP) increased by 1.9% in 2018, which equals the EU-28 figure and is higher than the euro area (1.8%), primarily due to higher energy prices, which are weighted higher in Slovenia’s market basket. Inflation (HICP) remains relatively low in 2019 (February SLO 1.3% and EU-28 1.6%), and is forecast to stay below 2% for the entire year in both the EU and Slovenia. High demand for workers in the private sector could lead to higher growth in wages and prices (i.e. service price inflation) in the coming months. Growth in wages continues to lag behind the Višegrad countries, due to which our export competitiveness vis-à-vis those countries remains positive.

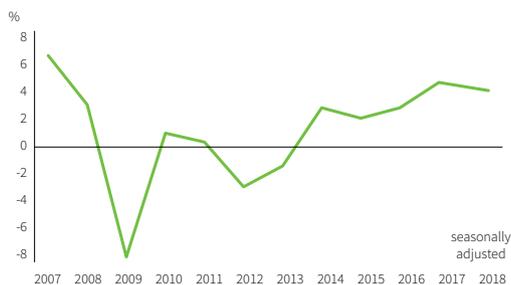
Trade War an Indirect Threat

The main risks to the Slovenian economy are associated with the sustainability of the favourable trends in exports, and particularly to the threat of trade wars. There are considerable unknowns with regard to the speed of the transition from diesel-powered vehicles to electromobility, as well as other political uncertainties connected with the EU single market, and particularly to the free flow of goods at the EU’s internal borders. This is of very great importance to Slovenia’s transport sector (port, railroads, freight transport). The return of faster growth of labor costs due to growth in domestic demand (construction and real estate) could gradually weaken the export competitiveness of the Slovenian economy, which is currently high, as the current account surplus is still over 6% of GDP.

As a small, open economy, the EU single market, the euro and the four freedoms (free movement of goods, services, labor and capital) are the key performance determinants for Slovenian exporters. Due to its integration into global value chains via Germany, it is important that the flow of goods across global markets remains as free as possible. Due to the Slovenian economy’s integration into global value chains, every Slovenian citizen has EUR 25,000 more than they had when Slovenia gained independence (source: Bertelsmann). Slovenia has therefore exploited the growth in global trade well, although lower growth or negative growth could lead to a decline in living standards.

The ILO surveyed unemployment rate fell to below 5%.

GDP growth



Ranking



Sources: Bank of Slovenia, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Doing Business, IMD - World Competitiveness Rankings, WEF - The Global World Competitiveness Report

Bringing a startup mentality to established companies

Transformation Lighthouse carries out comprehensive corporate transformations at established companies in order to help them create an innovative environment that leads to the development of products and services that allow them to penetrate new market segments.

The world is changing quickly, business activities are becoming more inter-dependent, and business models are changing, which means that all companies have to make fast adjustments irrespective of their size or history. Transformation Lighthouse helps companies understand and carry out the necessary changes and convince employees that the changes are necessary and welcome.

“It is a process of creating an innovative environment, a so-called “engine of innovation”, which means that the transformation has to be approached in a wholistic manner. The key is working hand in hand with companies to change their cultures and operations. This leads to innovative new solutions that they can market in new segments,” says Urška Jež, the managing director of Transformation Lighthouse.

Employees are the key to success

Jež says that recently, implementing changes to businesses has mainly involved digitalisation and innovation. “But you can’t change any of this if you don’t start with the people on whom the success or failure of the transformation will depend. In the modern world there is a great deal of uncertainty, and due to the numerous technological changes, the future of the business world, and consequently also of private life, is unknown. We have to learn how to accept this and take advantage of the opportunities, and not give in to fear and mistrust. Therefore it is all the more important to be open to the changes, and develop connections and cooperation,” says Jež.

A customised team for every client

Transformation Lighthouse connects companies with coaches who have been working in corporate consultancy for decades. Their partner, EDG of Palo Alto, has been present on the global market since the early nineties. “We combined knowledge, experience and advantages from various areas and created a comprehensive programme that is also supported by our partners’ technological platforms. There are eleven employees who actively work on these projects. Depending on the client’s needs, where there is a need for very specific knowledge, that number can be increased,” explains Jež.



All of this arose years ago out of a desire to connect established companies with newly emerging startups. They quickly realised how different these two worlds are. Therefore they began searching for methods and content that would allow traditional companies to get closer to the world of startups. “At the same time there was increasing talk around the world of the urgent need for digitalisation and innovation within companies. Therefore we found partners in the USA, the UK, Switzerland and Germany and designed a comprehensive programme that includes innovation, digitalisation, and launching or optimising internal processes according to the methodologies of startup companies. Most importantly, changing the mindset of employees begins with management. The programme is modular, so that clients can decide for themselves which is the easiest or best way to begin,” says Jež.



“With our partners in the USA, the UK, Switzerland and Germany we have designed a comprehensive programme that includes innovation, digitalisation, and launching or optimising internal processes according to the methodologies of startup companies,” says Urška Jež, managing director of Transformation Lighthouse.

A bridge between Europe and America

Transformation Lighthouse acts as a bridge between America and Europe via Slovenia. They also employ coaches and experts from the US, specifically from Silicon Valley. “The world has shrunk and companies are forming alliances in various areas and in various industries. They are seeking business opportunities everywhere, not just in their own countries. Thus we organise Silicon Valley strategic tours with our partner EDG in Palo Alto, and we also host strategic tours in Europe for American companies,” says Jež. These are strategic workshops, through which they connect companies in various industries in the development of new joint products. South-Eastern Europe is currently particularly interesting for foreign companies, as it is full of talents and innovators with whom they can connect.



Why Do Business in Slovenia?

Foreign investors appreciate Slovenia's excellent geostrategic location, as well as the quality and relatively low cost of its workforce.

Katarina Klepec Kovač

Edi Kraus, the General Manager of Aquafil, says that Slovenia has several advantages that apply to all foreign investors. He lists "the well-regulated economic environment, good education system and thus well-trained staff, knowledge of foreign languages, open economy, export orientation, exceptional familiarity with the markets of the former Yugoslavia, the eastern European countries and Russia, high awareness of the importance and protection of the natural environment, and good quality of life".

Kraus explains further using the example of the benefits enjoyed by Italian investors doing business in Slovenia. "For Italian investors, Slovenia is interesting for several reasons. First I would point out the geographical proximity, which is particularly important for companies just beginning to internationalise their operations. Also beneficial is the presence of the two minorities, in which companies can find bilingual employees who can contribute significantly to the establishing and management of new Italian investments in Slovenia. Slovenia has a very competitive workforce. And the logistical connections with the motorway and maritime traffic (two ports in Trieste and Koper) are excellent," says Kraus.

Quality That Will Convince You

According to the OECD, Slovenia is a relatively highly developed country. Because of skills, well-established sales channels and numerous intangibles, a number of the country's sectors and industries enjoy a competitive advantage. According to a survey of members of the Slovenian Foreign Investors Forum, the main reasons underpinning investment are:

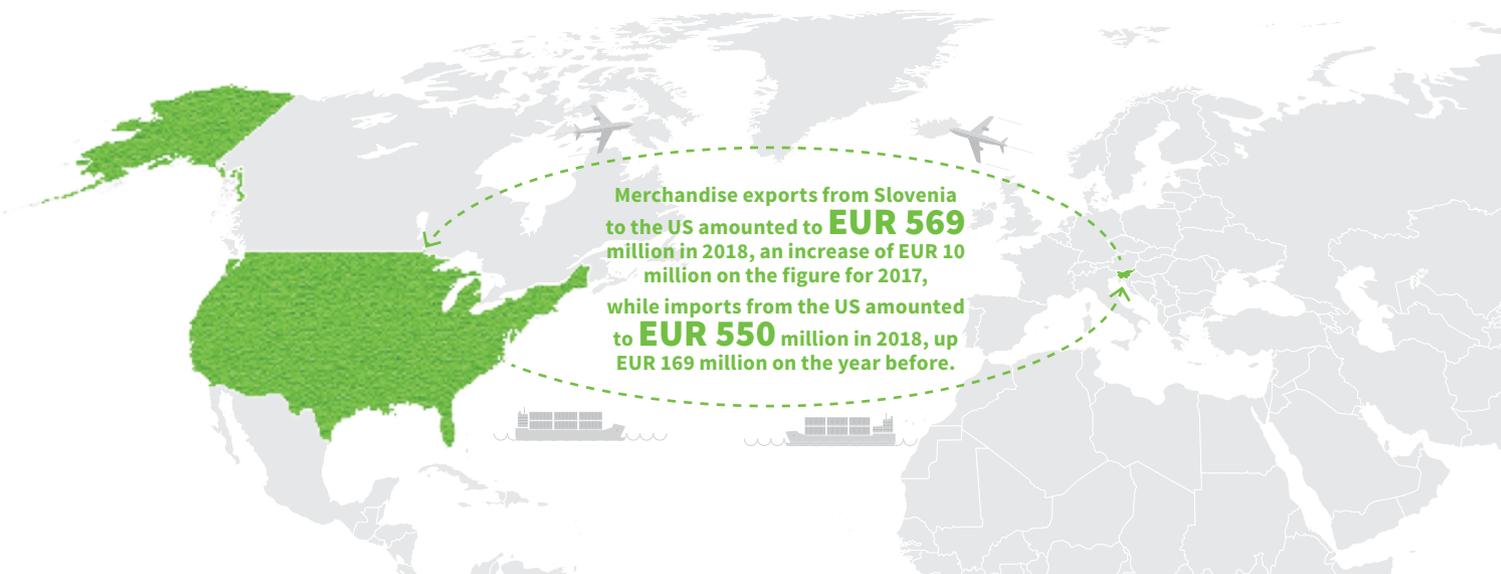
1. Quality of the workforce
2. Labor costs
3. Access to know-how and technology
4. Access to, or an increase in, the share of the Slovenian market
5. Good geographical location and communications infrastructure

Slovenian enterprises tend to make very good business partners for foreign investors; according to SPIRIT Slovenia, the national public agency for entrepreneurship, they tend to exhibit the following strengths:

1. Innovation, adaptability, openness and reliability
2. Large number of internationally recognised names and brands in many areas
3. Advanced hi-tech solutions and high-quality production processes
4. Brisk pace of innovation
5. Broad ecological awareness.



Photo: Barbara Reya



Merchandise exports from Slovenia to the US amounted to **EUR 569 million** in 2018, an increase of EUR 10 million on the figure for 2017, while imports from the US amounted to **EUR 550 million** in 2018, up EUR 169 million on the year before.

Trade Increasing Between Slovenia and the USA

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ), Slovenia and the United States enjoy excellent, development-oriented and strategic relations, although there are some areas where cooperation could be stronger.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

The foreign ministry has listed the most promising areas: investments in R&D, modern technologies, the automobile industry, healthcare equipment, environmental-protection equipment, computer hardware and software, information and communication technologies, the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, biotechnology, metals production and processing, food-processing and wine, the green technology sector (hydro, solar and wind energy, e-mobility), the start-up environment and opportunities in this area, such as Silicon Gardens.

Exploiting the Potentials of Internationalization

International Challenges 2019–2020, which is an action plan to promote the internationalization of Slovenian enterprises and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) for this and next year, sets out targets, target markets and sectors, and the measures to strengthen Slovenia's economy in global terms. The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT) highlights the US as one of the key markets in the action plan. It believes that the potentials for cooperation in the area of internationalization "remain unexploited".

In terms of FDI, the US is the third biggest ultimate investing country in Slovenia after Austria and Germany, and the US is systematically increasing its presence in Slovenia via European subsidiaries.

Green – Creative – Smart

Slovenia is one of Europe's most open and export-oriented countries. In terms of natural features, its geographical location is one of Slovenia's main competitive advantages, as the country lies at the point of contact between two European TEN-T transport corridors and offers access to the Northern Adriatic through the Port of Koper (for more, see

Selected planned activities of the SPIRIT Slovenija public agency in the US in 2019:

- A wood industry delegation to the US is planned for June 9 to 13, 2019 during the NeoCon Chicago trade fair.
- Representatives of Slovenian companies are expected to attend the IBEX nautical industry fair, which takes place in Florida from October 1 to 3, 2019.

the interview with president of the Port of Koper’s management board, Dimitrij Zadel, on page 30).

Slovenia is also rich in natural resources (wood, soil, water, energy) and other potentials for a transition to a green economy (knowledge, innovation, existing investments and skills). “It is because of these advantages that Slovenia is positioning itself as a green, creative and smart location,” says the MGRT.

In addition to this, the priority sectors are transport and logistics, machinery and electronic equipment, the automobile industry, fabricated metal tools and pharmaceutical products (additional reading from page 60), while, according to the MGRT, the priority sectors with the strongest potential are wood and wood products (read more on page 53), and tourism (read the interview with Maja Pak, Director of the Slovenian Tourism Board, on page 35).

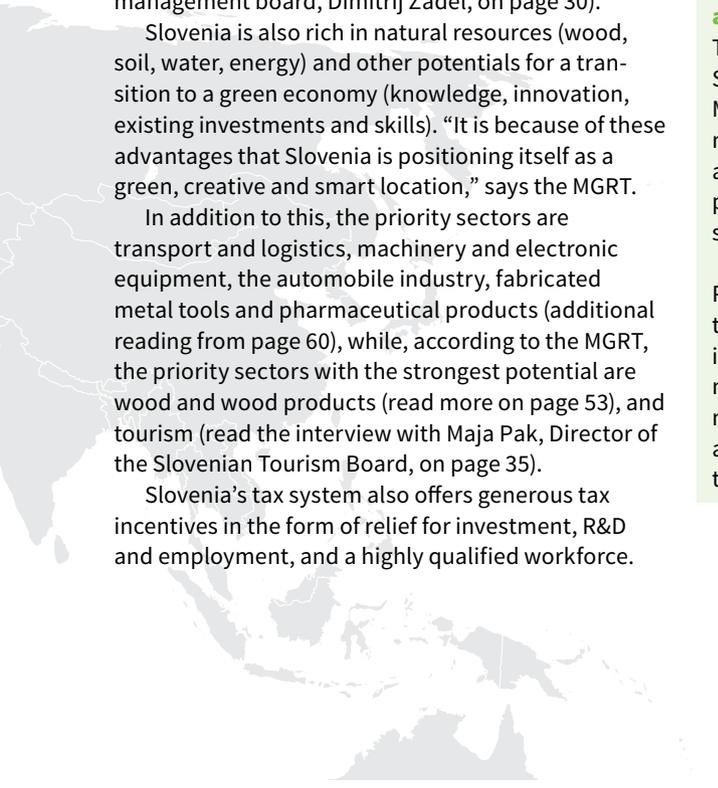
Slovenia’s tax system also offers generous tax incentives in the form of relief for investment, R&D and employment, and a highly qualified workforce.

US an important market for Slovenia’s steel and aluminum industry

The US is an important market for the Slovenian Steel Group (SIJ), with the Group (Acroni Jesenice, Metal Ravne) exporting products worth EUR 57 million across the Atlantic in 2017. Slovenian aluminum producers (Impol and Talum) exported products worth EUR 12.5 million to the US in the same year.

The foreign ministry does point out that President Trump’s protectionist policy has led to tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum imports. The foreign and economic development ministries are therefore constantly engaged in monitoring developments and supporting EU activities to exempt all European suppliers from the tariffs.

Colorado National Guard invites the Slovenian president to attend the annual NGAUS (National Guard Association USA) conference from August 30 to September 2, 2019 in Denver, Colorado.



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USA and Slovenia Already Topping a Billion Euros in Trade

Over the last four years merchandise trade between Slovenia and the USA has been growing, reaching record levels in 2018.

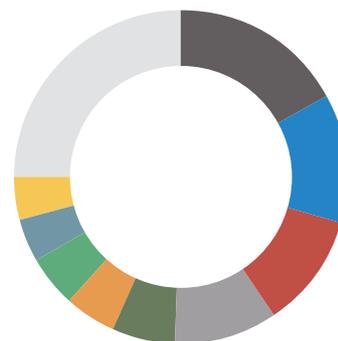
Darja Močnik, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

The volume of merchandise trade increased from EUR 702 million in 2008 to EUR 1.1 billion in 2018, mainly due to the high growth of imports. Merchandise trade with the USA accounted for 1.8% of Slovenia's total merchandise trade in 2018. Imports of US goods to Slovenia in 2018 grew to EUR 550 million, which was 44.5% up on the previous year and just under a third higher than the exports of US goods in 2008. The main thrust of import growth was accounted for by increased imports of petroleum derivatives and oils, technology related to obtaining nuclear energy, and aircraft (airplanes and helicopters). Half of imports comprised goods with relatively low value added (oils), while the rest had relatively high value added (nuclear technology, heating elements, helicopters, airplanes and turbojets).

Meanwhile Slovenia's exports to the USA in 2018 amounted to EUR 569 million worth of goods, a rise of 1.8% over 2017 and twice the amount in 2008. Slovenia exports to the USA mainly medications, glass products, rods from other alloyed steel, polyamides (PAM), and machines (for washing and drying bottles and other containers). The USA is Slovenia's 14th biggest export market (12th biggest in 2017), and 17th biggest supplier of imports (19th in 2017).

Slovenia has recorded a modest surplus in bilateral merchandise trade with the USA in all the past five years. The trade surplus did in fact fall considerably in 2018, to EUR 19 million, mainly due to greater growth in imports, which is probably a temporary phenomenon. In the previous four years the surplus ranged between EUR 161 and 197 million.

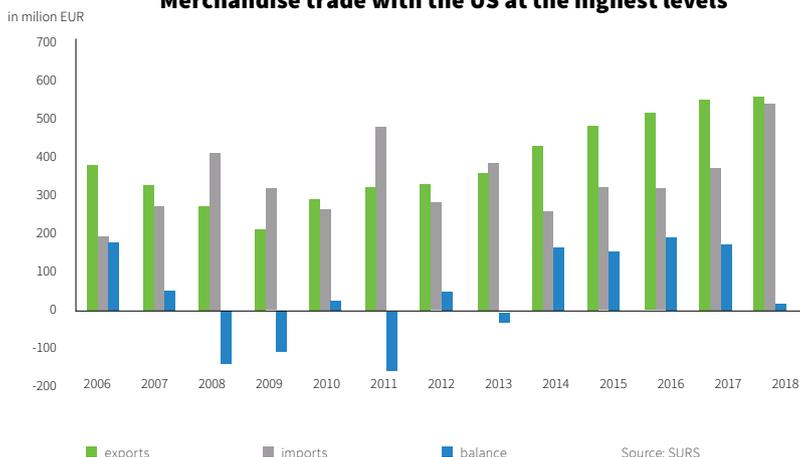
Slovenian products exported to the USA, 2018



product shares in %

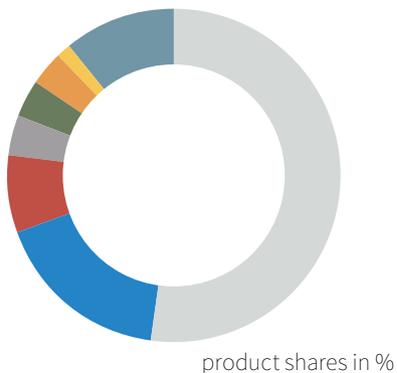
■ Nuclear reactors, machinery and mechanical appliances	17.1
■ Electrical machinery and equipment	12.6
■ Pharmaceutical products	11.0
■ Iron and steel	10.0
■ optical, photographic, measuring instruments and apparatus	6.2
■ Aluminum and aluminum products	5.0
■ Plastics and articles thereof	4.9
■ toys, games and sports requisites; parts and accessories thereof	4.2
■ Glass and glass products	4.2
■ Other	24.8

Merchandise trade with the US at the highest levels



Source: SURS, 2-place CN

US products exported to Slovenia, 2018



Mineral fuels and oils	52.4
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	17.2
Aircraft, spacecraft	7.5
Plastics and articles thereof, rubber	3.9
Electrical machinery and equipment optical, photographic, measuring	3.7
instruments and apparatus	3.1
Rubber and articles thereof	1.5
Other	10.7

Source: SURS, 2-place CN

Eighth Biggest Import Partner for Services

Trade in services with the USA amounted to EUR 335 million in 2018, up 13% on the previous year. Slovenia has a service trade surplus with the USA (EUR 39.2 million in 2018), meaning it exports more than it imports. In terms of exports of services to Slovenia, the USA is in 12th place, while it holds 8th place for imports of services.

Exports of services to the USA increased in 2018 by 13.6% or by EUR 11.4 million. The share of exports of trips by US tourists and their tourism spending in Slovenia represents the biggest share of exports of services (25.5% of total exports of services), followed by exports of transport or transport performed for US companies (24.4%), exports of telecommunications and computer services (12.7%) and other business services (21.6%). Imports of services from the USA increased in 2018 by 12.2% or by EUR 16.1 million. The

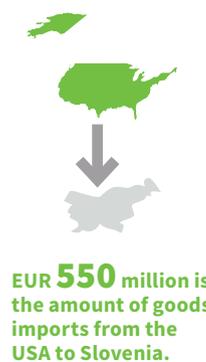
main imported services are transport services (18.6% of total services imports), followed by imports of telecommunications and computer services (11.5%), compensation for use of intellectual property (7.3%) and other business services (38.8%).

Foreign Investor Number Three

Official foreign direct investment (FDI) by the USA in Slovenia, in terms of country of origin of the parent owner company in 2017 (latest available data) amounted to EUR 19.3 million, representing a 0.1% share of all direct foreign investment in Slovenia. These investments fell considerably relative to 2016, standing at EUR 53.6 million.

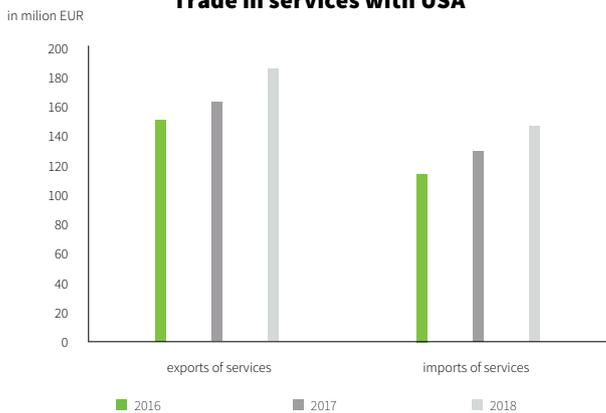
It should be noted that this figure does not explain well the importance of American companies for the Slovenian economy, since in terms of foreign direct investment in Slovenia the USA ranks third, after Austria and Germany, taking into account indirect ownership of European companies controlled by US firms. The US as the ultimate investing country held EUR 1,812.2 million of inward FDI in Slovenia at the end of 2017, the majority of the investments being held indirectly via affiliates in Luxembourg (EUR 1,194.3 million), Sweden (EUR 209.8 million), the Netherlands (EUR 148.9 million), Germany (EUR 98.6 million) and Switzerland (EUR 88.3 million). US investors are present in the Slovenian market in the area of healthcare and representing brands of medications and health accessories (Eli Lilly, Medtronic, Johnson&Johnson, Pfizer, Biogen Idec, Merck, Celgene), business consulting and auditing (Mayer McCann, KPMG, E&Y, PWC, Deloitte), computing (IBM, HP, Microsoft, S&T, Oracle), manufacturing (Knauf Insulation, Goodyear, Adient, Fluidmaster, Albauth TKI, Swatycomet), finance (NKBM), and food (McDonald's, Mars, Coca Cola HBC).

Slovenian FDI in the US amounted to EUR 56.2 million at the end of 2017, up from EUR 43.3 million in 2016. Large Slovenian manufacturing companies are among the leading investors.



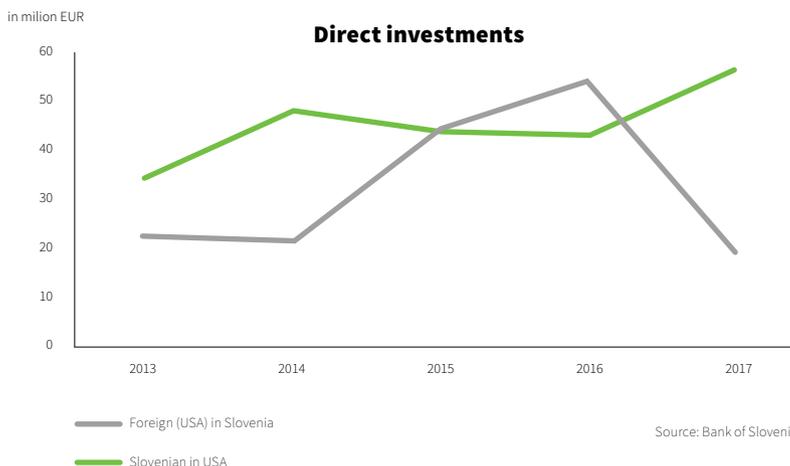
There are **1,000** Slovenian exporters to the USA and **8,000** Slovenian companies importing from the USA.

Trade in services with USA



Source: Bank of Slovenia

Direct investments



Source: Bank of Slovenia



CETA Should Make Exporting to Canada Easier

Slovenia and Canada work as partners and allies in many areas, says the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia (MZZ).

Ana Vučina Vršnak

As the MZZ and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia (MGRT) point out, cooperation between Slovenia and Canada is similar to that between Slovenia and the US: good, but there is room for improvement. Both ministries mention CETA, which is the bilateral trade treaty signed between the European Union and Canada. In the MZZ's opinion, the treaty should become the main potential or incentive, and make it easier for Slovenian companies to export to Canada. In general, it should encourage Slovenian enterprises to intensify their connections with the Canadian market.

According to the MZZ's commercial and public diplomacy directorate, the most promising sectors are the mechanical engineering and electrical industry, energy, tourism (Canadian visitors to Slovenia), the food industry and wine (Canadian wine producers are visiting Slovenia in April 2019). As far as more distant markets are concerned, the MGRT sees future opportunities mainly in terms of niche sectors, in which Slovenia excels.

Slovenia has hosted more and more visitors from abroad in recent years, with the number of Canadian tourists also on the rise. Some 29,775 Canadian

tourists visited Slovenia in 2018, an increase of almost a fifth (19.5%) on the previous year's figure of 21,453. They accounted for 67,892 overnight stays, which was a 25% increase on 2017's figure of 46,287. While Canada is not one of the more important markets for Slovenian tourists, there has been an upward trend in numbers.

Magna International's investment one of the largest in Slovenia in recent years

Magna International Inc. are based in Canada and are one of the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers in the automobile industry; they are also well-known for their work on new technologies and innovations. Their investment in Slovenia is one of the largest made in the country in recent years. Despite the bureaucratic problems involved, the foreign ministry believes that the investment is an example of good practice. It constitutes a strategic investment for Slovenia and, in statistical terms, is counted as an investment from Austria.

A trendsetter in women's health

Tosama is a global development leader on the tampon market whose products focus on utility, safety and the use of natural materials

Tosama have been producing and marketing hygiene and medical products for almost 100 years. Since their humble beginnings in 1923, Tosama have evolved into a world-renowned, innovative and respected company. The company currently has 591 employees, and generated EUR 37.9 million in net profit from sales in 2018, a year-on-year increase of 5.5%.

Flagship product: women's tampons

Their flagship product and main export item are women's tampons, of which they produce 560 million annually. "We started producing them more than 35 years ago, and we have been manufacturing them for foreign brands for more than 25 years. Today we sell 43 different types of tampons in 41 countries all over the world, on every continent," say sources at Tosama.

They produce tampons for private brands on foreign markets. They sell them to large retail chains, chemists/drug stores and pharmacies, and also cooperate with various globally-known brands.

"As technology enables us to manufacture using many different combinations of materials, sizes, absorption methods and insertion methods, we are known throughout the world as a company with a great deal of flexibility. We are able to develop a tampon for every customer that meets their wishes or the needs of their market."



Cotton tampons are the most popular type among women who understand the importance of natural materials for their health.



The Tosama team presents the company's latest development achievements every year at the PLMA Trade Show in Amsterdam.

Different tampons for different needs

Their largest markets are the USA, Germany, Russia and China. They obtained an approval for their tampons from the US Food and Drug Administration as early as 2008, and have been successfully marketing their products there ever since. Over the last two years the US has become their largest market.

Their primary exports to the US are a type of tampon that has been their biggest hit in the last few years: compact applicator tampons made from organic cotton. Their organic compact applicator tampons, made of bio-based materials, have been available on the US market since 2015. "We produce around 80 million of them per year, and we sell more than 80 percent of them in America. We also sell digital tampons in the US, which our customers package in a newer, more modern form of applicator tampons," say sources at Tosama.

Their guideline when developing new products over the last decade has been the use of natural materials to the greatest extent possible. "We have understood for a long time that natural materials are not just a fad, but have been proved to be the best choice for feminine hygiene. The majority of our tampons are made from cotton or organic cotton. These tampons

are the result of our own in-house development, and therefore our international patents are a major competitive advantage," they explain.

Safety first

User safety, which is always the number one requirement on the American market, is one of Tosama's most important objectives and one of the first issues considered during the development of each product. They will continue to develop new products made from natural materials, and they are aiming at making all of their wrappers and packaging biodegradable.

They are planning to increase their recognition and their market share on the American market over the next few years. "We want to be known as a high-quality, reliable, flexible business partner and as a trendsetter on the global tampon market. We want our customers to know that our tampons are modern, safe and made from environmentally and user-friendly materials," say Darinka Gabrovec, Head of Private Label Program.

More Than 300 Slovenian Companies Export to Canada, Almost 600 Import

Slovenia's exports to Canada in 2018 amounted to EUR 95 million worth of goods, a rise of 18% over 2017 and three times the amount in 2008.

Darja Močnik, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

Over the last two years merchandise trade between Slovenia and Canada has eased off somewhat, after a localized peak achieved in 2016. The volume of merchandise trade fell in 2018 by 9.7% or by EUR 16.5 million, although since 2008 it has increased from EUR 134 million to EUR 153.1 million in 2018. In 2018 merchandise trade with Canada amounted to 0.24% of Slovenia's overall merchandise trade, not taking into account exports of Slovenian semi-products that are installed as components in European products and exported to the Canadian market, but we do not have sufficient data to determine the volume of those exports.

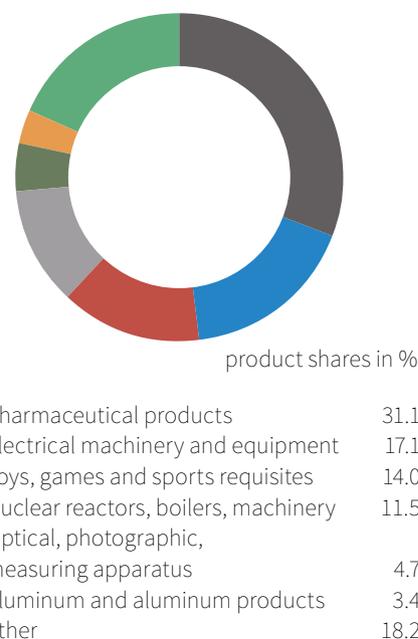
Exports of Canadian goods to Slovenia in 2018 amounted to EUR 57.7 million, which is a drop of 35% from the previous year and nearly half less than exports of Canadian goods in 2008. These exports vary greatly by individual year, which is linked to the variation in the exports of specific products (aircraft). In 2018 Canada's main exports were of ash and residues (containing arsenic and metals), unwrought nickel, chemical wood cellulose and medications.

Meanwhile Slovenia's exports to Canada in 2018 amounted to EUR 95.4 million worth of goods, a rise of 18% over 2017 and three times the amount in 2008. Slovenia exports to Canada principally medications, video game consoles, batteries, electric motors and electric generators. For Slovenian exports Canada occupies 37th place (in 2017 it was in 38th place), and for imports 40th place (31st place in 2017). The surplus in bilateral trade between Slovenia and Canada amounted to EUR 38 million in 2018, which was a similar amount to 2015. In 2016 and 2017 a deficit was recorded (EUR 7 and 32 million). In 2017 Canadian products were imported by 567 Slovenian companies, while nearly 310 companies exported to Canada.

Slovenian exports to Canada with growth trend



Export products to Canada, 2018



Source: SURS, 2-place CN

Import products from Canada, 2018



product shares in %	
Ores, slag	50.5
Nickel and nickel products	16.2
Pharmaceutical products	6.6
Wood pulp	4.8
Nuclear reactors, boilers	4.1
Aircraft, spacecraft	3.5
Other	14.4

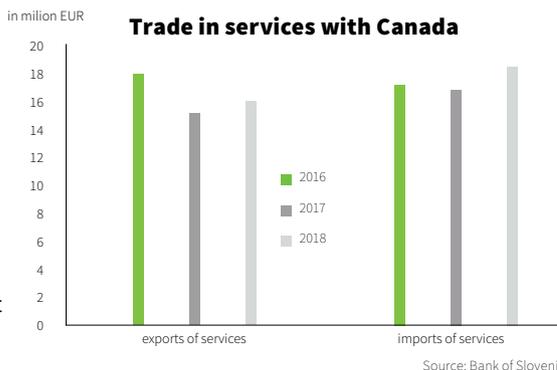
Source: SURS, 2-place CN

Trade in Services Growing

Trade in services with Canada amounted to EUR 34.5 million in 2018, up 7.4% on the previous year. In the past two years, Slovenia has recorded a modest deficit in services trade with Canada (in 2018 it was EUR 2.5 million). In terms of exports of services to Slovenia,

Canada is in 37th place, while it holds 33rd place for imports of services. Exports of services to Canada increased in 2018 by 5.2% or by EUR 0.8 million.

The share of exports of trips by Canadian tourists (consumption of Canadian services in Slovenia) represents the biggest share of exports of services (51.5% of total exports of services to Canada), followed by exports of transport (11.4%), exports of telecommunications and computer services (9.5%) and other business services (14.9%). Imports of services from Canada increased in 2018 by 9.3% or by EUR 1.6 million. The main imported services are other business services (77.9%), transport services (4.9% of total services imports from Canada), followed by imports of telecommunications and computer services (3.6%) and travel (2.7%).



EUR 95.4 million is the amount of goods exports from Slovenia to Canada.

EUR 57.7 million is the amount of goods imports from Canada to Slovenia.

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Growth in Trade Between Canada and Slovenia Is Very Good News

The markets of North America, particularly Canada, can be a springboard to the world for Slovenian companies.

Andreja Salamun

The agreement ensures greater protection for intellectual property – which is important for the Slovenian pharmaceutical industry, for example.

One of the reasons why a Slovenian company might consider establishing a presence in Canada is that companies there have priority access to markets around the world on account of the numerous international trade agreements that Canada has negotiated with other countries. Canada is, in fact, the only G7 country with free trade agreements with all the other members of the G7, says Aleša Mižigoj, president of the management board of Medex and Canada's honorary consul in Slovenia.

What is your assessment of the current level of cooperation between Slovenia and Canada at the national level? What works and what needs to be changed?

Slovenia and Canada enjoy excellent bilateral relations. We share common values, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, and we are strong supporters of the multilateral system, i.e. international cooperation between countries. Slovenia and Canada work alongside each other in organisations such as the UN, OSCE and NATO. In the field of security, I am extremely proud that Slovenia is contributing military units, under Canadian command, as part of NATO's strengthened presence in Latvia. Canada is a partner of long standing in the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victim Assistance, which is chaired by Slovenia. Trade between the two countries has increased strongly in recent years, which is very good news. The close ties between Slovenia and Canada are also being strengthened through our common love of nature, our commitment to environmental protection, and our enthusiasm for sports – including ice hockey, of course.

What is this cooperation like at the company level? How is it changing over time, if it has at all?

When the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union

(CETA) came into force in September 2017, tariffs were eliminated on 98% of all trade between the EU and Canada. In the first year of its provisional application, CETA has helped boost bilateral trade by more than 12%. However, for Slovenia and Canada, CETA means much more than simply the elimination of tariffs. The agreement ensures greater protection for intellectual property – which is important for the Slovenian pharmaceutical industry, for example. It also maintains high regulatory standards, improves access for temporary workers to both countries, and opens up government contracts to Slovenian and Canadian firms. For Slovenia, CETA is also having a large number of positive indirect effects, with exports being made to other EU Member States that also export to Canada.

On the investment side, the Canadian company Magna International, a leading global manufacturer of auto parts, has just initiated the first phase of a major investment operation in the Maribor region. Magna, which currently employs more than 200 people in Slovenia, intends to invest EUR 1.2 billion and, over time, create more than 6,000 jobs. The new paint shop in Hoče, in the form of support for Magna in Graz, Austria, is only the first of four phases of development.

How much interest is there among Slovenian companies in doing business on the Canadian (and, by extension, the American) market? Is the interest reciprocated by Canadian firms?

Alongside merchandise trade between Slovenia and Canada, there are several Slovenian companies with a physical presence in Canada. These include Litostrój Power, a Slovenian manufacturer of water turbine equipment for hydroelectric power plants and pumping stations, which has a plant in Bromont, Quebec. The Slovenian company Domel makes engines for Hydrogenics, a Canadian firm that manufactures fuel cells. There are several Canadian companies

Litostrój Power, a Slovenian manufacturer of water turbine equipment for hydroelectric power plants and pumping stations, has a plant in Bromont, Quebec, while Domel, another Slovenian company, makes engines for Hydrogenics, a Canadian firm that manufactures fuel cells.

in Slovenia as well: Magna International, Valeant Pharmaceuticals and Constellation Software. Adria Tehnika from Ljubljana is an authorised service agent for the regional jet aircraft manufacturer Bombardier Aerospace CRJ.

There are many reasons why a Slovenian company that wished to establish itself overseas would focus on the Canadian market. Canada has a strong spirit of enterprise allied with a high level of social development. Within a culture of respect, peace and good governance, diversity is able to flourish – and with it, ideas and innovations based on perspectives and cultures from all around the world. This creates lively, healthy, well-integrated communities that stimulate the production of new technologies and the development of new ideas. Canada has a stable business environment that is open to companies, investment and trade; it also benefits from a healthy, efficient financial system that supports low taxes and low business costs, and a government that is investing in an innovative, clear and inclusive economic future.

Another reason why a Slovenian company might consider establishing a presence in Canada is that companies there have priority access to markets around the world on account of the numerous international trade agreements that Canada has negotiated with other countries. Canada is, in fact, the only G7 country with free trade agreements with all the other members of the G7.

Are there opportunities that remain unexploited in economic cooperation between the two countries?

I see potential for further growth in the coming years. The leading products that Canada exports to Slovenia include mineral products such as ores and nickel, wood pulp and paper, and machinery and mechanical devices, while Slovenia's main exports to Canada include machinery, electrical appliances and pharmaceutical products.

I see additional opportunities in merchandise trade between the two countries in agricultural and fisheries products, information and communication technologies, and services. It is worth remembering that CETA has improved Slovenian companies' access to the Canadian services market, where global imports reached EUR 87 billion in 2015 according to Statistics Canada. This is an important market for Slovenian companies.

How active are Slovenian agri-food companies in Canada, and vice versa?

I am very happy and proud that Apimondia, the largest international apicultural congress, will be taking place this year in Montreal, Canada. This is a unique opportunity for Slovenia, which was the driving force behind the inauguration of World Bee Day, to present itself to the world as a country of beekeepers and bee products.

CETA has also opened up many opportunities for trade in agriculture products. In the first nine months since the agreement came into force, European

exports of agricultural products to Canada rose: fruit and nuts by 29%, chocolate by 34% and sparkling wine by 11%. This effect has also been felt by Slovenia. On the other side, Canadian exports of dried legumes (mostly beans) grew by 29% between 2017 and 2018, exports of pre-prepared food and confectionery rose by 88% and whisky rose by 34%. We are expecting further growth in exports of legumes and fisheries products in 2019 and 2020.

Does Medex have any plans for the American market?

The markets of North America (Canada and the US together) are very specific. The laws regarding food supplements are completely different to those applied in Europe. The use of propolis is forbidden to under-18s in Canada, for example. We also diverge on the levels of vitamins permitted, there are specific regulations regarding plant extracts, and so on. We have therefore decided not to enter these markets directly using the Medex brand but, instead, to operate via companies already established there. This will eliminate risks related to product naming and, at the same time, enable quicker entry to these markets.

There are many reasons why a Slovenian company might wish to focus on the Canadian market. Canada has a strong spirit of enterprise allied with a high level of social development.





Latin America a Promising Region in the Environmental, Energy and Infrastructure Sectors

Despite the challenging conditions, there are opportunities to enhance economic cooperation between Slovenia and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

Sao Paulo is home to the Slovenian-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, or SLOBRAZ.

Economic partnership between Slovenia and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is at modest levels and there are several factors mitigating against greater progress being made to strengthen cooperation; these include the distance of the markets from each other, a lack of knowledge of the respective regions' customs and habits, and the language barrier. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ) believes that considerable opportunities do exist to boost bilateral economic cooperation and that, obstacles notwithstanding, there are niche opportunities on the large Latin American markets, particularly in the member states of Mercosur and the Pacific Partnership. This requires Slovenia to follow the good practices, experiences and economic activities of those other smaller EU Member States that are already present and successful on these markets.

Despite the difficult conditions attending potential cooperation, there are opportunities common to the large majority of Latin American countries: environment, water, forestry, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy sources, and information and communications technology.

Brazil is the Most Important Foreign Trading Partner in the Region

According to the MZZ, opportunities for Slovenian companies, for example on the Brazilian market, which is Slovenia's most important foreign trading partner in Latin America, lie in infrastructure (planned large infrastructure projects), the environment and water (waste treatment, processing and separation, solid waste management and energy generation, treatment plants, green technologies, forestry, ocean

clean-up), hi-tech solutions in aviation, arms and fire-protection systems, pharmaceuticals, the automobile industry, renewable energy sources (solar and wind), software (applications for improving quality of life and the competitiveness of the Brazilian economy), smart technologies for agriculture and smart cities, the food industry (organic products), digital transformation, and so on.

SLOBRAZ on Hand to Help in Sao Paulo

Sao Paulo is home to the Slovenian-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, or SLOBRAZ, which has just started organizing regular monthly seminars and conferences with an emphasis on presenting business opportunities for Brazilian companies in Slovenia and vice versa. It also offers help to Slovenian companies looking to enter the Brazilian market and to companies already established in Brazil. Slovenia is planning to potentially expand the network of honorary consuls by opening three consulates in Brazil and one in Ecuador.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT) further points out that potentials in the area of internationalization should be better exploited in those countries with a Slovenian emigrant community, such as Argentina.

Exports Fell by a Tenth Last Year, with Imports Rising by the Same Amount

Figures on economic cooperation between Slovenia and the countries of Latin America indicate a fall in exports and a growth in imports.

Brazil is Slovenia's most important foreign trading partner in the region (2nd for exports, 1st for imports), followed by Mexico (1st for exports, 3rd for imports), Colombia, Chile, Argentina and Ecuador. Mexico is Slovenia's largest export partner, followed, in order of export volumes, by Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Peru. Slovenia imports most from Brazil, followed, again in order of volume, by Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

Of those countries with whom Slovenia has merchandise trade exceeding EUR 10 million, trade increased in terms of volume with Brazil (+ 14.7%) and Mexico (+ 1.8%) but fell with all the other countries.

The third meeting of the Slovenian-Brazilian mixed commission for economic cooperation will take place in 2019. Plans have been made for a mixed commission on scientific and technological cooperation and a business, scientific and tourism conference to be organized on the sidelines of the meeting in Sao Paulo.

A business delegation has just completed a visit to Cuba, which was led by Aleš Cantarutti, state secretary at the MGRT. The program included the bio-, pharma- and agrotechnology sectors, medical and pharmaceutical equipment, measuring technologies, logistics, metals, and information and communications technologies.

After the success of the first Latin America and Caribbean Day, an international conference, in 2018, the MZZ are in the process of organizing a second event, "Latin America and Caribbean Days 2019", to take place from May 20 to 24, 2019 in Ljubljana and Piran. This year's conference will build on last year's by examining the possibilities of strengthening inter-regional and bilateral connections between countries in the region in the economic, environmental and scientific-research fields. A further aim of the conference is to familiarize the general Slovenian public with the region through a series of cultural and promotional events. Representatives from Slovenia, Latin America and the Caribbean, European Union institutions, and business, education, scientific and research agencies will take part in the conference.

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The potentials in the area of internationalization should be better exploited in countries with a Slovenian emigrant community, such as Argentina.

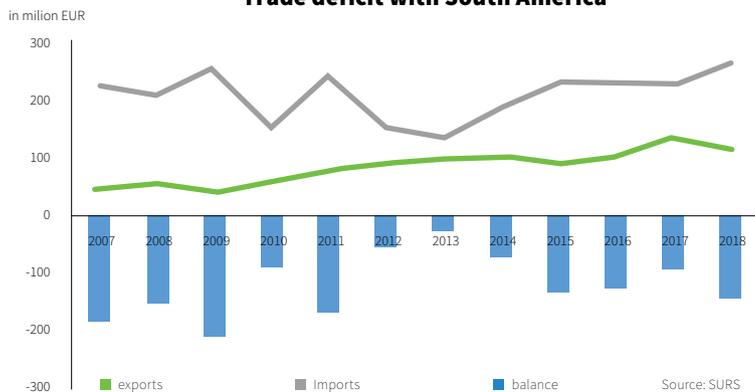
Merchandise Trade Between Slovenia and South America Is Growing

Trade between Slovenia and South America reached a peak in 2018.

Darja Močnik, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

Merchandise trade between Slovenia and South America has been growing over the last five years, and reached a peak in 2018. The volume of merchandise trade increased in 2018 to EUR 388 million, which is 4.7% or EUR 17.5 million higher than in 2017, and since 2008 it has increased by around EUR 120 million (EUR 269 million in 2008). Merchandise trade with South America accounted for 0.63% of Slovenia's total merchandise trade in 2018. A deficit in bilateral trade between Slovenia and South America has been recorded in all of the past ten years (EUR 150 million in 2018).

Trade deficit with South America

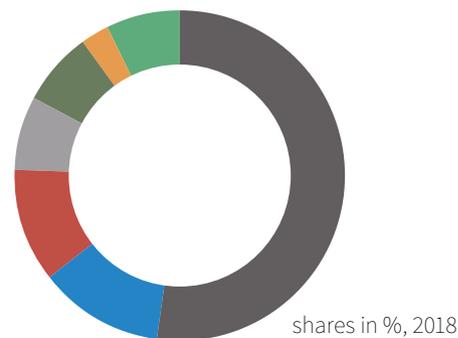


Slovenia Exports and Imports Most to and from Brazil

Exports of South American goods to Slovenia in 2018 amounted to EUR 269 million, which was 14.8% up on the previous year and a quarter higher than the figure in 2008. Exports from South America comprise principally oilseed cake and other solid residues (around half of all imports), chemical wood cellulose, bananas and coffee, in other words mainly residues in the food industry intended for further processing, primary agricultural products used in domestic foods and input materials for use in the wood industry.

Of all the South American countries Slovenia imports most from Brazil (80% of total imports), with imports growing in 2018 by as much as 19%, followed by imports from Colombia (7.7% of the total), Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay (between 1.7 and 4.3% of total imports), Argentina and the rest.

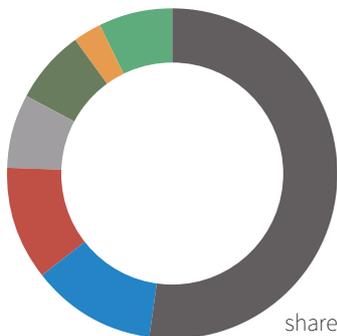
Import products from South America



Meanwhile Slovenia's exports to South America in 2018 amounted to EUR 119 million worth of goods, a drop of 12.5% from 2017. In the previous two years exports grew by between 7 and 32 percent, and have grown twofold since 2008. Slovenia exports to South America principally video game consoles and devices (indirect exports, since the products are manufactured in other countries), medications, prefabricated buildings, tricycles, scooters and other aluminum products.

By country, Slovenia's largest share of exports goes to Brazil (43% of total exports), followed by exports to Argentina (16% of the total), Chile, Colombia (between 11 and 15% of total exports), Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay and the rest.

Export products to South America



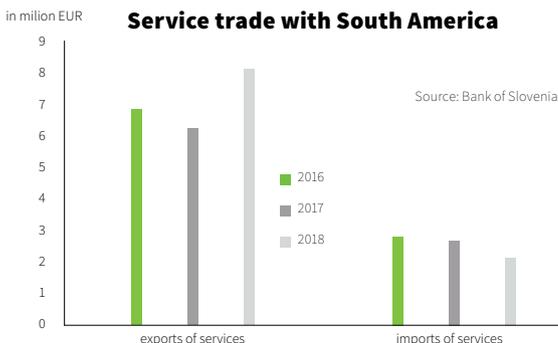
Product Category	Share (%)
Toys, requisites	31.1
Electrical machinery and equipment	17.1
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	14.0
Pharmaceutical products	11.5
Aluminum and aluminum products	4.7
Optical, photographic, measuring instruments	3.4
Other	18.2

Source: SURS, 2-place CN

Service Trade Surplus with South America

Trade in services with South America amounted to EUR 10.4 million in 2018, which was a sixth higher than the previous year. Slovenia has a service trade surplus with South America (EUR 3.6 million in 2018). Exports of services to South America increased in 2018 by 30% or by EUR 1.9 million. The share of exports of trips by South American tourists represents the major portion of service exports (55% of total service exports to South America), followed by exports of transport (17.6%), telecommunications and computer services (7.2%) and other business services (4.8%). Imports of services from South America fell in 2018 by 18.3% or by EUR 0.5 million. The main imported services are other business services (22.4%) and travel (16.3% of total services imports from South America), followed by imports of transport services (13.3%).

Service trade with South America



Source: Bank of Slovenia

EUR 119 million is the amount of goods exports from Slovenia to South America.

EUR 269 million is the amount of goods imports from South America to Slovenia.

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Special hydro-cylinders
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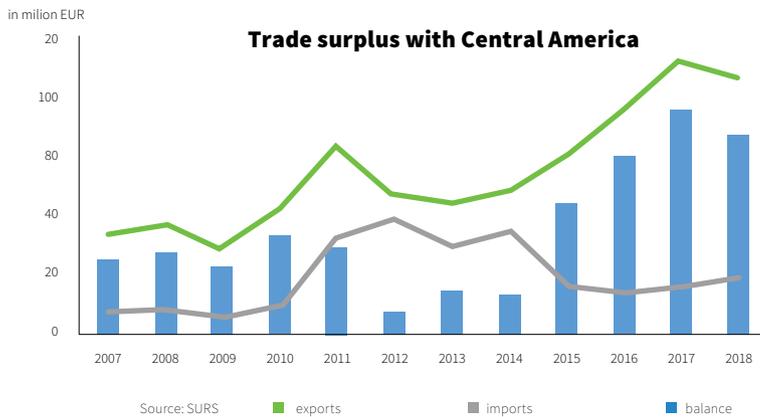
Gear systems

Slovenia Records Trade Surplus with Central America in All the Last Ten Years

Slovenia exports to Central America mainly items with high added value, which are used in the automobile and electrical industries.

Darja Močnik, Analytical Department, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

Merchandise trade between Slovenia and Central America fell in 2018 by 3.1% or by EUR 4 million, after peaking in 2017. Last year the volume of merchandise trade was 2.3 times greater than in 2008 (when it amounted to EUR 54.8 million). Merchandise trade with Central America accounted for 0.2% of Slovenia's total merchandise trade in 2018. A surplus in bilateral trade between Slovenia and Central America has been recorded in all of the past ten years (EUR 81.6 million in 2018).

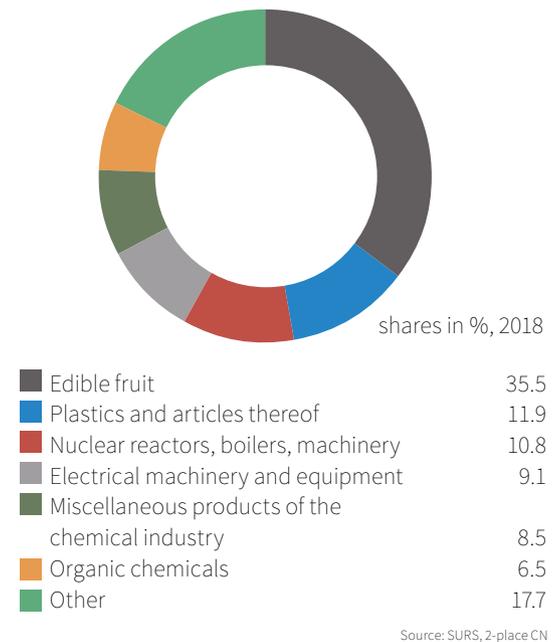


Slovenia Imports Mainly Bananas from Central America

Exports of Central American goods to Slovenia in 2018 amounted to EUR 23 million, which was 14.5% up on the previous year and 2.3 times higher than the figure in 2008. For the most part Slovenia imports bananas from Central America, along with computers and devices for automatic data processing, insecticides, ethylene polymers and amine-function compounds.

By country, Slovenia imports from Central America principally from Mexico (57% of total imports), followed by Costa Rica (37% of the total), Dominican Republic and Honduras (1.6% of total imports).

Import products from Central America

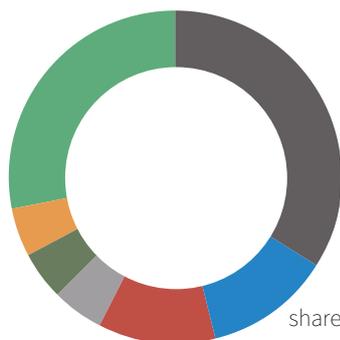


Slovenia Exports to Central America Mainly Electrical Machinery and Equipment

Slovenia's exports to Central America in 2018 amounted to EUR 104.7 million worth of goods, a drop of 6.3% from 2017, while in the preceding three years export growth amounted to 23% for each year. This put exports in 2018 at 2.3 times higher than in 2008. Slovenia exports to Central America parts for rotational electrical machinery, medications, electrical equipment for lighting and signals, electric motors and generators, in other words mainly items with high value added, which are used in the automobile and electrical industries.

By country, Slovenia's largest share of exports to Central America goes to Mexico (84.6% of total exports), followed by exports to Panama (7.7% of the total), Jamaica and Costa Rica (around 1.5% of total exports), then the rest. The Kolektor factory in Mexico should also boost trade with that country.

Export products to Central America



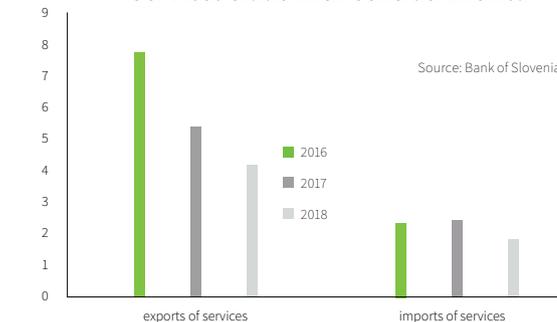
Product Category	Share (%)
Electrical machinery and equipment	34.2
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery	12.0
Pharmaceutical products	11.4
Vehicles and parts and accessories thereof	5.1
Plastics and articles thereof	4.8
Toys, requisites	4.7
Other	27.9

Source: SURS, 2-place CN

Services surplus with Central America

Trade in services with Central America amounted to EUR 33.5 million in 2018, down 24.4% on the previous year. Slovenia has a service trade surplus with Central America (EUR 13.1 million in 2018). Exports of services to Central America fell in 2018 by 23% or by EUR 7 million. The share of exports of transport services trips represents the major portion of service exports (72.2% of total service exports to Central America), followed by exports of telecommunications and computer services (6.4%) and other business services (14.2%). Imports of services from Central America fell in 2018 by 27% or by EUR 3.8 million. The main imported services are transport services (24.6% of total imports from Central America), financial services (10.8%) and other business services (36.7% of total services imports from Central America).

Services trade with Central America



Source: Bank of Slovenia

EUR 105 million is the amount of goods exports from Slovenia to Central America.

EUR 23 million is the amount of goods imports from Central America to Slovenia.

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Photo: Port of Koper

From Coal and Iron to Bananas

The Port of Koper, Slovenia's strategic harbor, works with North, Central and South America in the transportation of certain goods, mainly raw materials. Despite the longer transit times on the maritime side, there has been a noticeable growth in freight for the USA, especially export goods where the time factor is not vital, says Dimitrij Zadel, CEO of the Port of Koper.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

In 2018 the Port of Koper had a throughput of 24 million tons of goods, which is 3% more than the previous year and represents a record year for cargo handling in the history of the port.

What is the significance of the Port of Koper for the European and American economies?

The natural hinterland of the harbor at Koper is Central and Eastern Europe, and in overseas markets we are linked principally to the Mediterranean and Far East. Owing to its geographic position, we are a less competitive choice for the countries of North and South America, exclusively because of the more frequent and shorter vessel links with ports in

Northern Europe. Still, we do cooperate with those countries in the transportation of certain freight, mainly raw materials.

How much business do you already have with North, Central and South America?

From the USA, shipments of coal and iron ore come in for the needs of the Austrian steel industry, and iron ore also comes from Brazil. We receive shipments of

bananas in refrigerated containers from Costa Rica, Ecuador and Colombia.

Where do you see development potential for American companies?

Despite the longer transit times on the maritime side, in recent years we have noticed a slight growth in freight for the USA, mainly export goods where the time factor is not vital, for instance various project cargos. Regardless of the longer maritime route, Koper remains competitive in serving the Central and Eastern European markets, where the advantages of the Northern European ports over the entire transport route, especially by land, are not so obvious.

What are the competitive advantages of the Port of Koper over other European ports?

One of the main advantages is our organizational model, which combines the functions of harbor management and terminal operation. This brings the effects of synergy and allows a high degree of adaptability, productivity and reliability of our services. Another important factor that contributes to competitiveness is regular and extensive rail links to inland markets, along with the efficient operation of the entire port community, from shipping companies and agents to state institutions.

What are the cargo handling statistics at the Port of Koper for 2018?

In 2018 the Port of Koper had a throughput of 24 million tons of goods, which is 3 percent more than the previous year and represents a record year for cargo handling in the history of the port. We recorded growth in all goods groups except liquid goods, while container and car handling continues to rank us among the leading ports in the region. The favorable physical indicators have been reflected in the financial results, since according to unaudited data, net earnings from sales for the Port of Koper Group reached 226 million euros, or 7 percent more than in 2017. Compared to the previous year, Group net operating profit increased by 71 percent and reached 60 million euros. Without taking into account the compensation received for a damaged crane, the net profit would have reached 51.9 million euros in 2018, an increase of 48% on 2017.

What are the plans for 2019 and 2020?

For 2019 we are planning to handle 24.7 million tons of cargo, representing a continuation of the positive trend and a 3-percent increase on 2018. We anticipate growth in all groups of goods, with the biggest increase, measured in tons, to come in the container terminal. In the other strategic goods groups, growth will depend on the implementation of key investments in infrastructure and on acquiring additional surfaces. We will also strive for further growth in throughput in the filling and emptying of containers segment, which generates multiplier effects at several terminals.

The Port of Koper Group business strategy up to 2030 and the Strategic Plan up to 2020 anticipate that in order to fulfil the plans, investment in port infrastructure and equipment will be needed to the tune of 300 million euros. What major investments are you planning for 2019 and the coming years and in what amounts?

The most important investments lined up in the coming years include extension of the first wharf and container terminal. We will put a total of 235 million euros into this project, part of which we have already invested in previous years to deepen the harbor, procure new cranes and equipment, construct terminal rail tracks and so forth. We anticipate starting construction in the fall of 2019 on a 100-meter (328 feet) extension and pertaining warehouse support facility. If everything goes to plan, we will conclude the project in 2021 and in this way increase the annual capacity of the terminal to 1.5 million TEU. We are also intensively involved in other infrastructure projects, which are just as important in terms of increasing port capacity, better throughput and consequently the competitiveness of the port. In April 2019 in the eastern section of the port we are opening an additional entrance for heavy goods trucks, and this will be followed by upgrading of the truck arrival alert system. For the needs of the car terminal we already have a construction permit for a new RO-RO berth and closer rail tracks, and we are also planning a new parking garage for 6,000 cars.

In the past 12 years the Port of Koper has operated on approximately the same amount of space, although turnover has doubled. Recently the regulation on management of Koper freight harbor was amended to enable its expansion by 43.6 hectares (108 acres). The Port of Koper waited more than seven years for this decision, which was adopted by the previous government at the end of its term. You will only be able to start using the majority of the additional land in the coming years, you are requesting new areas and you anticipate that the government will allocate an additional 80 hectares (198 acres), which in 2011 was earmarked for the Port by the adopted state spatial plan. That envisaged the freight port being expanded to 404 hectares (998 acres). How far are you from achieving that?

The company urgently needs additional space or additional warehouse capacities to be able to respond effectively to customer needs. Our spatial constraints can be seen mainly in the car sector, since in the last few years we have become one of the biggest car ports in the Mediterranean. According to the information we have, the state has initiated the relevant procedures for acquisition of three parcels that border on the concession zone of the harbor. These parcels, in contrast to the 43 ha, which you mentioned in the question, are also the most suitable for relatively rapid use. Also we have signed a lease agreement with the state for the parcel on the north side of the harbor, where we were already storing

We should start construction in the fall of 2019 on a 100-meter (328 feet) extension and pertaining warehouse support facility. The project should be completed in 2021.

One of the main advantages at Koper is our organizational model, which combines the functions of harbor management and terminal operation.

Regardless of the longer maritime route, Koper remains competitive in serving the Central and Eastern European markets.

vehicles a few years ago. Speaking optimistically, we could acquire at least a part of these parcels for use this year.

In the future you see the Port of Koper as a “green port”. What specifically does your vision include?

On two sides the port is bounded by residential zones, and in the hinterland there is a nature reserve. On the outward side it meets the sensitive marine ecosystem. So we understand sustainable development in a broad sense, and where possible more broadly than legislation demands. Being embedded in the local environment, and our desire to maintain a high competitive advantage, dictate to us that we must constantly strive for the most comprehensive possible implementation of modern sustainable solutions and that we live and develop in a coexistence with the people and natural world around us.

One of the biggest environmental challenges is noise, which spreads toward the old city center of Koper. Ports in several continents, including the Port of Koper along with Rotterdam and Hamburg, founded the Neptunes project, in which solutions are being sought to reduce vessel noise. In what way and when can we expect results?

Within the Neptunes association, ports exchange experiences and determine common standards in an effort to influence vessel operators and legislators toward giving the issue of noisy vessels greater attention. Noise emissions from vessels into the environment are not addressed by any EU or world legislation. Neither the Port of Koper nor the competent ministries have any legal basis for taking action and imposing sanctions on vessel operators in the event of environmental noise emissions. So all we can do is communicate with the ship operators and together seek the most appropriate solution. In any event we will continue the measures to reduce noise in other areas, which we defined in the Environmental Strategy up to 2030.

How far off is the project to establish infrastructure for alternative fuels in transportation and the possibility of fueling vessels with electricity?

The European directive on establishing infrastructure for alternative fuels requires Member States in their national policy contexts to assess the need for the supply of electricity from the shore to ships, and that such electricity supply from the shore be installed in ports as a priority by the end of 2025. At the Port of Koper we are dealing with this challenge as part of the European ELEMED project. The aim of the project is to verify the technical, safety and financial aspects of developing and installing a system that provides vessels access to electricity from the fixed grid while they are berthed, thereby offering vessels access to an alternative and renewable source of energy. With the construction of new shoreline and surfaces at the harbor in Koper, and especially at the container terminal, we are already envisaging the construction

of infrastructure in which cables for future supply of vessels will be installed. In this project we will also need assistance from the state, since it will first be necessary to run a sufficient quantity of electricity to Koper. And we must not forget that the ship operators also need to adapt to the new system.

How has digitalization affected your business model?

We can't imagine the port today without digital support. Handling almost a million containers and more than 700,000 cars a year would be impossible without adequate IT support. But in this area we still have a lot of work to do, and again we are faced with the urgent need for the cooperation and adaptation of all stakeholders in the logistics chain. I am thinking of a single window that would link all neighboring ports with ship operators and reduce the bureaucracy. And of course the paperless operation of freight forwarding companies, which would speed up the logistics in truck transportation. Not to mention the automation of cargo handling, which is increasingly present.

In the last few years the Port of Koper has become one of the biggest car ports in the Mediterranean.

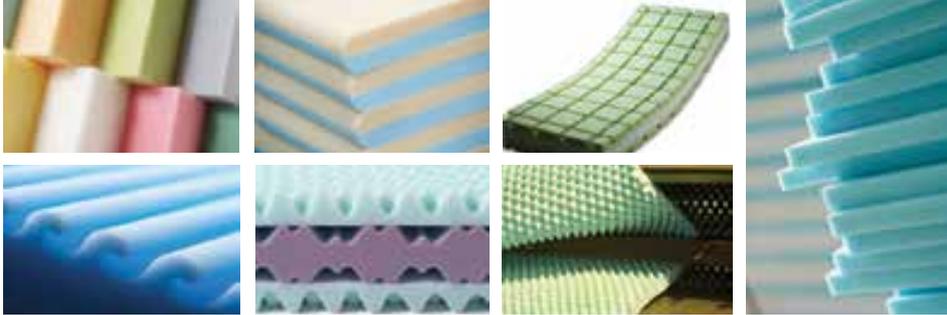
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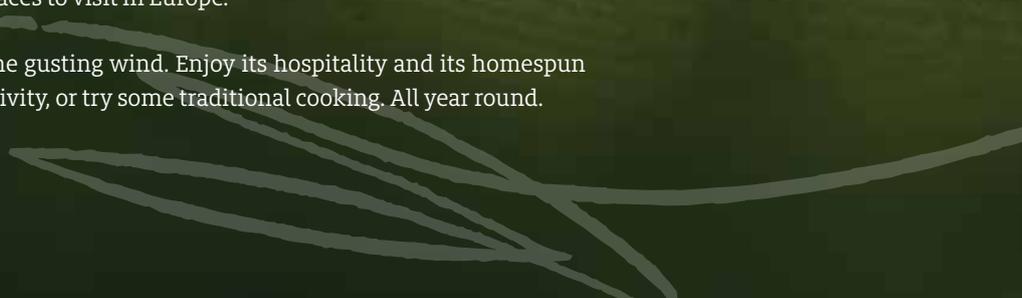
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American Markets Most Promising for Slovenian Tourism

Maja Pak, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO), talks about the challenges involved in attracting the huge tourist markets of North, Central and South America. There has been steady growth in the number of tourists from these regions in the last decade.

Andraž Sodja

STO Director Maja Pak has been living and breathing tourism for around 20 years. She is now in charge of the STO at a time when Slovenia is seeing exceptional growth in tourism, with records being broken year after year. Slovenia has managed to position itself in the tourism world as a green, sustainable destination, and has won all the world's most prestigious awards in this category.

Slovenia is achieving good results on the markets of Americas. What is the profile of the country?

Slovenia is gaining in profile as an attractive destination on the market of the Americas, particularly in the US and Canada. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the STO, in collaboration with the Slovenian tourist industry and other partners, has stepped up its marketing activities in the region. Evidence of this is the growth in the number of tourists and overnight stays from the Americas, particularly the US, where we have seen year-on-year growth since 2010.

What proportion do American guests account for?

Slovenia saw 19% more visitors from the US last year than the year before, with a 24% rise in the number of overnight stays. The respective figures for Canadian visitors are almost the same: 19 and 25%. There was an 8% increase in arrivals from Brazil (a 15% increase in overnight stays) and a 30% increase in arrivals from other parts of South America and from Central America (a 36% increase in overnight stays). The North American market in particular, i.e. the US and Canada, is one of the most promising distant markets for the Slovenian tourism industry. Europe has traditionally been an attractive destination for American visitors, who are also always on the lookout for interesting new destinations in Europe.

How important are guests from America?

North America is a very important outbound market for global tourism. If we look at the US for example, it is the world's second most important outbound market in terms of arrivals and the most important in terms of tourist spending. There has been an upward trend in arrivals to Europe from the US in the last few years. According to the European Travel Commission, a strong US dollar and growing consumer confidence have helped to increase Europe's appeal as a holiday destination. The US market accounts for around 5% of total arrivals (27 million) to Europe, with further

19% more visitors from the US and Canada visited Slovenia in 2018 in comparison to 2017.

Slovenia is known for its good sustainable tourism practices.



Slovenia caught the attention of the American media by being the driving force behind World Bee Day and through the stories attached to the olm (human fish) eggs in Postojna Cave.

Slovenian gastronomy has made great strides forward in recent years, as evidenced by the fact that Ana Roš, who became a star of the Netflix show Chef's Table, was named Best Female Chef in 2017.

STO arranges study visits to Slovenia for American agents and tour organizers so that they can acquaint themselves at first hand with destinations and providers.

The multiple successes of Luka Dončić and Goran Dragić, two great Slovenian basketball players, caught the attention of the global media.

growth expected at an annual average of 6% up to 2020. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) figures, US tourists are second only to the Chinese in terms of the amount of income they spend on international travel.

What are the goals of the Slovenian Tourist Board?

Our goal is clear: to increase Slovenia's profile as a destination that offers unique experiences for guests in the higher income bracket.

Which tourism segments do you see as having the greatest potential?

We see greatest potential in positioning ourselves in the special, 5-star experience segment. We highlight the fact that Slovenia is an authentic destination with unspoiled nature, a rich tradition and culture, and genuine, friendly people. It is also a leading sustainable tourism destination. According to research by the European Travel Commission, tourists from the US are most keen on countryside and rural experiences, sightseeing, and learning more about the history and culture of a country and its inhabitants.

What is the profile of the average American visitor?

American tourists that visit Slovenia, and specifically tourists from the US, are at the top of the list when it comes to average tourist spend in Slovenia. A survey of foreign tourists in Slovenia showed that they spent an average of EUR 160 per person per day. Ljubljana is the most popular destination, followed by mountain areas. When it comes to choosing travel and holidays, American tourists are focused mainly on personal safety, the friendliness of the local population and cleanliness. More than half of them visit more than one country when they travel. We have also caught the attention of the American media by being the driving force behind World Bee Day and through the stories attached to the olm (human fish) eggs in Postojna Cave.

Gastronomic tourism is one of the industry's most important segments.

Food and drink are among Slovenian tourism's greatest competitive assets. Slovenian gastronomy has made great strides forward in recent years, as evidenced by

the fact that Ana Roš, who became a star of the Netflix show Chef's Table, was named Best Female Chef in 2017. Other chefs and establishments, along with wine cellars and labels, are also making big names for themselves. Many prominent media outlets and food professionals are discovering that Slovenia is a country of organic produce that top chefs are able to transform, in authentic but nevertheless modern and innovative ways, into genuine culinary experiences. International recognition has already been bestowed on Slovenian food and drink by Gault&Millau, The World's 50 Best Restaurants, JRE, Slow Food International and the Decanter World Wine Awards. We are also extremely proud to have been awarded the title of European Region of Gastronomy 2021.

Are there any other celebrities, apart from Ana Roš, who have a profile on American markets?

Interest in Slovenia on the American market, particularly the US, has been on the rise since the multiple successes of Luka Dončić and Goran Dragić, two great Slovenian basketball players, which has caught the attention of the world media. We recognize that this is a perfect opportunity to raise Slovenia's profile as a country of top athletes, so, in collaboration with the Government Communication Office and the Slovenian Basketball Federation, we have decked out fans attending matches in the colors of the national tourism campaign, I Feel Slovenia.

What are STO's plans as far as promotion on the American market is concerned?

We also arrange study visits to Slovenia for American agents and tour organizers so that they can acquaint themselves at first hand with destinations and providers. Every year we also invite them to attend the biggest Slovenian tourism industry event, the Slovenian Incoming Workshop. This year it will take place at Terme Olimia spa resort from May 16 to 18, and the number of American partners in attendance is growing every year.

“Superlatives have been showered on Slovenia in articles in The New York Times, on the BBC and on MSN, one of the largest American news sites, Vogue, Conde Nast Traveler, the American online travel journal Travelsquire.com, the Point Guy and Jetsetter travel sites, and Travel & Leisure, to name just a few. Bloomberg spotlights Slovenian chef Ana Roš, wine magazine VinePair cannot praise Slovenian wine highly enough, Departures magazine describes Slovenia as a culinary destination of the future, and specialist news site Skift calls Slovenia a role model for sustainable policies. Numerous global media outlets with wide reach on the American continent, such as National Geographic, have described Slovenia as a destination worth visiting. In March, Slovenia was visited by a production team working on a series to be broadcast by Netflix at the end of the year.”



Photo: STO

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A Fine Future Awaits Slovenian Boutique Products, Wine, Meat, Spirits, Even Beer

Quality control is very strong in Slovenia, which is largely the result of the top-quality professionals working in the food sector. While it is logical to expect the majority of products from the agri-food industry to still be sold at home and to tourists visiting the country, export potential is seeing steady growth.

Andreja Šalamun

More robust links are emerging within vertical chains, i.e. between the food processing industry and agriculture, which ensures a continuous, high-quality base of raw materials.

Slovenian agri-food has a long tradition. "It was one of the strongest sectors in the former Yugoslavia, mainly because we had the opportunity to get raw materials from other parts of the federal state," says agricultural economist and dean of the Biotechnical Faculty at the University of Ljubljana Dr Emil Erjavec. The industry weathered the storms of Slovenian

independence and EU entry well, and exports continue to grow steadily. Some sectors, such as meat (white as well as red) and dairy, are very strong, as are cereal products, fruit, wine and other beverages (soft drinks and beer).

"Studies have shown that, alongside pharmaceuticals, agri-food is an area in which Slovenia can really

stand out and one in which it enjoys considerable competitive advantages,” says Erjavec. He adds that while the economic crisis did change the ownership relations in some companies, and some sectors are still ‘in transition’, things are stabilizing. Companies in this sector are becoming more and more active on foreign markets by strengthening their export activities. The key trading partners in these areas are Croatia, Austria and Italy, while Slovenia imports a considerable amount from Germany.

Erjavec says that more robust links are emerging within vertical chains, i.e. between the food processing industry and agriculture, which ensures a continuous base of raw materials of sufficiently high quality. “That is also Slovenia’s advantage in comparison with other countries in the region, particularly when it comes to wine, dairy and meat. We even have a problem in that a large portion of our milk and meat goes directly to Austria and Italy, which shows that these products are regarded as being of high quality.”

Quality Is Carefully Controlled

“Quality control is very strong in Slovenia, which is largely the result of top-quality professionals working in the food industry – technologists, veterinarians, agronomists, livestock breeders, farmers... The engineering aspect is so robust that serious anomalies just could not arise in production processes,” says Erjavec. He also says that the Slovenian agri-food chain has safety built into the system. “It cannot be otherwise, as the Slovenian consumer is very demanding and sensitive when it comes to quality.” This is also one of the reasons why organic production, encouraged by the country’s agricultural policy, continues to grow steadily.

Economies of Scale a Concern

Erjavec believes the only thing that could cause problems over the long term is economy of scale. “Preparing a sufficiently large volume of orders does present a few problems when it comes to serious export deals. But even here the problems are being overcome to a certain extent, with Slovenian wine already being exported to America, along with wine and dairy products to China. This shows that companies do know how to organize themselves and to prepare sufficiently large quantities when required,” says Erjavec.

He does acknowledge that quality recognition is still confined to the region – to South-East Europe and to parts of Italy and Austria. “This is despite the fact that every visitor to Slovenia is surprised at the quality of our ingredients and our cuisine.” He sees this as the consequence of the small size of the market – a market that was, for a long time, oriented more or less towards itself. While it is logical to expect the majority of products from the agri-food industry to still be sold at home and to tourists visiting the country, export potential is seeing steady growth. There have been positive changes mainly in the dairy and wine industries, with similar developments expected with white meat, processed meat and cereal products when ownership of these companies is consolidated. “If the Chinese market is interested in Slovenian agri-food products, then the same will definitely apply to the American market,” says Erjavec.

Perutnina Ptuj Establishes Production in the US

The Slovenian poultry company Perutnina Ptuj, which, along with its subsidiaries, generates annual revenues of around EUR 265 million, has decided to enter the American market directly, signing an

The Slovenian agri-food industry could enter the entire American continent (North, Central and South) more aggressively through its boutique products.

Some sectors, such as meat, dairy, cereal products, fruit and wine, are very strong in Slovenia.



Order volumes present a number of problems when it comes to serious export deals, but these are being overcome to some extent – for example, with wine exports to America.



Photo: www.slovenia.info/Boris.Pernar

agreement with American partners to produce salamis for those areas on the East Coast that are home to immigrants from countries of the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, in January this year it commenced production of chicken sausages and Poli frankfurters in Chicago. The spice mixes used in the manufacturing process are prepared according to the original Poli recipe in Ptuj and then sent to the US. Poli is now available at 1,750 retail outlets in Chicago.

In January this year, Perutnina Ptuj started to manufacture chicken sausages and Poli frankfurters in Chicago. Poli is now available at 1,750 retail outlets in Chicago.

Recognition Needs to Be Strengthened

Erjavec believes that the Slovenian agri-food industry could enter the entire American continent (North, Central and South) more aggressively through its high-quality boutique products aimed at the discerning consumer. "The quality is already there, but work needs to be done to strengthen recognition." He points out that the American market is a very specific and demanding one. "Winemakers, who are becoming more and more successful over there, say that while their profile is growing, they do have to invest a great deal in the market."

Slovenian wine is indeed making a name for itself in the US, mainly as a result of very intensive marketing efforts on the part of winemakers. "The wine market is a specific one. The product has to enter the retail system, the gastronomic sector, and this can only be achieved with the right people. It's not a case of investing funds in classic forms of advertising, but in the right people, in high-quality staff, who know how to present the product. I have no doubts about the quality. If Slovenian wines can replace elite French and Italian wines in China, then they are certainly suitable for the demanding American market as well," says Erjavec.

Award-Winning Boutique Wines

Winemaker Boleslav Mervič agrees. Together with his daughter Kristina, who runs the farm, he produces wine across nearly four hectares of vineyards in Šempas near Nova Gorica under the JNK brandname. No herbicides, pesticides or synthetic fertilizers are used in the vineyards, and they partly also follow biodynamic principles.

"Our boutique wines are achieving excellent results at wine competitions in the US. For example, we have won awards at the Finger Lakes Wine Competition and the Great American Wine Competition, but we're not of interest to them commercially," says Mervič. "We don't have the large quantities they want, so we are, for now, focusing on the Italian, British, German and Danish markets. But we are nevertheless trying to break through to the American market as well. We have just hosted a visit from Canadian and US importers," he explains. "I don't know what will come of it, but they loved our wine."



Photo: www.slovenia.info / Tomo Jeseničnik

Organic Wines Are Coming into Their Own

“Americans would like 5,000 bottles of a certain wine, but that’s something we will not do, as I believe that it’s important for a winemaker to have control of the cellar himself. With quantities like that you have to employ an oenologist who corrects the wine with chemicals in the event of any defects. That’s obviously something we cannot accept, being a producer of organic wines,” explains Mervič.

He stresses that organic wine is coming into its own and that more and more people are prepared to spend 20 euros or more on a bottle. “A bottle of commercially attractive wine costs between five and six euros and you have to produce several thousand bottles of it a year. This requires large investment and a large roster of staff – something not every winemaker can afford.”

Soya Bean Imports on the Rise

So what American products are of most interest to the Slovenian agri-food business? “Mainly soya beans, which are being imported in greater quantities from these regions,” says Erjavec. “Last year’s agreement between European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and US president Trump, as well as the issue of a trade war between China and the US, have redirected soya bean exports to the EU. We used to import them from other parts of the world, but in the last few months we have imported them mainly from America,” he says. He adds that Europe would nevertheless like to increase its domestic production of protein-rich crops, which is the only area in which it is not self-sufficient.

There are quite a few opportunities for cooperation between Slovenia and American markets, he says. “Boutique products, wine, meat, spirits, partly also beer, and high-quality meat products all have a bright future,” he adds.

The boutique wines produced by the Mervič family under the JNK brandname have won awards at the Finger Lakes Wine Competition and the Great American Wine Competition.

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KLET BRDA
Family vineyards

I FEEL SLOVENIA

Slovenia's innovation-based enterprises are focusing on artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, robotization and 5G mobile networks.



Photo: Ana Vučina Vršnak

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Smart and Innovative Slovenia

Slovenia is a country with a high number of new doctors of science. Moreover, a significant proportion of its population have studied to tertiary level, it produces a pleasing number of scientific and specialist publications, and its industry makes major investments in R&D. In response, it has directed its Smart Specialisation Strategy (S4) towards nine priority areas.

Aleš Ugovšek, Head of technological development and innovation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

Blockchain innovations are also worthy of mention, as Slovenia is one of the world's leading countries in this technology on a per capita basis.

Slovenia hovers at around 30th place on a wide variety of scales designed to measure countries' innovativeness. Among Slovenia's advantages are the fact that it has a high number of new doctors of science and that a significant proportion of its population have studied to tertiary level; it also produces a large number of scientific and specialist publications, its industry makes major investments in R&D, and it is home to many companies offering ICT training and the straightforward solution of insolvency-related problems. The number of ISO 9001 certificates is also high, as is the number of registered trademarks.

Slovenia's innovation-based enterprises are following 2019's global trends by focusing on artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, robotization and 5G mobile networks. Blockchain innovations are also worthy of mention, as Slovenia is one of the world's leading countries in this technology on a per capita basis. Slovenian companies are also very active at the cutting edge of electrical mobility and pharmaceuticals. In 2018 the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) gave out ten national gold awards for innovations in the fields of smart home appliances, ICT, smart cities, medicine, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and mobility (Danfoss Trata, Domel,

Efos, Gorenje, Iskraemeco, Krka, Radeče Papir Nova, Weiler Abrasives and TPV).

Smart Specialisation Strategy

When adopting the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S4), Slovenia directed development and innovation activities into nine priority areas selected on the basis of three common denominators (see box).

The country has set up one Strategic Development-Innovation Partnership (SRIP) per priority area that brings together industry and research, educational and other institutions with the aim of achieving the basic objectives of the S4: to increase value added per employee, improve industry competitiveness and increase the volume of entrepreneurial activity being undertaken. Of these nine areas, Slovenia is investing most in R&D and the development of innovation.

Venture Capital

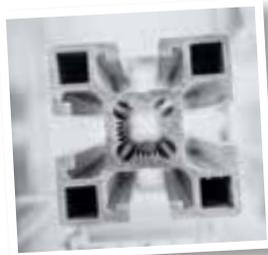
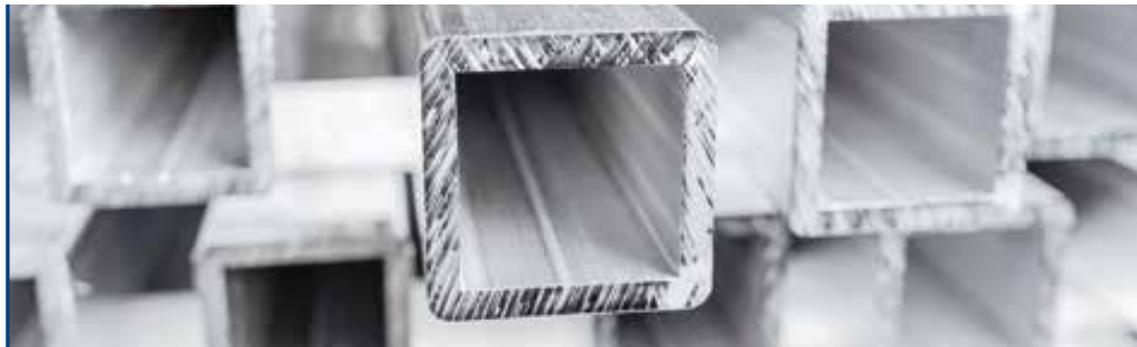
While the various international innovation tables refer to the advantages that Slovenia enjoys, they have also pointed, on a number of occasions, to shortcomings such as low venture capital receipts – something that has a major impact above all on the innovation environment of SMEs and start-ups. However, the situation is improving in this regard because of the

increasing amount of attention being paid to it. According to Aleš Pustovrh from the ABC business accelerator, foreign investors paid more than EUR 1.5 billion acquiring Slovenian start-ups in 2017 and 2018 (KPMG reports that venture capital funds invested more than USD 254 billion globally in 2018, which was a 46% increase on the year before).

Only very small amounts of venture capital are available in Slovenia: start-ups are able to acquire venture capital assistance through a small handful of corporations that have set up their own funds, while public money is also available via applications to the Slovenian Enterprise Fund. Among the more visible Slovenian corporations that have set up their own funds are Kolektor (Kolektor Ventures), Iskratel (Iskratel Startup) and Dewesoft (the Katapult business accelerator), although we are talking here of investments totaling less than EUR 20 million. The Slovenian Enterprise Fund gave EUR 10 million to start-ups last year, although it estimates that at least a further EUR 16 million will be made available over the next year. Business angels also invest money in start-ups, although the figures are small: around EUR 1.5 million over the last 12 months.

The figures quoted above are the reason why quite a high number of Slovenian start-ups move abroad

Slovenian companies are at the cutting edge in electric mobility and pharmaceuticals.



PROFILES



FOILS



RODS



SHEETS

In 2018 the GZS gave out ten national gold awards for innovations in the fields of smart home appliances, ICT, smart cities, medicine, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and mobility.

Foreign investors paid more than EUR 1.5 billion acquiring Slovenian start-ups in 2017 and 2018.

Six innovative Slovenian start-ups are highlighted here as "ones to watch" in 2019. Four of them have already acquired foreign investors.

The Smart Specialisation Strategy (S4) priority areas are:

A healthy living and working environment

1. Smart cities and communities (IT platforms and the conversion, distribution and management of energy)
2. Smart buildings and homes and the wood chain (advanced living spaces, building management systems, smart appliances, and building materials and products)

Natural and traditional resources for the future

3. Networks for the transition to a circular economy (processing of biomass, development of new biological materials, technologies for use of secondary raw materials, and energy generation from alternative sources)
4. Sustainable food production (sustainable production of food products and their processing into functional foods, and technologies for sustainable plant and livestock production)
5. Sustainable tourism (IT-supported marketing and networking, investments to raise quality of service, technological solutions for the sustainable consumption of resources in tourism accommodation, and the green Slovenian tourism scheme)

(S) Industry 4.0

6. Factories of the future (optimization and automation of production and production processes, including enabling technologies)
7. Health and medicine (biopharmaceuticals, diagnostics and translational medicine treatment, cancer treatment, resistant bacteria, and natural medicines and cosmetics)
8. Mobility (niche components and systems for internal combustion engines, e-mobility and energy-saving systems, safety and comfort systems and components, and materials for the automotive industry)
9. Materials and products (processing of metals and alloys, and smart multi-component materials and coatings)

or seek venture capital from foreign investors, who usually require a share in ownership in exchange for their investment.

GenePlanet Lives Healthily, Seascope Sails the Seas and Nervtech Gets Around

Among the most prominent Slovenian companies to have sought foreign capital are GenePlanet, a biotech company engaged in genetic analyses for healthy living, which has received EUR 10 million of Swiss capital in the last year; Seascope, a sailboat manufacturer in which French boating company Beneteau has taken a 60% share; Nervtech, which develops driving simulator technologies and new mobility tech, including self-driving vehicles, and which has received venture capital totaling EUR 1 million from the American fund Vecto IQ; Eurosender, an international mail delivery system, given a capital injection by the Luxembourg Post Office; Acies Bio, a biotech company that has received an investment of EUR 5 million from the Chinese pharmaceutical company Desano; and Elaphe, a start-up established in 2006 to develop electric vehicle engines, which acquired EUR 10 million of Chinese capital in 2015.

Innovative Start-ups

Slovenia is home to quite a large number of organizations involved in boosting the start-up economy; these include the Start:up Slovenija initiative, the ABC business accelerator and the Ljubljana university incubator.

Six innovative Slovenian start-ups are highlighted here as "ones to watch" in 2019. Four of them have already acquired foreign investors. These enterprises offer their products and services to European and global markets in the hotel, automotive, nautical, construction, surveying and energy industries.

The first is Creatriks, which develops and markets the Flexkeeping app, which enables hoteliers to gain instant access to information on all repair and cleaning operations and helps improve the flow of information and communication between different departments within a hotel. Nervtech (see above) develops high-tech driving simulators that measure a driver's response to dangerous situations, and the Simarine start-up is engaged in the development of sophisticated nautical measuring equipment and switchboards for managing different on-board systems. Eforma is responsible for the Moj mojster online platform, which brings together those looking for construction services and those offering them, while the Modri planet surveying company has developed a system for capturing data from the air (aerial photography) with the help of drones and 3D data processing, and SunContract operates an electricity trading platform based on blockchain technology.

Idea Incubators Are Springing Up All the Time

There is no shortage of innovative ideas in Slovenia – within companies and outside them. Start-ups abroad also recognize the value added created by Slovenia’s micro economic environment, which is, more than anything else, a suitable one for initial pilot projects and the testing of concepts when new business models are being launched.

Andreja Šalamun

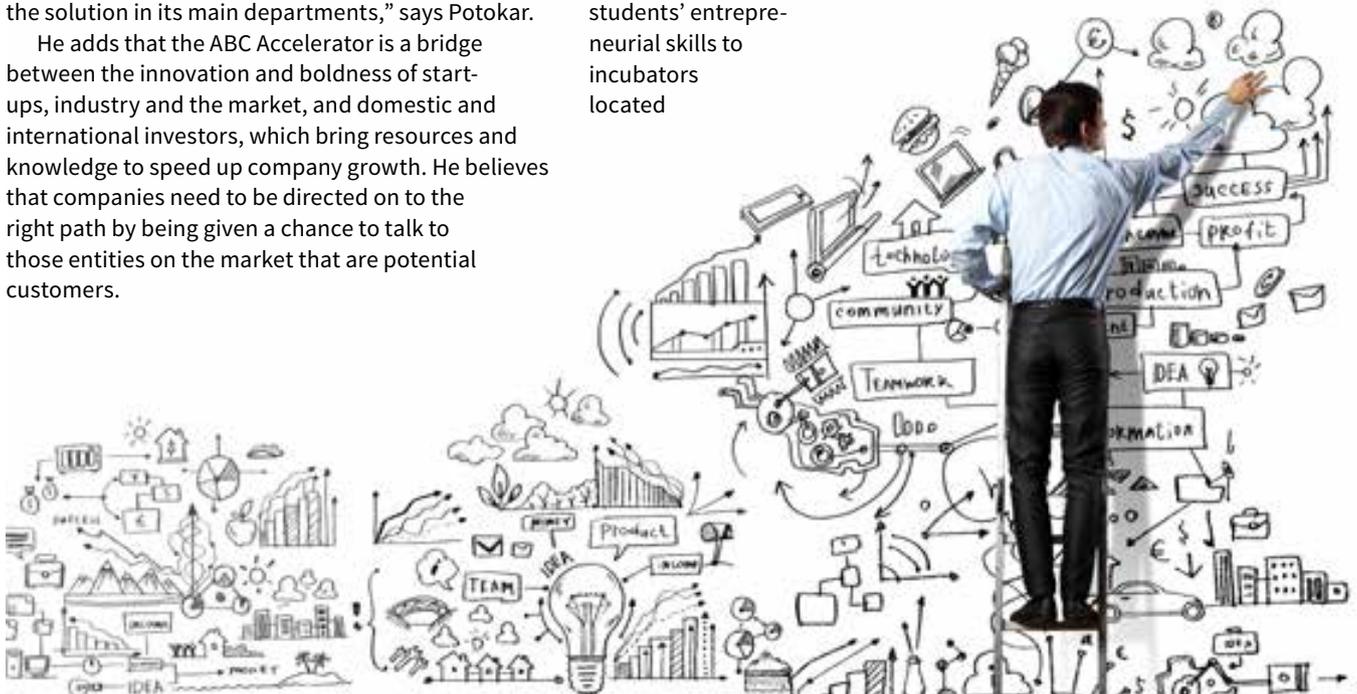
Slovenian enterprises are usually very open to innovation and cooperation, but they approach pilot projects cautiously. “So they often turn to us for help,” says Grega Potokar, co-founder and Managing Director of the ABC Accelerator, which helps companies after the ideas phase, when most incubators have already finished their work. “Our job is to accelerate the growth of start-ups that have already entered the market and to help them connect to industry and the economy,” explains Potokar. They are trusted by the large Slovenian firms that are also their partners: BTC, Zavarovalnica Triglav, Telekom Slovenije, Petrol and Enaa.com. He highlights the case of cooperation between the Companion start-up, with its gamification and employee motivation solution, and BTC. “The pilot project is already under way and the company is planning to implement the solution in its main departments,” says Potokar.

He adds that the ABC Accelerator is a bridge between the innovation and boldness of start-ups, industry and the market, and domestic and international investors, which bring resources and knowledge to speed up company growth. He believes that companies need to be directed on to the right path by being given a chance to talk to those entities on the market that are potential customers.

The experiences that the ABC Accelerator has had with large companies have been very positive. Potokar says that companies are full of enthusiasm and energy for cooperation. Of course, such companies do not accept every idea or solution, but they are very active and are keen to monitor the innovations that do come to the market.

Slovenia Is the Perfect Place for Testing Ideas and for Pilot Projects

Slovenia has a large number of incubators dedicated to encouraging ideas and accompanying a business as it takes its first steps into the world of enterprise. “The state co-finances around 32 of them and new ones are springing up all the time. These range from university incubators that strengthen students’ entrepreneurial skills to incubators located



Start-ups have one thing in common: all of them are unbelievably quick at adapting to market response and have no problem abandoning or changing their initial idea. They are not personally attached to the company, but go where the business leads them.

within large companies that act as factories of ideas and innovations within closed structures,” explains Potokar. He adds that there is noticeably strong support from state institutions and private initiatives. “It is a growing and lively scene. Consequently, investors’ interest groups are also increasing. We are well-developed and work well here. Unfortunately, very few business ideas come to market and stay there. We need greater boldness and persistence,” says Potokar, who believes that a company should try to enter a market even when the product is not yet complete.

The ABC Accelerator has so far helped more than 130 enterprises, which it also co-owns, and acquired investment totaling more than EUR 32 million. Start-ups that have already performed their first tests on the market and are keen to strengthen their business in the area of the former Yugoslavia, or collaborate with large corporations, are always welcome. “Start-ups abroad also recognize the value added created by Slovenia’s micro economic environment, which is, more than anything else, a suitable one for initial pilot projects and the testing of concepts when new business models are being launched. Our accelerator and Slovenia are unique, and this has been confirmed by the association of Central European start-ups, which has named us Best Accelerator Program in the CEE Region on two occasions,” says Potokar.

Slovenia Has a Large Number of Innovative Companies

Innovation is permanently established practice at Optomotive, which generates more than 90% of its sales on foreign markets. The company collaborates largely with foreign companies in its research and innovation work, but says that Slovenia does have quite a few extremely innovative and technologically advanced companies. “In our experience, these are mainly micro and small, young companies,” says company director Barbara Rakovec Gorkič. She says that the support environment for innovative companies in Slovenia is very well organized in most areas. “This applies more to support for start-up companies and slightly less to support for companies that are more than five years old. We have this feeling at Optomotive, perhaps because the field in which we operate is fairly specific and niche and is therefore known about only by a few people. So, in these circumstances, we have to look for partners abroad,” she explains.

The company develops, manufactures and markets flexible high-speed intelligent cameras for machine vision whose sizeable computing power enables real-time image processing.

The company obtained quite a few grants, mainly in the first five years, to co-finance innovation and development; it was only with these grants that they were able to start the business at all.

Attracting Investors’ Attention

What are the experiences with the start-up scene? At the end of March, the first of ABC’s three programs to accelerate start-up companies came to end. The Slovenian start-up CarCo, which has bolstered its ranks with Russian entrepreneurs and is preparing the ground for an entry into the Russian market, also took part. “Because of the enthusiasm and persistence of the team, we have managed to attract the attention of Austrian and Czech investors, who have opened negotiations on a multi-million-euro investment for the entry of the platform onto their markets,” explains Grega Potokar.

He also highlights the Sileo start-up, which has joined forces with an Italian partner and is producing its first solar roof panels, which puts it alongside or even beyond giants such as Tesla. “Our innovativeness and ability to adjust quickly to the market attracted the attention of the Principality of Monaco. This led to a personal meeting at which the Sileo team acquitted themselves well,” reveals Potokar. He notes that start-ups have one thing in common. “All of them are unbelievably quick at adapting to market response and have no problem abandoning or changing their initial idea. They are not personally attached to the company, but go where the business leads them,” he says.

There are quite a few flagship companies from previous generations, and those that succeed do so at a global level and with great speed. “The Slovenian star start-ups of which we will definitely hear more in the future include Flexkeeping, Nervtech, Beeping, Viberate, Sleepy Bottle, Cafelier, Fast Cast and Homey,” adds Potokar.

From the Idea to the Product in One Year

Optomotive develops new products that it manufactures itself and then places on global markets, and also develops products tailored to the needs of individual customers. “In order to finance the development of our own products, we have to make sure that the development costs for tailor-made products are covered by the customer,” explains Barbara Rakovec Gorkič. She says that the customers for whom a product has been developed end up buying these products from them over the next few years.

Generally speaking, they need between six months and a year to develop a new product and there is scarcely a time when they are not involved in development. When they are not developing an entirely new product, they are optimising details on existing products. They adjust and, where necessary, change their development plans as they go along, as this is a very uncertain process in which it is never possible to predict all the details in advance.

“For young micro companies, and probably for large companies as well, tax relief for investment in research and development is a great help as it means that more money stays within the company and can then be invested in subsequent development,” she says.

More Active on the American Market

In past years, Optomotive operated in a more passive way on the American market: as a member of the American branch association, via a single distributor and with no special additional marketing activities. “Because it wasn’t possible to make equally intensive breakthroughs onto several different markets at the same time, we decided at the outset to opt for intensive activities to raise our profile on European markets. This led, indirectly, to quite a bit of recognition on the American and Asian markets as well,” says Rakovec Gorkič.

Last year they decided to up their profile on the American market. Last November they invited a number of American companies to the Vision fair in Stuttgart, Germany, and also decided to take part in the Embedded Vision Summit fair and conference in Silicon Valley, California. They have managed to find a highly capable distributor on the American market – one that understands well the difference between their specific products and other products in the market. They are convinced that, with the distributor’s help, they will be able to raise their profile in the States.

Almost 300 start-ups are set to take part in the 5th PowerUp! competition

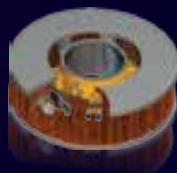
Almost 300 start-ups from 24 Central and East European countries will battle it out at this year’s 5th PowerUp! competition, organized by InnoEnergy. The final, which will take place in Krakow, Poland on 21 May, will feature 14 finalists selected to challenge for the main prize. The final will take place as part of the largest economics conference in this part of Europe, Impact’19. The competition will also offer companies the chance to secure financial support and to develop their ideas at the global level.

The 2GG (Second Generation Grid) system for the integrated gathering, transfer and processing of data on energy and water consumption, developed by the DS Meritve company, came out on top in the Slovenian final of the PowerUp! competition, after seven companies had made it to the final round. Sileo and its photovoltaic roof panels came second, in front of Rivertum (turbines). Only the winner will go forward to the final in Poland.

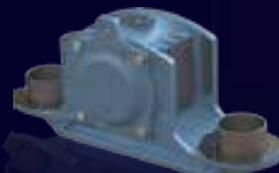


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Brake disc



Axle Box



Spare part for railway

The Marles Hiše company was awarded the prestigious Deutscher Holzbau Preis for best wooden building in 2017.



Photo: Marles

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The Smart Home of the Future Is Being Designed Jointly by the Best Home and Living Companies in Slovenia

“Slovenia has a serious amount of potential when it comes to future living, in terms of both knowledge and natural resources. It’s a leading country in the wood and cement industries, and is no slouch either when it comes to technology for building smart homes and systems,” says General Director of the Finnish civil engineering association Dr Miimu Airaksinen, who paid a visit to the Future Living (Prihodnost bivanja) exhibition in Slovenia in February.

Nina Šprohar and Ana Vučina Vršnak

The best home and living companies in Slovenia have been involved in the DOM24h smart home of the future project.

“The Future Living exhibition showcases the achievements of Slovenian companies in the fields of smart and sustainable living, but this is only a tiny part of what we know and do,” said President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS) Boštjan Gorjup at a conference to mark the opening of the exhibition. He

was keen to point out that connection and integration are key to improving outcomes.

The challenges are not inconsiderable: we are faced by a rising urban population, with around 70% of all greenhouse gas emissions coming from towns and cities. “If we’re to have safer and more affordable living with lower emissions, we need more solar and

wind energy. We also need to take a big step forward with the Internet of Things. And, in the end, we must not overlook existing buildings, which have to be adapted and developed into smart buildings.” These were some of the issues highlighted by Dr Airaksinen, who believes that Slovenia can make a strong contribution to global developments in the field of smart buildings.

Speakers at the conference that accompanied the Future Living exhibition agreed that decarbonization and digital transformation were two key areas contributing to healthier and more comfortable living. The conference provided them with a chance to open a dialogue on future cooperation and to discuss the goals that individual companies had set themselves. A smart home of the future has already been produced as part of the DOM24h project, a collaboration between the best home and living companies in Slovenia.

Slovenian Companies Have Joined Forces to Develop Spaces for Future Living

Slovenian companies involved in future living see great potential in connection and integration, which is why they have collaborated on the design of the DOM24h demonstration project, coordinated by the Marles company, as part of a Strategic Development-Innovation Partnership (SRIP) (“Smart buildings, homes and the wood chain”, PSIDL). The project showcases a living space of the future that enables the user to work from home and enjoy high-quality leisure time. The companies involved in its planning cover all segments of the smart and sustainable future living concept.

What will this building be like? “The demonstration unit will be designed to be energy self-sufficient as far as is possible, but nevertheless connected to its surroundings: this means that it can pass on the energy surpluses that it generates and obtain an energy supply when it needs it,” explains Bogdan Božac, Managing Director of Marles Hiše, which received the prestigious Deutscher Holzbau Preis for best wooden building in 2017.

“At the same time it will showcase a basic unit of mobility, as it will provide a starting point for user mobility. Information technology will also play a major role, as the building as well as the fixtures within it will intuitively track the needs and habits of users in such a way as to ensure the synchronous operation of individual elements within the building, such as energy supply, device management and furniture, etc. Above all, the building will be a space in which users’ needs are recognized and solutions that accord with the needs of future living are formulated,” says Božac.

Alongside Marles, a large number of companies operating within the SRIP are also involved in the project; these include Petrol, Gorenje, Alples, Danfoss, Eti elektroelement, Helios, Robotina and Špica International.

Digital Transformation Has Improved Gorenje’s Operations

Franjo Bobinac, Chairman of the council of directors at Gorenje and Vice-President for global marketing at Hisense International, says that the Gorenje Group “are changing, through a process of digital transformation, from a manufacturer of appliances to a provider of services that will make customers’ lives easier and simplify everyday household chores.”

The Gorenje Group are digitally transforming and automating processes, and are developing smart services with the aid of bots (virtual assistants) and appliances with new sensors and features. “Our Atag-branded connected appliances, which can also be managed using a smartphone or tablet, are already being used by customers in the Netherlands and, by the end of this year and at the beginning of 2020, we will be launching further appliances under the Asko and Gorenje brandnames. We are updating the websites for the Gorenje and Asko brands with new digital services, including digital assistants,” says Bobinac. He explains that, since becoming part of the Hisense Group, the company has intensified its involvement in the development of digital services and solutions, and enjoyed considerable success in the process. They have also designed a concept for the ConnectLife platform, which brings together smart products and services for all Hisense Group brands. The platform received an enthusiastic response at CES in Las Vegas. The ConnectLife platform is also integrated with digital assistants from the Gorenje Group and with products and services from external partners, and is linked to digital personal assistants such as Alexa, Google, Siri and others.

What impact has digital transformation had on the Gorenje Group? “It has improved and optimized our operations,” claims Bobinac. Industry 4.0 is already having an impact on staff structure at Gorenje, having

Slovenia has a great deal to offer in the area of smart, sustainable living.

The Gorenje Group are digitally transforming and automating processes, and developing smart services with the aid of bots (virtual assistants) and appliances with new sensors and features.



Photo: Gorenje

intensified the recruitment of IT specialists and developers in the last few years. “We are automating production processes to an ever-greater degree, which will definitely have an effect on the staff structure – something for which we are already making preparations. We are also planning to set up a new factory for hi-tech Hisense-branded television sets,” says Bobinac.

A Smart Energy- and Time-Saving Solution

Robotina are responsible for the HIQ Home system, which comprises devices and software for home automation. “The system can be expanded to unlimited dimensions from a very simple base. It is also very easy to connect it to other systems. Individual functions are controlled by the basic components. When connected to each other, they create a unique and complex system that supplies individual units with electricity and allows them to communicate with each other,” say the company. The system therefore controls lighting, heating, cooling and air-conditioning systems, and it is also capable of managing energy efficiently.

The system can be used in new-builds and in buildings that have undergone renovation. System implementation requires no specialist knowledge apart from that of an electrician. End-users can select the functions and the number and type of connected devices and applications in a very straightforward way, controlling the HIQ Home system from a smartphone or tablet.

The smart system is intuitive, reliable and simple to use. Its advantage over the competition is that it provides the user with complete control. They can, for example, decide for themselves when to lower or raise the blinds, and can turn on the lights without having to get up or even be at home. Users who use the RGB LED diodes can even change the color of the lighting and therefore further enhance their home experience. Users can decide who is

Robotina markets the HIQ Home system, which comprises devices and software for home automation.

Robotina have developed a completely new form of installation. It is entirely wall-mounted, which means that no intervention in the structure of the building is required – a vital feature when it comes to installing the system in protected buildings.



Photo: Robotina

allowed to enter their home. The company has also provided for flexibility in heating arrangements, with users able to set the temperature for each room separately regardless of how the home is heated. Sensors also provide security, whether against break-ins, fire or gas leaks. Robotina stress that HIQ Home is not a closed system, as users can add new units and upgrade the software at any time. “The system learns the individual user’s habits and therefore enables them to lead a simpler and more carefree life.

We want to become a leading provider in the field of smart connected solutions, components and platforms.” As they explain, they will achieve this objective by developing, producing and introducing new technologies, aided by their rich array of specialist knowledge, their high-quality hardware and software, and their strong organizational structure and protocols.

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Photo: Robotina



A MANUFACTURER OF BENDING MACHINES



Strojgradnja SAS is a Slovenian manufacturer of bending machines and other equipment for sheet metalworking that is located near Rogaška Slatina. Over the past 30 years, the company has specialised in developing, manufacturing and selling machines that bend metal sheets up to 2 mm thick. During this time and with more than 500 manufactured bending machines, the company has proved itself as a reliable and high-quality manufacturer of sheet metalwork machines. The sales programmes also include sheet metal cutting systems, unrolling and coiling machines, and storage machines.

Their innovative products guarantee:

- **good quality**, which is achieved through their own developing, experience and production (CNC processing, plasma cutting, robot welding, etc.);
- **functionality and easy machine operation;**
- **realistic and reasonable prices.**

www.strojgradnja-sas.si

Strojgradnja SAS
Stanko Arzenšek s.p.
Krtince 11c, 3241 Podplat
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RAVNE PRESSES



Msc. Maja Pucko Gnamus,
General Manager

RAVNE PRESSES D.O.O is a manufacturer of high quality custom-made industrial hydraulic, mechanical and servo presses for sheet metal forming and powder material with its own brand of RAVNE PRESSES that have a nominal force ranging from 400 to 40,000 kN, and a table length of up to 8 meters. The Ravne brand originates from 400 years of steel-milling tradition. We have been producing mechanical, servo

and hydraulic and press line machinery are integrated into the production facilities of many suppliers and producers in the automotive industry, household appliances industry, forging industry, electro industry, and tool industry, among others.

For more than 50 years Ravne presses have been exported to markets worldwide and can be found on all six continents. Our highly motivated and innovative employees are able to develop any kind of press according to customers' various standards (including the CE, OSHA and CSA standards).

Total Quality Management is the basic operating principle of our company. Quality is monitored using the system approach presses for the steel and sheet metal forming industry for more than 50 years.

During this time, the Ravne brand has established itself worldwide as a trustworthy partner due to its product performance and efficiency. Our production presses and a computerized business system which includes production, research, development, technology, marketing and analysis. The continuous improvement of processes is our strategic direction, and with this systematic approach we are able to constantly exceed customer requirements and achieve our business goals.



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Slovenian Furniture Makers Seeking New Partners in the USA

Slovenia's woodworking and furniture industry is growing. In 2017 Slovenian companies exported more than EUR 16 million worth of wood and furniture products to the USA.

Nina Šprohar

“Slovenia's woodworking and furniture industry is currently in a period of growth. In the last five years we have seen growth in employment, exports and earnings, and there are also improvements in value added and investment in development,” says Bernard Likar, advisor at the Wood Industry Cluster. He adds that the American market represents a promising export market for Slovenian furniture manufacturers. A whole range of representatives of the former Slovenijales company and other business people favorably inclined toward Slovenia are still there in the USA.

According to data from SPIRIT Slovenija, in 2017 Slovenian companies exported more than 16 million euros worth of wood and furniture products to the USA. Meanwhile the Wood Industry Cluster, together with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) and with the support of the agency SPIRIT Slovenija, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ) in recent years provided concerted support for companies entering or consolidating their business in the USA. Entrepreneurs are also being supported by the SID bank.

Encouragement is being given to business and economic delegations, and the project KOCles is underway to support and promote the professional training of personnel in Slovenia. Foreign and domestic investors are eligible for investment incentives, on the condition that the value of the investment in manufacturing is at least a million euros and that the recipient of the incentive creates 25 new jobs no later than three years after concluding the investment, explains the MGRT.

Greatest Opportunity in Engineering Business

This year a business delegation will be in Chicago from June 9th to 13th, and will include the companies Murales, Donar, Lina Design, Ceta, Mizarstvo Florjančič, L.ask, Prinčič and Noki..

“The USA is of course an attractive market for Slovenian entrepreneurs, especially because of its size and openness to European products,” explains

Likar. He sees the biggest opportunities for companies in what is called engineering business, which includes furnishings for offices, public spaces and hotels, and in higher price bracket designer products. “Partly also in the supply of components for furniture,” he adds.

Mizarstvo Florjančič Seeks Buyers Interested in High-Quality Mass Production of Furniture

Mizarstvo Florjančič is interested in the US market, for which it makes rack and shelving systems. “We divide our product range into three groups – shelving systems, furniture to order and solid wood products including children's chairs,” says CEO Robert Florjančič.

The company exports 90 percent of its production, mainly to the Scandinavian countries, Germany and Austria, and occasionally also to France, Italy and Russia, but one of their main buyers in Denmark started marketing in the American market, so they, too, needed to get all the necessary certification and materials and adapt their work process so as to satisfy US laws.

The American market is a promising export market for Slovenian furniture manufacturers.

Mizarstvo Florjančič is interested in the US market, for which it already makes rack and shelving systems.



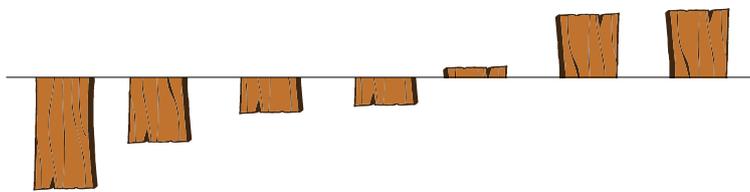


Table of net profit/loss in furniture manufacturing (in '000 euros)

Source: GZS performance indicators



Photo: Mizarstvo Florjančič

The biggest opportunities are in what is called engineering business, which includes furnishings for offices, public spaces and hotels, and in higher price bracket designer products.

As Florjančič puts it, they satisfy very specific requirements of US regulators regarding materials, adhesives and environmental standards.

By visiting this year's fair they would especially like to find potential buyers interested in higher-quality mass production.

Murales Already Familiar with the US Market

Now nearly a hundred years old, Murales makes dining room seating furniture for the domestic and international markets. "We transform the raw materials using processes that we have developed over the years," they say. They are helped in this by advanced technology and, as they put it, exceptional attention to detail. In addition to furniture, Murales makes wood semi-finished products. They export mainly to European countries, the USA and Russia. What they want to take away from the visit to the USA is mainly new acquaintances and cooperation, while the visit also offers them a direct encounter with new designs and local trends.



Photo: Murales

Now nearly a hundred years old, Murales makes dining room seating furniture for the domestic and international markets.

Insight into Standards and Quality of Construction and Furnishing

The first delegation was organized in 2017, when it headed to New York with the aim of getting to know the features and trends of the US furniture market. That was followed by last year's delegation to New York, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. "On that visit we wanted mainly to get additional information about the market and to strengthen business relations with business people and architects in the USA, while also securing contacts to boost exports in the coming years," explains Likar.

In Cleveland they arranged meetings with the representatives of various architectural offices and interior furnishing firms. They also viewed a project involving construction of wood residential homes of varying quality, which as Likar puts it gave them a better direct insight into the standards and quality of construction and furnishing of buildings in the USA. In Pittsburgh they met with representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, who provided a presentation of the characteristics of the local wood industry.

Donar Seeking to Break into the US Market with a Sustainable Product

The company Donar is sustainably oriented, and they hope that Americans will recognize their efforts to reduce environmental pollution. Ivan Ukmar, Project Manager at Donar, says that in the USA they are interested primarily in contract business. "We want to familiarize architects and designers over there with our products and to show them the value of plastic waste, which may be the industrial material of the future. It is they that could help us enter the American market place," says Ukmar.

"Our Nico less chair is a response to the human need to reduce our carbon imprint on the planet and to rediscover waste as an industrial material of the future. Re-thinking a new philosophy of socially responsible, sustainable design, Primoz Jeza Studio and Donar created a chair made of recycled felt (70 percent re-cycled PP bottles and 30 percent non-woven textile). The use of waste as industrial materials of the future is an important asset to reduce CO₂ emissions produced in various different industrial processes. We are implementing a new approach in the furniture production industry -- using a process borrowed from the car industry we designed and produced many sustainable products made from waste materials, and Nico Less is the most highly awarded and widely recognized of them among all," they say.



mizarstvo
FLORJANČIČ

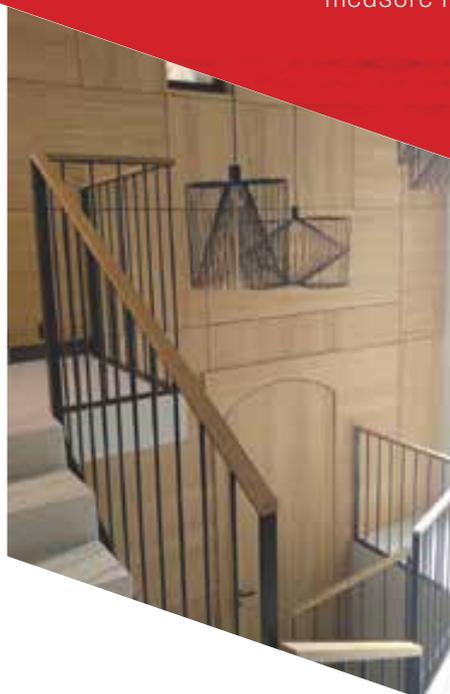


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Slovenia Has the Potential to Become a Reference Country for Green Mobility

The Slovenian automotive industry is an important creator of world trends in breakthrough technologies, particularly self-driving and electric vehicles.

Darja Kocbek

Slovenia's one major auto manufacturer, Revoz, is one of the largest companies in the country and has been, for a number of years, its largest exporter.

The automotive industry is a very important sector of the Slovenian economy. Slovenia's one major auto manufacturer, Revoz, is one of the largest companies in the country and has been, for a number of years, its largest exporter. There are also over 600 companies in Slovenia engaged in supplying products and services to major automotive companies, mainly through partners in Germany.

Almost 1,000 Vehicles per Day

Slightly less than 1,000 vehicles a day are manufactured by 3,400 employees, aided by some 450 robots, at Revoz, the Slovenian car plant based in the southern Slovenian town Novo Mesto, which is part of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance. In addition to the Renault Clio and Renault Twingo, Revoz also manufactures the Smart ForFour and Smart ForFour EV in partnership with Daimler.

The company says that it is gearing up for new projects and investments in new technologies, including electric vehicles and digital transformation.

In December 2018 the Slovenian government approved a financial incentive to Revoz to establish a production line for the new Renault BJA model. The total value of the investment, which is slated for completion by December this year, is estimated at EUR 90 million, with the government adding a further EUR 6 million to this in the form of an incentive. The government took the decision to offer the subsidy because it expects it to help create 75 new jobs at Revoz and contribute to a significant rise in value added per employee.

Every day, 3,400 employees, aided by some 450 robots, manufacture slightly less than 1,000 vehicles at Revoz.

One could go as far as to say that there is no car anywhere that does not contain at least one part from Slovenia.

Several Hundred Suppliers

The parts manufactured by auto industry suppliers in Slovenia are incorporated into vehicles produced by the world's largest automotive companies. One could go as far as to say that there is no car anywhere that does not contain at least one part from Slovenia. Slovenia is home to more than 100 companies engaged in directly supplying vehicle manufacturers and their suppliers, i.e. first- and second-level suppliers, while there are around 600 lower-level suppliers.

Hella Saturnus Upgrading Its Range of Lighting Products

One of these direct suppliers is the Ljubljana-based Hella Saturnus company, which is part of the international HELLA Group. The company is engaged in developing and manufacturing automotive lighting systems, including headlamps, auxiliary fog lamps, daytime running lamps, and single- and multi-function lamps.

Hella Saturnus have been supplying products and services to some of the world's most important auto manufacturers since the beginning of the 1960s. The company explains that they have been involved in a constant process of upgrading the existing range of

Revoz, Slovenia's largest exporter, exported vehicles worth a total of EUR 1.75 billion in 2018. Together with the several hundred suppliers to the auto industry based in Slovenia, Revoz contributes around EUR 4 billion to Slovenia's GDP annually – a staggering 10% of the country's entire GDP.

products and services in recent years, and expanding their development activities with the addition of departments for electronics, R&D for new products and technologies, the development of standard components and the development of internal (ambient) vehicle lighting.

Since 2012, Hella Saturnus have headed up three group-level competence centres for auxiliary headlamps, lighting systems for sports cars and single-function lamps. Their largest customers by revenue volume are Renault-Nissan (42%), Volkswagen (30%) and General Motors (10%). Most of their sales in the last financial year were to customers in Europe, although their products are marketed across the globe, including South America.

Kolektor a Globally Important Supplier

The Slovenian Kolektor Group from Idrija in the west of the country is one of the world's leading suppliers to global manufacturers of starters, fuel pumps and actuators. In addition to commutators, rotors and electronic, magnetic and hybrid components, the components programme also includes electronic sub-systems and plastic products for vehicle exteriors and interiors.

Hidria Sells to 55 Countries

Hidria, from Idrija, is another leading Slovenian automotive technology company. It sells to 55 countries, with Germany its largest customer. Last year, for the second year in a row, Hidria received the "PSA Best Plant" award, given to the best supplier, from PSA Peugeot Citroën Opel.

TPV One of the Leading Development Suppliers

The TPV Group is one of the leading development suppliers to the automotive industry in Slovenia. Its principal activity involves the development and manufacture of a variety of components for the auto industry, such as body and chassis assemblies, seat components and elements, and engine seals. They also develop and market comprehensive solutions for production logistics management, and their automated guided vehicles, developed in-house, are one of their key products.

Iskra Mehanizmi and Its Mechatronics Know-how

Iskra Mehanizmi from Kropa in northern Slovenia supply complex mechatronic solutions, and provide automotive companies with know-how and experience in the field of mechatronics.

Plastic and Metal Products from Plamtex

Plastic products and metal parts for vehicle exteriors are manufactured at Plamtex, a company based in the central Slovenian town of Komenda. Its sensors are used in the electronic assemblies of vehicles manufactured by established companies such as BMW and Mercedes. "We also manufacture various elements for car door interiors, small plastic parts for engine compartments (cable glands, caps, etc.), door handle coverings, and so on," say the company.

Lotrič Metrology Performs Calibrations, SFC Automotive Provides Advice

SFC Automotive from Ljubljana are one of a number of highly successful Slovenian companies with an important role to play in the automotive industry without producing parts or components for it. Instead, it offers consultancy services in connection with the SAP information system. Calibrations for the world's largest automotive groups are performed by Lotrič Metrology, a family company from Kranj in Central Slovenia. Last year they opened the first metrology park in Slovenia.

Magna Steyr Starts Production

The Canadian-Austrian company completed the construction of a paint shop for its own vehicles in Maribor, north-eastern Slovenia, in 2018. Trial operation began in March, with production slated to commence fully by the end of May. The first vehicle bodies to pass through the paint shop were for the Jaguar E-Pace H540. The Slovenian government provided state aid of EUR 18 million for this first phase of the project.

The company is planning a second phase involving whole vehicle manufacture. They are not prepared to release much information about this second phase as yet, as it depends mainly on orders from Magna's partners; what we do know, however, is that they intend to complete the phase without state aid.

That the Slovenian automotive industry is an important creator of world trends in breakthrough technologies, particularly self-driving and electric vehicles, and that Slovenia has the potential to become a reference country for green mobility, was something that all participants (and there were over 170 of them) agreed on at last October's conference, which was co-organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

There are over **600** companies in Slovenia engaged in supplying products and services to the automotive industry.

Hella Saturnus have been supplying lighting systems to global automotive manufacturers since the beginning of the 1960s. They sell their products around the world, including South America.

The Slovenian Kolektor Group is one of the world's leading suppliers to global manufacturers of automotive systems.

The Slovenian-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (SLOBRAZ) in Sao Paulo points out the great success that has, in the past, been enjoyed by Slovenian suppliers to the automotive industry in Brazil. One of the most successful Slovenian families in Brazil, the Hlebanja family, own the Drava Metals company in Sao Paulo, from where they have supplied Volkswagen for several decades.

"More and more global manufacturers are setting up assembly lines or plants in Brazil. They import parts for assembly through their own parent companies. This means that Slovenian suppliers sell to the parent company and therefore do not export directly to Brazil," explain SLOBRAZ.

Suppliers are able to start their own manufacturing operations in Brazil and can do so in agreement with their customers, as it is in the interests of the large auto manufacturers to have a local supplier and therefore bring down supply costs. The former Prevent company used to have an agreement of this type with Volkswagen. Toyota for example, has a complex containing all its key suppliers, in addition to its own plant in Sao Paulo. SLOBRAZ can help Slovenian suppliers establish their own manufacturing capacities in Brazil, guiding them through the entire purchase: legal assistance, location-scouting, contacts with local partners, accounting, imports, permits and so on. "In Brazil, success comes to those who operate on a long-term basis, such as Gorenje, DEWESoft and Tajfun. Slovenian manufacturers undoubtedly do sell to the Brazilian market through European plants without knowing it," say SLOBRAZ.

The Door of Our Chamber is Open to You

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) is the largest independent, voluntary, non-profit association of companies in Slovenia. It was founded more than 160 years ago and today boasts more than 6,200 member companies of all shapes, sizes, branches, and regional backgrounds. Our member organizations power more than 2/3 of the Slovenian economy in terms of capital and human resources. Business in Slovenia starts here!

What Can We Do for You?

The GZS is the ideal **local partner** for foreign investors and business professionals. It can support and facilitate your entrance into the Slovenian market. It can help you search for **new contacts** and provide you with a wide range of useful business information.

If you are interested in doing business in Slovenia, the GZS offers you **services** developed especially for your needs.

Looking for Partners in Slovenia?

The Centre for International Business is the perfect contact point for anyone interested in working with Slovenian companies. Along with providing information on the Slovenian market, the Centre also provides support to foreign enterprises and institutions in finding new partners. The Centre is responsive, creative, and tirelessly modern. At the same time it makes sure that all its partners are treated as individuals, on a case by case basis.



What do you gain by knocking on the door of Slovenia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry?

1.
The most powerful representative of the Slovenian private sector

2.
A partner who stands by your side as you enter the Slovenian market

3.
A networking megahub, where best practices are freely exchanged

Market Intelligence

The GZS provides a wide range of insightfully discerning information on the economic situation in Slovenia. This includes everything from economic indicators and trend forecasts to information on companies' credit ratings. You also get access to contacts for potential business partners.

The GZS publishes a monthly electronic bulletin in English called **Slovenia Business Link**. This publication features information on upcoming events, op-eds on regulatory issues, and the latest economic data.

Take advantage of the best business opportunities in Slovenia – make an offer or find a supplier. Foreign companies can register and search for trade inquiries through our special inquiry database BORZA (www.borza.org), where you can find both Slovenian and international business partners.

Go International

The GZS is the primary meeting hub for Slovenian development and export-oriented enterprises, which are the very engine driving the core of development and innovation in the Slovenian economy. Our continuous interaction with foreign enterprises, institutions, and experts is converted into engaging activities like business delegations, educational and other major events, and B2Bs. It is our mission to provide you with our assembled information about inquiries on international markets, assistance in connecting Slovenian and foreign enterprises, and making your business experience here as productive and lucrative as possible.



go international
slovenia

Legal Framework

The GZS can provide you with information about Slovenian legislation or offer you legal consulting on Commercial, Corporate, Property, Enforcement, and Labour Law, as well as information on public procurement and insolvency procedures.

SloExport: All Major Slovenian Companies in One Place



SloExport is a database catalogue containing information on more than 4,500 Slovenian exporters. It is a tool that will be of great assistance in seeking information on individual Slovenian companies.

Excellent SME Certification



In conjunction with the renowned global credit insurer COFACE, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia is now issuing Excellent SME certificates to Slovenia's most successful small and medium-sized enterprises.

This certificate enables potential investors or business partners to verify a company's existence, its actual web address, and, most importantly, its creditworthiness.

Ljubljana Arbitration Centre



The Ljubljana Arbitration Centre is an autonomous and independent arbitration centre providing administrative services for the resolution of disputes between parties through arbitration, mediation, conciliation, and alternative forms of dispute resolution.

Promotion and Advertising



The GZS offers several packages of promotional opportunities and advertising also to foreign partners to increase their visibility on the Slovenian market.

Environmental Protection

The GZS can provide information on new and existing environmental legislation, and other environmental aspects, including exchanges of best practice and benchmarking through conferences, training activities, and individual consultations.

4.

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Photo: Adria Mobil

Slovenian Technology to Be Used by Entire Volkswagen Group

Year after year, Slovenian companies prove through their innovativeness, development competence and excellent production quality that they are perfect partners for companies in the car industry. At the same time, with their final products they are dictating trends in the field of mobility.

Barbara Perko and Andreja Šalamun

Electric-Powered Boat with Hydraulic Hardtop Roof Is a Hit

The most popular boat from Alfastreet Marine last year was the 23 Cabin Prestige Line, with a 10kW electric motor and a hydraulic hardtop roof. “Our customers are mostly interested in the more luxurious models, and the look and comfort of the cockpit is very important to them,” say company sources. They have also launched a model with semi-hybrid drive, which allows up to 20 hours of use; in the last few months there has been a lot of interest in this design, according to sources at the company. “We have also added options to the Model 23 Cabin Prestige Line that are offered by luxury-class car makers, so these boats are truly refined. Options include the installation of ambient LED lights on the console, black structural wood inlays on the console and Spradling

Diamante cushions, which are UV and water-resistant, have an opulent look and are exceptionally pleasant to sit on. The cabin version of the Model 23 also allows for installation of an electrical WC, so in an overall length of 7.8 metres we can offer nearly all of the options available on larger craft,” say sources at Alfastreet.

In the last three years, Alfastreet Marine has been intensively expanding its sales network and is seeking distributors around the world, as demand for their boats is increasing every year. “Alfastreet Marine remains a synonym for quality and refinement, and above all we want to offer nautical enthusiasts maximum comfort on the water and technical solutions that make the boats fun and easy to use. We are currently the only manufacturer that has a category B CE certificate in the 7 metre category, meaning that

we have also achieved the highest standard of safety on the water,” say company sources.

8.6 Metre Model Under Development

Their development team is currently focused on finishing the design for an 8.6 metre Model 28, through which the company will take a major step forward in the global range of vessels in this class. “The model will be available in two styles, one with a planing hull and one with a semi-displacement hull, which will allow the installation of various types of electrical drives and motors up to 600 horsepower. The boat will also be available with three cabin options, so we will try as much as possible to cover the wishes and demands of all of our customers. The Model 28 will also offer the option of a hydraulic hard-top roof, as the 95-percent sales of this option prove that the unique design is an excellent choice for both comfort and functionality,” say company sources.



Photo: Allstreet Marine

New Generation of Twin Vans on the Way

Adria Mobil is one of the three most respected and recognised caravan brands in Europe. Their leading new feature for the 2019 season is the new generation of Twin series vans, based on the Fiat Ducato, with exclusive new functions including the completely revamped Supreme model with a panoramic “sky-roof” and a spacious loft in the cabin, new kitchen and WC layouts and a completely redesigned interior. The new Plus model has a double sky-roof and a cabin loft, new kitchen and WC layouts and completely new interior furnishings. The entry level Axess Twin models will continue to be built on a Citroën Jumper chassis.

For the 2019 season, Adria Mobil has upgraded the competitiveness of the affordable Axess models and focused on the competitiveness of its entire range of motor homes. The more affordable Axess motor homes, based on a Citroën Jumper (except for the Sonic model), offer new features, layouts and additional value for money. The Sonic Axess also adds new interior furnishings and other improvements.

In the motor home range, new, innovative “Open Salon” (double sofa or “face to face”) layouts are being introduced in the Sonic, Matrix and Coral models. The new layout offers numerous improvements in terms of both living and driving, and a third bed is added to the popular Coral model.

The caravan range also includes new innovations and new layout options. The Alpina caravan now offers the Adria Live Stream app, which features remote smart control of the caravan and access to instructions for users, the authorised dealers network and information on campsites. Innovative new layouts have been designed for the Alpina and Adora, with a layout for teens in the Adora that features four separate living areas and two entrances.

Houseboat Launched

In 2018, Adria Dom began selling houseboats, for which they have partnered with an Italian firm that is responsible for supplying the floating platforms. Their first houseboats have already been sold in the Italian resort town of Lignano. They are also betting on their Alpline modular house, which is designed primarily for the demanding northern European markets. The energy-efficient Alpline house is designed for year-round living, with various heating options.

Adria Dom has developed new features for the 2019 season in all of their product groups. In mobile houses they have completely revamped their entry-level SLine series. Both the interior and the exterior have been redesigned. The Compact model, which can be quickly adapted to the user’s immediate requirements, has also been upgraded. The main living area has been designed so that it can be a children’s playroom in the morning, a dining area for lunch and either a living room or an additional bedroom at night. The mid-level MLine series features a redesigned exterior and interior. The exclusive XLine series also received some new design features, including innovative 3D wood cladding.



Photo: Adria Mobil



Photo: Adria Dom

Among glamping tents for 2019 they have designed the new Safari Adriatic, the entry-level model in their most popular series, whose authentic character is captured by the slogan “Perfectly Simple”. Another important innovation is the new Safari L Loft model, which was developed on the basis of the success of the smaller M Loft model. The Safari Loft series features a spacious loft with a balcony, which is still a standout feature amongst the competition.

The competitive advantages of Adria Dom’s glamping tents are quality, design, innovativeness and excellent post-sales service, which is recognised by customers in Sweden, Portugal, Spain, Croatia and Japan. The company is already developing ideas for the 2020 season. “We are planning and already beginning to develop smart house technology with which buyers can use the IoT system to manage one house or an entire neighbourhood.”

Technology to Be Used by Entire Volkswagen Group

Last year, Hidria launched important new innovative designs for radically lowering fuel consumption and emissions in internal combustion engines and for new highly efficient hybrid and full electric drives.



Photo: Hidria

“After years of innovative development we launched a new innovative digital system for cold-starting diesel engines using a Hidria Optymus PSG pressure sensor, which received a European award. It significantly reduces fuel consumption and all emissions of harmful gases from diesel engines,” say sources at Hidria. “The closed-loop digital ignition system developed by Hidria can reduce fuel consumption and emissions of harmful gases by up to 30 percent in comparison with current technologies. Our global market share in this segment will consequently approach 30 percent. The entire VW Group will be using the system in its new two-litre diesel engine.”

Their innovative solutions in the totally new 48V light hybrid electric drive system contribute to the reduced emissions. “Using so-called starter-generator technology, it allows mechanical energy to be converted into electrical energy during braking and assists the electric motor during acceleration. The latest models which have both the Optymus PSG and the solutions for the new 48V light hybrid system built into their engines are Audi A6 and A7.”

Hidria also develops and manufactures key parts for steering systems, with a focus on premium marques. They have thus developed key parts of the steering systems for the new Mercedes C Class. They also develop and manufacture innovative and stylish motorcycle frames, which they produce for BMW, Ducati and others, and as of last year also KTM.

In the field of heating, cooling and air conditioning, they have launched a completely new line of electronically commutated centrifugal fans, EC fan systems that feature low noise and high energy efficiency. The state-of-the-art electronics and highly efficient electric motors produced by Hidria ensure increased efficiency and reduced energy consumption.

Hidria’s key partners include Audi, BMW, Daimler, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault, Volkswagen, Bosch, Continental, ZF and many others.

Exhaust for Kawasaki Ninja Well Received

Among the products launched by Akrapovič in the past year, they note in particular their aftermarket exhaust for the Kawasaki Ninja 400, which has been very well received on the market. Other top sellers include their exhaust systems for the Vespa GTV 300, Yamaha MT-09, Yamaha YZF-R6 and BMW R1200 GS Adventure. Their aftermarket exhaust systems for cars include systems for the Porsche Macan, BMW M5, Porsche Panamera Turbo/Turbo S E-Hybrid, Nissan GT-R, Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2) and Mercedes AMG E63/E63 S.

“Our recent projects include working with the motorcycle manufacturers Ducati and BMW Motorrad. In the car segment we manufacture exhaust systems for the Bentley Continental Supersports, Bentley Bentayga, Audi RS 6 Avant, RS 7 Sportback, Alfa Romeo 4C, Volkswagen Golf R and Koenigsegg Regera, and the BMW M4 DTM, BMW M6 GT3, BMW M8 GTE and Aston Martin Vantage GTE race cars,” say sources at Akrapovič.



Photo: Akrapovič

Akrapovič exhaust systems can also be found as stock equipment or as options on various motorcycles and cars from leading manufacturers. These include the motorcycle manufacturers Aprilia, BMW Motorrad, Can-Am, Ducati, Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Yamaha and others, and car makers Bentley, Audi, Alfa Romeo, Volkswagen R, Renault Sport, Koenigsegg, and Abarth, and race cars from BMW Motorsport, Aston Martin Racing and others. They supply numerous racing teams that compete in the MotoGP, MXGP, WorldSBK and other world championships.

“We are currently developing exhaust systems for several motorcycles and cars, including an

aftermarket system for the Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio,” say company sources, who add that they are also developing numerous exhaust systems and other motorcycling and automotive products, which will be presented this year. The company hopes to establish new connections in the motorcycling field, particularly with motorcycle producers in the US and Asia, while their target group in the car segment is manufacturers of premium marques.

The World’s Most Environmentally-Friendly Trainer Plane

Pipistrel’s most notable launch in the past year is Alpha Electro. “At this moment we are completing the full certification procedure, meaning that it will be the first totally electric aircraft ever to obtain a full EASA-Type certificate, and it is also certified for pilot training. We will begin delivering them to flight schools this year, as the greenest, quietest and most environmentally-friendly trainer plane in history,” say company sources proudly.

Pipistrel sell under their own brand in 95 countries on every continent, and they are currently focusing on new markets in Africa, the Near East and Oceania. They also sell their electric drive systems to others for research or scientific purposes or for application. “A good example is NASA, which has purchased several

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Photo: Pipistrel

Pipistrel electric drive systems that are normally used to power our Taurus Electro G2 aircraft. They are testing the systems as a part of their research into electrically-powered flight in preparation for their new experimental X-57 aircraft, which has 14 electrically-driven propellers integrated into the wings.”

Another very significant and sizable project is their cooperation with Uber, which signed a long-term agreement with Pipistrel on cooperation in the manufacture of electric-powered VTOL aircraft. According to Pipistrel, test flights of the prototype will begin in 2020. The major part of their development capacities are currently focused on vertical take-off and landing aircraft.

Camping Trailer Receives Award

The TPV Group is a leading development and pre-development supplier to the car industry that develops and manufactures products which critically affect handling, safety and comfort. They include various frame and body assemblies, seat components and engine seals. They also develop and market comprehensive solutions for smart factories, where their automated guided vehicles (AGVs) are one of their key products in the field of automated internal logistics. They also develop and manufacture light cargo

trailers, where together with their partner Böckmann they are one of the largest manufacturers in Europe. “Among our more than 80 trailer models, one of the key new innovations in 2018 was our Off Road camping trailer, which won an award for innovation,” say sources at TPV.

The TPV Group has earned the trust of the world’s most demanding vehicle manufacturers and systems suppliers, which have entrusted them to develop products for the most prestigious marques such as BMW, Rolls Royce, Mini, Volvo, Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, Land Rover, Renault, Smart, Volkswagen, etc. They hope to further expand sales of their product groups already present on the European, North American and Asian markets.

Products to Support E-Mobility

KLS is a global supplier to the car industry whose products are supplied to Tier 1 customers and OEMs in all of the major global markets. “Our ring gears, signal rings and mass rings for flywheels are installed in cars from the majority (more than 30) of the world’s finest OEMs. Every year we develop a large number of new products for this series for prototype testing or batch production. In the last year we have developed 46 new products in this group to the batch production phase,” say company sources, who add: “One of our major German customers even gave us a strategic partnership award in 2016 for the high quality of our products and services and overall excellence.”

They are currently developing the production of products for e-mobility applications. “These are very precisely manufactured gears and rings, capable of transferring large amounts of power along with high wear resistance, for transferring power from the electric motor to the drive wheels in electric or plug-in hybrid drives,” say company sources.



Photo: TPV



Photo: KLS



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Photo: Pirnar

Entrance Doors Like Never Before

Some very special developments in the world of entrance doors, new trends in battery-powered gardening equipment, the world's first digital actuator (with energy-saving functions), a sophisticated designer kitchen composter for organic waste, and technically advanced glass of super premium quality.

Barbara Perko and Andreja Šalamun

Domel's Electric Motor in the BMW i3 AC Compressor

With its development of compact and highly energy-efficient electric motors, Domel are setting the pace when it comes to battery-powered gardening equipment. The leading names in professional gardening equipment, Stihl and Husqvarna, already incorporate electric motors manufactured by Domel into their chainsaws, mowers, harvesters and blowers. Alongside a series of components manufactured for the car industry, the company also produce electric motors for the AC compressor in the BMW i3 electric car. By developing a compact compressor, they have become an exclusive supplier to the Wagner company, which produces paint-spraying equipment.



Photo: Domel

Their vacuum, which received a Gold Award for innovation from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, has been incorporated into the new vacuum cleaner from Kärcher, the German manufacturer of professional cleaning equipment. “The new vacuum unit has been developed for battery-powered stick vacuum cleaners. It is an innovative technological solution based on an electronically commutated motor of modular design that provides a great degree of adaptability to the varying requirements of customers,” say the company.

By diversifying their product portfolio, they have managed to disperse their operations across several market sectors. Domel’s motors are incorporated into vacuum cleaners manufactured by Philips, Electrolux and Kärcher, as well as those produced by Slovenian manufacturer Hyla, which are marketed on all continents. They are strengthening their presence in the vehicle segment in tandem with Hella, Continental and other predominantly Tier 1 and Tier 2 concerns.

They are keen to use their own branded products to strengthen operations in the medical and laboratory equipment sectors. “When developing our new family of centrifuges, we strove to ensure that the devices were packed with top features. We also included elements of industrial design, which is very important for products,” say Domel.

The company have several e-mobility projects in development. Their key guidelines when developing their range of EC fan motors were high energy efficiency and high material efficiency. “New applications have appeared recently in which practically the only running cost is that of electricity consumption for cooling and ventilation. These are mainly large servers, computer centres and data centres, where our solutions are attractive not only from the ecological aspect but also in terms of cost-effectiveness and reducing running costs.”

First Digital Actuator, Upgraded with Energy-saving Functions

Danfoss Trata are the world’s leading supplier of energy-efficient solutions and technologies for buildings, infrastructure, agriculture and the environment. The company outline their product portfolio, which includes 4,000 different products from four manufacturing programmes: “We supply products that are used in district heating and cooling applications and



Photo: Danfoss Trata

for the regulation of heating and air-conditioning in residential and business buildings to partners in over 45 countries around the world.” Their most important products are those used for the regulation and hydraulic balancing of district heating and cooling systems, as well as heating and cooling systems in buildings, and brazed plate heat exchangers.

They see digital transformation as a massive opportunity, believing that the transition to smarter and more connected systems will increase value for their customers. They introduced three major new products in the recent past. NovoCon is the world’s first digital actuator, complemented by a number of energy-saving functions. “These allow the user to install certain operating regimes to reduce energy consumption for heating and cooling, from limiting return temperature to setting the desired temperature range. We received a Gold Award for innovation for this product in 2017,” say the company.

The XB06H StS Evoflat brazed plate heat exchanger is a further link in the new chain of small and medium-sized heat exchangers manufactured by Danfoss. They are produced using alternative copper-free brazing materials. “The new heat exchanger boasts superior rust-resistant properties and an extended operating life of over 15 years when used in district hot water applications. With this new product, we have managed to upgrade our existing range of conventionally brazed variants of the same model, thereby facilitating its use in the most testing operating conditions – something that has hitherto not been possible,” say the company.

“A new approach has recently been taken in my area, combined with new technical solutions. We had issues with some valves and decided, in collaboration with an operations manager, to implement and test Danfoss’s new valves for our field of work. I didn’t know that heating equipment required so many tests, and it is very impressive to see that 100% of it was tested. We see the quality of the equipment.”

Valet Didier, Technical Department Director,
Dalkia Paris

They have also presented a new generation of pressure regulators and Virtus flow regulators, which have been upgraded with an electrical drive unit that enables the desired values to be set. The main selling points of the digital transformation of mechanical pressure regulators are the option of setting the regulators remotely (iNET functionality) and the automatic recognition of oscillations in heating systems by adjusting the operating regimes of the pressure regulators (iSET functionality). Danfoss Trata are also preparing to launch a new generation of Virtus and Abqm4.0 products.

Their main B2B customers are wholesalers specialising in heating technology, including Skanska and the German company GC Gruppe, while their direct customers include district heating installations and district heating and cooling distributors, such as the ENGIE Group. Their largest export markets are Russia, China and Germany, but they are also increasing their presence in South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain and Italy.

Unique Entrance Wall

The Pirnar company manufacture innovative entrance doors and walls – including a door that features the world’s first automatic one-touch handle – and last year they have managed to create another superbly innovative product. The company certainly know how to sell their entrance wall, the only one of its kind in the world: “We wanted to make something that excited admiration, thrilled with its innovation and knew no bounds. So we created two timeless and unique collections of handles, Magma Light and Crystal. Elegant. Timeless. Uncompromising.

These are the words that describe our most exclusive and refined product, the Theatrica entrance wall. For perfectionists who know what they want and who delight in beauty. For bold, ambitious people with taste.” The products caught the eye of the international jury and the company received the Red Dot Product Design Award, the German Design Award 2019, and is being nominated for the German Innovation Award 2019.

Theatrica is an entrance wall that uses cameras to automatically identify the owner, before sliding open silently and then automatically closing (although it is still possible to operate it manually). The wall can be manufactured in the largest dimensions and is available in a wood, stone, glass or aluminium finish.

The company can also boast an entrance door featuring the world’s first automatic one-touch handle, for which they won a prestigious German Design Award in 2017. The “Ultimate Pure” range of entrance doors uses a OneTouch system to identify the owner by means of a fingerprint reader or other access system. The handle then emerges from a completely flat surface, the surrounding area is illuminated, the lock is released and the doors open. As the doors open, the handle moves back into its resting place.

The company are always looking for new challenges, and are planning even more new, unique masterpieces. Their doors can be found all over the world. “It’s worth reminding people that our doors adorn production companies and the magnificent homes of some world-famous celebrities,” they add.

Compost, Fertiliser, Even a Drain Cleaner

Last year’s innovation and a last summer’s success story at the Velenje-based Skaza company, which is making a bigger and bigger name for itself on the outdoor living market, is the Pick&Go collapsible picnic set, made from environment-friendly materials, chiefly sugar cane. As the company are keen to point out, the natural materials used prevent any harmful long-term effects on the environment – and, what’s more, the picnic set is melamine- and BPA-free and can be recycled. The basic model is aimed at countryside adventures for up to four people, while the stacking system, which uses fasteners to keep the bowls in place, means that extra elements can be added for larger groups of picnickers.

The Bokashi Organko 2 kitchen composter for organic waste, which features a sophisticated new design, was also launched last year. As Skaza say, this new, improved product features a better range of functional solutions and, like the majority of the company’s products, is made from recycled materials. “In addition to treating organic waste responsibly, a trend that is gathering strength in the developed world, Bokashi Organko owners get a superb compost base, and the fermented liquid produced as the waste breaks down is an excellent fertiliser for garden and indoor flowers, vegetables and fruit. It also makes a great drain cleaner, too.”



Photo: Pirnar



Photo: Skaza

Skaza have been working with world-renowned partners for decades, and have already contributed several products and solutions to the car and electronics industries in particular, such as switches and home furnishing components. “Here at Skaza we are always looking for new customers looking to expand our areas of operation. We are focused on markets whose shoppers are ecologically aware and value the concept of sustainability. This means Scandinavia, the UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and a few other places. Our products can be found in more than 50 countries worldwide,” say the Velenje-based company.

Impressing the Caribbean and Mexican Markets

The products produced by the Steklarna Hrastnik glassworks company are distinguished by the excellence of the glass they use and the quality of execution. The new “Alaska” bottle, part of their ‘High Glass Spirits’ collection, more than meets the company’s traditionally stringent quality requirements. The bottle is the result of an international design competition organised by the company. Like the other 14 standard bottles in the High Glass collection, it boasts technical sophistication and super premium quality (being made from some of the purest glass in the world), and can be used for a range of purposes. “It is this adaptability that enables the customer to add their own individual touch or a company to add their own branding elements by applying added decoration, which gives the product authenticity and uniqueness,” say the company.

Steklarna Hrastnik produce new bottles for prestige spirits such as cognac, rum, whisky and gin. “These bottles have opened up the Caribbean and Mexican rum-producing markets for us.” Their spirits bottles are used by world-famous brands such as Hennessy, Heineken, Bacardi, Martini, Pernod Ricard and others. “Last year, together with one of our clients, the Pernod Ricard Group, we also applied to the Luxe Pack fair in Monaco in the hope of securing

a ‘Prix Formes de Luxe’ prize, which rewards innovation, for the LGD bottle we have developed in cooperation with the client.”

The company have also recently added to and refreshed their own collection of glass tableware. They have developed two new ranges, Freya and Jack, which feature water, whisky and cocktail glasses. As they reveal: “We have also taken a step forward in 2018 by developing our technically most exacting perfume bottle as part of the ‘High Glass Parfums’ collection.” Their Callisto High Glass bottle has gained top recognition by being used by a prestigious ambient perfume brand. “We are already developing a fresh new design for the client, with additional volume sizes.” The company is also preparing a product they hope will cement their place as a serious competitor on the perfume bottle market.

But that’s not all the company are currently developing. They are also working on a line of special bottles for a global gin producer, and collaborating with an excellent Slovakian designer and outside partner on another spirits-related project, to be launched on the prestige drinks market in India this year. They would like to expand their presence in France, the UK and the US by 2021, offering glass tableware as well as glass packaging, and to expand their production of special glass packaging for super premium drinks brands and premium perfumes.



Photo: Steklarna Hrastnik



Photo: Sava Hotels & Resorts

Health and Well-Being

A comprehensive package for mind and body – from superb food to first-class locations and products your body will love.

Innovative range of yoghurts, first high-protein ice lollies and hemp-seed toast. Healthy and natural are the guiding principles behind the Slovenian food industry, which keeps a keen eye on food trends and offers consumers only the very best. They place great emphasis on locally produced ingredients of verified quality, but also on using new approaches to develop environment-friendly packaging.

Slovenia is also continuously engaged in introducing new developments in tourism, with guests opting in increasing numbers for comprehensive “well-being” products and services. Guests can take therefore advantage of a relaxation park comprising the four basic elements that help to improve well-being, rejuvenate their senses at a spa, or set out to explore one of the most beautiful caves in the world. A visit to a high-mountain pasture, a unique example of

cultural and architectural heritage, also makes for an unforgettable experience.

The principle of “a healthy mind in a healthy body” is something common to all the activities and experiences described above. The Slovenian pharmaceutical industry, which introduces new products to markets across the world, is also concerned with ensuring that people enjoy good health. Among other innovations, they have introduced a tablet to replace suspensions, and a tablet that dissolves in the mouth in a matter of seconds.

Companies Win Over Customers with Healthy Products

Demand for healthier foods and products is on the increase every year, and Slovenian companies have plenty to offer in this regard: additive-free premium fruit yoghurts, special types of bread ...

Andreja Šalamun

Innovative Range of Yoghurts

Last year, dairy producer Ljubljanske mlekarne have unveiled Mu Natur, a new, innovative range of yoghurts containing yoghurt, premium selected fruits and nothing else – making them the only fruit yoghurts on the Slovenian market without any added sugar. “This innovative product was developed in collaboration with scientists at Ljubljanske mlekarne and specialists from Ljubljana university’s Biotechnical Faculty. The main idea behind this first joint development project was simple: to use only natural yoghurt and fruit, with no additives at all,” the company explain. They add that the Biotechnical Faculty has awarded the product one of its “100% natural” certificates as proof that it contains no added sugar, flavourings, colourings or other additives. “The Mu Natur range is our response to a growing trend in the food sector, which is increasingly turning to healthy food containing no added sugar.”

Ljubljanske mlekarne are part of the dairy industry’s largest concern, Lactalis, whose global brands, which include Président, Galbani, Lactel and Zymil (Parmalat), can be found in almost 90 countries around the world. The company say that they have made a name for themselves within the group for the exceptional quality of their products. According to them, “this is why our sister companies have entrusted the manufacture of various products under globally and regionally recognised brand names, including Président, Lactel, Zymil (Parmalat) and Nestlé, to us here in Ljubljana.” Their products also appear as ingredients in domestic food manufacturers’ products, for example in those of Pekarna Pečjak and Žito, the Conditus confectionery workshop uses its own ingredients to produce the famous cream slice, or kremšnita, from Bled for Hofer, while the Incom company produce ice cream.



Photo: Ljubljanske mlekarne

Gorenjka Chocolate Making a Name for Itself Abroad

“The most successful products to be placed on the market in recent years by Žito and Podravka have been their ‘jubilee bread’ and a range of new part-baked products. We brought out the ‘jubilee bread’ product to mark the company’s 70th birthday. It is made from seven types of grain, comes in a classic oval loaf shape with longitudinal cuts, and has a fuller taste on account of the wheat sourdough, which also keeps it fresh for several days,” say Dr Mateja Modic, Žito’s Director of Development, and Matjaž M. Dremelj, Head of exports. The new part-baked products, the company’s export flagships, are also popular. As they explain: “These Žito products are made in Slovenia, partly baked, then deep-frozen. They are then shipped abroad, where they are finished at shops and service stations.” The two point out that the products concerned are marked by innovation, originality, a rustic style and a recognisable flavour, making them distinct from the products produced by their global competitors.

“Foreign customers also enjoy Gorenjka chocolate, including, over the last year, the new Mistica Wellness range of dark chocolates containing goji and maca, hemp seeds and orange, ginger and matcha, and



Photo: Gorenjka

coconut and collagen, as well as the Gorenjka Classic with 85% cocoa. Our customers also appreciate our spelt gnocchi.”

Hemp Seed Toast Wins Awards

Žito have brought their “Krušnik” bread to market and it has already proved very popular, while the company won an award for most innovative food product in the pre-packaged food category for their hemp seed toast from the Ljubljana-based Nutrition Institute. “We have also launched a special range of pastas onto the market, including nettle pasta and tricolore mini penne rigate, which get their colour from the pumpkin, nettle and powdered beetroot added to the durum wheat. We are also developing a range of organic products, such as the Natura Bio mix of heritage flours. We have also introduced new flavours to our range of 1001 CVET teas: apple and turmeric and pineapple and ginger.”

Modic and Dremelj also point out that the development of new and the reformulation of existing products is a response to food trends on the market and to customers’ wishes. “We are taking account of the trend that is seeing an increase in the levels of naturally present functional ingredients, such as fibre, minerals and proteins. We are manufacturing less complex products with simple labelling that are nevertheless of high quality. We are bringing back old grains and pseudo-grains, such as spelt and other ancient forms of wheat, buckwheat, quinoa and amaranth, and are increasing the use of pulses and products made from organic produce.”

Žito products can be found on the shelves of global retailers; such products include part-baked products and caramel and vegan jelly sweets. They are interested in new partners and new markets, particularly countries with higher purchasing power, such as France, Scandinavia, Benelux and the UK, as well as countries outside the European Union.



Photo: Žito



Photo: Don Don

Yeast Starters Improve Quality

The Don Don company introduced “Grandma’s cornbread” from Pekarna Grosuplje to the Slovenian market, and white and dark breads under the “Domača peka” label followed last year. “All three products are prepared using a lengthy dough-preparation process with the addition of a yeast starter, which we use to improve quality,” say Don Don. The yeast starter is prepared from flour, water and a little yeast; the mixture is then not worked into the other ingredients until the following day. “While the dough is resting, micro-organisms and enzymes cause changes that have a positive effect on the sensory properties of the product, giving a fuller flavour, a rich aroma and greater freshness,” they explain.

In autumn 2018 they also presented a new “Tvojih5minut” (T5M) dark toast product, which joins the range of toasts already available: classic toast, butter toast, seed toast and Maxi toast. “We manufacture T5M toasts for the entire Don Don Group on all the markets on which we currently operate,” say the company. They point out that the toasts are distinctive mainly because they contain no additives.

World’s First High-Protein Ice Lollies

The Incom company from Ajdovščina manufacture ice cream and other frozen products. They make more than two million ice creams a day and export them to 46 countries around the world. The company say that they are constantly engaged in developing innovative products and new ice cream flavours. A year ago, in April 2018, they entered the European healthy lifestyle food market with the Leone ALIVE brand. “Consumers in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe can now buy a functional ice cream that promotes a healthy, balanced lifestyle,” say the company. They add that they are the first in the world to offer high-protein ice

lollies, as well as Greek yoghurt-flavoured ice lollies with added cereals and semi-candied fruit. Aronia-flavoured ice lollies are also part of the Leone AL!VE family. New “Leone Triple Pleasure” ice lollies have also been added to the Leone range last year.

“We have received numerous awards for innovation for our ice cream, including an internationally prestigious Wabel award, which is given to the best food manufacturers, an international award from the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF) and a World DAIRY Innovation Award 2018 (‘best ice cream’ category), which is given to only the most innovative dairy products. Our new ice creams have also won recognition at home: at the international Agra Fair in Gornja Radgona and at the 23rd meeting of business leaders of Primorska in Ajdovščina, where the Leone AL!VE range of healthier ice creams received a Gold Award from the Northern Primorska Chamber of Commerce and Industry and was put forward for national selection.”

Manufacturing More Than 600 Different Types of Ice Cream

Incom collaborate with several key partners in Europe. “All our ice creams, more than 600 different types, can be found under global brand names. There’s a big chance that a consumer eating ice cream anywhere in Europe or the rest of the world is tasting a product made in Ajdovščina, particularly if they buy a licensed figurine lolly,” claim the company.

Their largest sales markets are the most demanding European markets, such as Germany, the UK, Scandinavia as a whole, Italy, France and Belgium and, beyond that, all the way to Israel, Australia, New Zealand and the US. “We would also like to break through with our innovative ice creams to the Middle East and Japan,” say the company that develop new ice cream flavours to meet two different types of demand: for healthy ice cream and for rich, sinfully good ice cream.

Consumers Want Healthy Products Made from Local Ingredients

The group of associated companies, Pivka perutninarstvo and Delamaris, also follow consumer demand for healthy products of verified origin, with a high degree of control and the highest-quality ingredients. “With the huge demands on their time, consumers are ever more frequently reaching for food that is quick to prepare, but which has to be healthy, naturally seasoned and without artificial additives,” says Karmen Rodman, Director of Strategic Marketing at Pivka perutninarstvo and Delamaris.

Pivka perutninarstvo are therefore continuing to develop ready-prepared chicken for the grill, with added fresh vegetables and natural seasonings, and preservative-free parboiled chicken products. “The aim of the company is to control the entire chain from the selection and preparation of feed, to animal-rearing, production and distribution, all in line with the highest standards,” says Rodman.



Photo: Incom

Delamaris are specialists in fish with a tradition that stretches back to 1879. “With so many loyal customers, the company prepares its products in the way it always has, while also developing new flavours for its pre-prepared foods. In 2017 we revitalised the tuna salad market, last year we presented new mackerel flavours featuring vegetables and without tomato sauce,” says Rodman. She guarantees that the company use only mackerel of the highest quality (*Scomber Scombrus*) caught in the FAO 27 area of the North Sea, along with naturally fermented vegetables. She points out that the products are manufactured without preservatives and other additives, gluten or GMOs, have high levels of naturally occurring Omega 3 fatty acids, and are packed in environment-friendly BPA-free aluminium tins.

Working with Partners in More Than 20 Countries

Delamaris give priority to manufacturing products for their own brand, but also produce products for Pivka under the latter’s brand name. “To realise our vision, we work with different distributors and retailers in more than 20 countries worldwide. We also seek out new ways of getting our products closer to consumers in the European Union in particular,” says Karmen Rodman. She adds that they are present in an independent capacity on various different markets. “Delamaris have had a presence on the



Photo: Delamaris

wider European and global market for 140 years. As experts with a long tradition, we have become famous for premium quality because we control the entire product preparation process, from selecting the ingredients, checking the origin of the fish we use, insisting on sustainable fishing, controlling all production and recipe preparation processes, and designing striking packaging,” says Rodman.

As a manufacturer of various parboiled chicken products, Pivka believe that their quality stands out because of their integrated approach to controlling all aspects of creation of the product. “This includes our own preparation of selected plant-based animal feed without added poultry antibiotics, the selection of animals from local farms located an average of 80 km away, and control of all stages of production and distribution to retailers or end-customers. Feed and the end-products themselves are regularly inspected in the companies’ own and in independent laboratories, and the quality of our products has been confirmed by numerous medals, awards and domestic and international quality certificates, including IFS, FDA, EAC and MSC,” says Rodman.

Eyeing up Foreign Markets

“Delamaris products have long expiry dates which makes it possible to reach geographically dispersed and distant markets, while Pivka’s products require the targeting of markets closer to hand,” according to Rodman. She says that the leading markets for both brands are Germany, the UK and Sweden, although the Czech Republic and Switzerland are also important. What interests them most in these markets is working with sales agents that have an extensive business network of merchants able to credibly represent their brands in the pre-prepared food and healthy snacks segment.

As the development of products and packaging is one of the company’s basic activities, they earmark a considerable portion of funds every year to the development of technology and equipment, as well as to the human resources capable of successfully realising the vision of each individual brand. “We are currently placing particular emphasis on developing packaging that preserves the excellent ingredients that make up the product, makes handling easier, is practical to use and is made of sustainable materials. One of our past achievements was the aluminium packaging developed for Delamaris products, while further packaging development products are actively under way, alongside projects to create tasty new products,” says Rodman.

Social Responsibility an Integral Part of the Business Strategy

Pivovarna Laško Union are the leading beer producer in Slovenia. The Ljubljana-based company, which has a tradition stretching back almost 200 years, brews its products at two sites, in Laško and Ljubljana. “Our brands, the best-known being the Laško Zlatorog and

Union pilsners, reflect our passion for quality and our commitment to bringing pleasure,” say the brewery.

The company are constantly adding innovations to their beer portfolio and adapting them to beer-lovers’ desires and requirements. They point out that they use top-quality natural ingredients and are committed to continuous improvement and innovation. “In 2016 Pivovarna Laško Union expanded its sales portfolio with Heineken and other brands manufactured by Heineken-owned breweries around the world. The range of beers is complemented by refreshing soft drinks such as Sola and by Zala spring water.”

The brewery say that they are constantly engaged in introducing new innovations. “They cover all areas, from new drinks categories and new types of beer and soft drink, to packaging redesign and the introduction of new beer-serving technologies.”

EUR 9 Million of Investment in 2017

Since Pivovarna Laško Union was acquired by Heineken, “the level of investment in the core business has remained intensive”. In 2017 the brewery made investments of EUR 9 million. “Priority was given to ensuring the production and bottling of Heineken-branded products in Laško, the production and bottling of cider in Ljubljana, and projects to improve safety and innovation and to optimise production lines for sales on the domestic market and the wider region,” they explain.

The brewery exports 34 percent of its output, mostly to Croatia, Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. The company say that their highest-selling products on foreign markets are Laško Zlatorog, Laško Club, Union pilsner, Union Radler and Sola soft drinks.

“The Adria region and neighbouring markets remain the brewery’s main area of focus. Our export-related ambitions include expanding brand presence to the American market, as well as to other countries in which Slovenes live and work,” they add.



DISTILLERY and CHOCOLATIER BERRYSHKA

Junniper berries – an important material for brandy manufacturers in Slovenia

Common juniper is the most widespread sort of juniper in Slovenia and is for several years considered as one of the most important healing plants. Every part of the plant is used in folk healing: juniper wood, tips and the most important-berries.

Blue-black berries are being used for production of essential oils for centuries since they have a very aromatic odor. The berries contain essential oil Aetheroleum Juniperii and other healing substances. With juniper berries (fresh or dried, but either way crushed) we can season various meat dishes, especially those with more »greasy« character, and all of those that take longer to cook or grill.



Despite their bitter taste, almost a third of berries is made up of sugar which is why they are so often used for production of juniper brandy – a beverage, that helps with minor stomach and digestion problems. Besides all that, they are also an important spice for gin aromatisation.

The biggest amount of juniper berries in Slovenia is nowadays being processed by Berryshka distillery. The distillery has been owned by a family company for the last 29 years. The distillery began its first test run in 1950.



The distillery and chocolatier Berryshka is located in the south-eastern part of Slovenia, more precisely in a village Obrh, close to Dolenjske Toplice spa resort. It is surrounded by Kočevje forrest, natural spring water, in short- an unspoiled nature from which the ingredients are being acquired since the dawn of the distillery.



From the beginning the company made its business by producing essential oils, especially juniper essential oil. Later, with the renovation of the distillery, a wish for diversification of products came to life. With hand in hand go distillation of juniper berries and making of juniper brandy. Stilling of brandy lead to the idea of making other sorts of brandy and liqueurs. In year 2011, In Obrh near Dolenjske Toplice, was thus born the trademark of Berryshka in its distinctive, elegant figure. It marked Slovenian country as the first manufacturer of Slovenian London gin, alongside which later came the more established juniper brandy, made by the unique recipe and aged for three years inside an oak barrel. In 2013 Berryshka London gin became the recognition award winner for the first time. Since then, it proves its top quality with new medals every year. Its name represents the name of procedure and the recipe or alcohol to spice ratio remains the secret of the master distiller Mr. Samo Kenda.

Berryshka is distinguished by the highest internationally recognized quality. (IWSC London, WSA San Francisco, IWSC Hong Kong, WSA Bad Kleinkirchheim).

Produced by: Topp d.o.o.,
Šentvid pri Stični 152, Slovenia, EU
www.berryshka.com
info@berryshka.com

Imported by: Dandelays Inc., Chicago, IL

abilgin@dandelays.com

I FEEL
SLOVENIA

SLOVENIA. MY WAY OF GETTING INSPIRED.

#ifeelsLOVEnia
#myway



Slovenia is a small green country in central Europe at the crossroads of the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pannonian Plains and the Karst. In a single day, you can indulge in Alpine adventures, enjoy coastal Mediterranean cuisine, explore the mysterious karst world, and experience luxury wellness treatments with therapeutic water in Slovenia's spas. As a cherry on top, tour pleasant Slovenian towns and cities, including Ljubljana, which is considered to be one of the greenest capitals in Europe.

MY WAY OF RAMBLING AROUND

One of the main reasons for the intense activity of Slovenians is the diversity of the landscape, which provides opportunities for various activities in nature. This is a country that embraces adventure and discovery in the natural world, be it hiking in the Alps, cycling through

verdant Italian-style olive groves or rolling hills dotted with the vineyards, canoeing the turquoise waters of the iconic Lake Bled or experiencing adrenaline rush on the Soča River rapids.

One of Slovenia's advantages is that you can have direct contact with nature, even at the edge of our biggest cities.

MY WAY OF NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

Culture is the backbone of every nation. Slovenians are proud of our rich cultural heritage and modern cultural creativity. Here you can discover medieval castles and Roman ruins, seek out fascinating artifacts including the world's first musical instrument and the

oldest wooden wheel in existence, or simply stroll through one of numerous charming towns, abound with architectural masterpieces. Among them is also the capital, Ljubljana, which is graced with many beautiful buildings designed by Plečnik, the master of early-modern minimalist architectural design. Maribor, the country's



second largest city hides a surprising number of museums and art galleries as well as the oldest grape vine in the world.

MY WAY OF FOODIE HEAVEN

Slovenia might be small, but it boasts 24 gastronomic regions and three wine-growing areas with 14 wine-growing districts. Slovenian winemaking tradition goes centuries back. The fertile soil accommodates 52 varieties of vine including the country's own 'Teran', full bodied wine grown from the

rich red soils of the Karst region. The country is also home to a pioneering orange wine, a floral, honey-colored variety unique to the Goriška Brda region.

Traditional Slovenian delicacies include Carnolian sausage and žlikrofi dumplings, while fresh fish and seafood is widely available in coastal restaurants. Those with a sweet tooth should seek out local specialties such as potica nut roll or the decadent and multilayered gibanica cake from Slovenia's

easternmost province. This is also a country on the frontline of world cuisine, featuring top chefs like Ana Roš and Tomaž Kavčič (and let us recall: Ana Roš was also named World's Best Female Chef 2017), and does not only create culinary masterpieces, but also change Slovenia into one of the most desired foodie destinations. Thanks to richness of tastes, high-quality ingredients, gastronomic masterpieces and commitment to sustainable

development, Slovenia was selected to become European Region of Gastronomy 2021.

MY WAY OF WELLBEING

In Slovenia, water is the source of life and health. It is the quality of water that Slovenia has to thank for the fertility of the landscape. The country is home to some of Europe's finest natural spas and thermal springs, with a centuries-old cultural tradition of treating both body and spirit using worldfamous magnesium and calcium-rich waters.

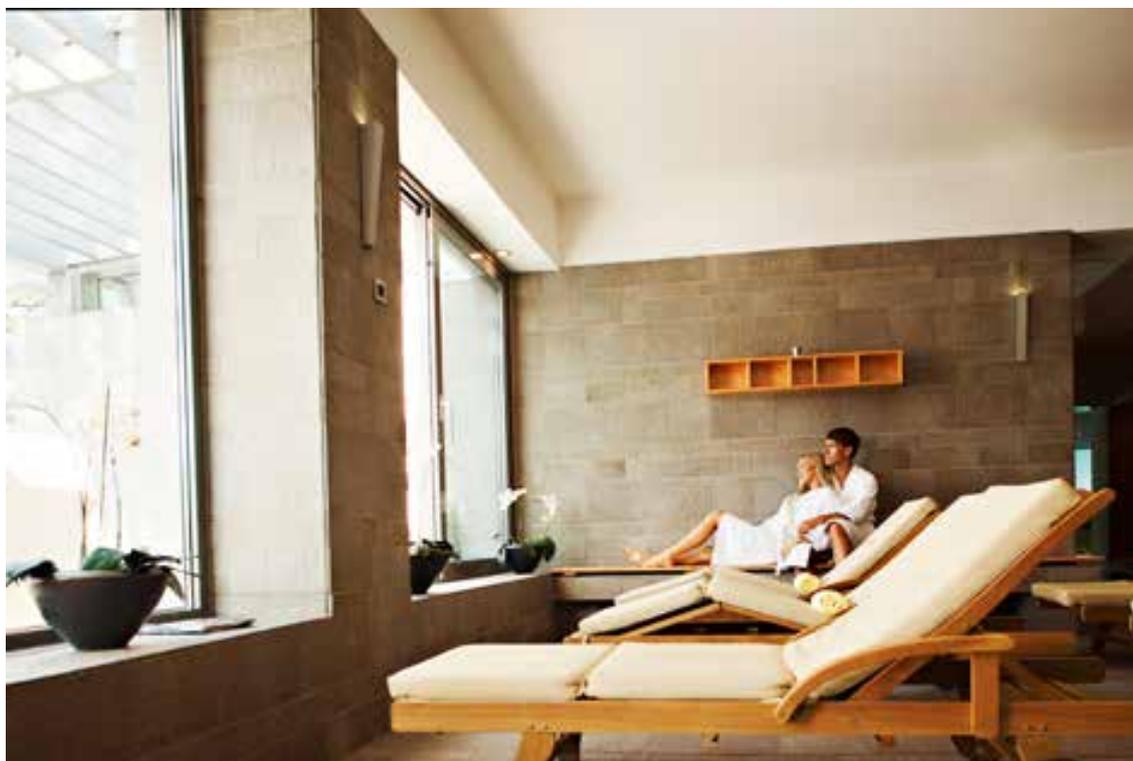


Photo: Sava Hotels & Resorts

Relaxation Park for Improving Your Well-Being

Individuals need relaxation that both represents and provides integrated well-being. Slovenia has something for everyone.

Andreja Šalamun and Barbara Perko

Visitors Looking for Socialising and Adventure

“The trend when spending holidays at our spas and wellness centres in Štajerska and Pomurje and in Bled is developing in the direction of integrated well-being, which first of all attracts the ‘take care of yourself’ type of guest, and secondly the type of guests who are looking for socialising and adventure. Guests in both of these segments want to take care of themselves – relax, pamper themselves and recharge their batteries, which can mean for example bathing in thermal spring water, relaxing by the pool and reading a book, enjoying time with their families and friends, riding the water slides, tickling their taste buds with local and organic cuisine, enjoying authentic local experiences, cycling through the local hills and flatlands, checking their health status, going for a morning run, sampling typical local wellness

products, treating yourself to a beauty treatment...”, say sources at Sava Turizem.

They believe that the trend of holidays that both embody and represent integrated well-being is “mainly the result of the fast tempo of everyday life, in which what we miss most is quality time for ourselves”.

Hotel Offers New Age Treatment Methods

In the last two years, they have introduced numerous new features for guests at all of their destinations. At Sava Hotels Bled they have renovated the former Hotel Golf and renamed it the Rikli Balance Hotel, which has been open since March 2018, and the rooms have been given locally tinged stories. They also revamped the hotel’s menu, which is now based on fresh ingredients and local dishes.

With the opening of the hotel last year they have completed the second of three phases of renovation, and they are just now completing the third phase. “Our guests will now be able to experience New Age treatment methods based on the methods of Arnold Rikli, the founder of natural healing in Bled in the 19th century, who relied on natural forces for healing: air, water and sunlight. He promoted exercise in the fresh air, good food in moderation and reinvigorating sleep. The Rikli Relaxation Park is the perfect place for guests to slow down and spend a few moments for well-being, focus on themselves, relax and gather new strength for their everyday challenges,” say sources at Sava Turizem.

The Rikli Relaxation Park is composed of four basic elements that each promote well-being: “Rikli’s Barefoot Path” (a walk over eight different surfaces that has a beneficial and relaxing effect on the body and soul), “relaxing in the shade of trees” (Rikli advocated spending time outdoors, and especially exercise, in order to increase your vitality, improve your mood, improve your concentration, strengthen your immune system and increase your ability to tolerate stress), “hugging trees” (vast amounts of life force flows through trees, which is beneficial to the body and soul) and “inner peace through yoga” (yoga in the park will still the participant’s thoughts, relax the body and return them to wellbeing).

A “Nature Pool” with Black Thermal Spring Water

Upgrades have also been made at the Terme 3000 spa in Moravske Toplice. They have renovated the indoor thermal pool, the lower part of which is designed for lively and active guests, and in the “nature pool” guests can bathe in the black mineral water of the thermal spring, which is helpful for degenerative rheumatism, alleviates chronic infective rheumatic diseases, promotes recovery from injuries and operations, stimulates blood circulation, helps treat skin diseases, reduces anxiety and improves your general well-being. The upper part of the indoor pool has numerous peaceful corners intended for rest and relaxation, and there are several saunas to choose from.

At Terme 3000 in Moravske Toplice, a completely new experience awaits at the charming new cottages in the Prekmurje village of Ajda, which take their inspiration from the typical Prekmurje houses called “cimprače”, say sources at Sava Turizem. “The modern cottages have thatched roofs and wooden accents, giving them a natural airiness and warmth, and unlike the cimprače, the large windows let in a good amount of sunlight. The cottages are located in the immediate vicinity of the Terme 3000 spa complex.”

They have also completely renovated the indoor pool at the Hotel Ajda at the Ptuj Spa, which is known as a destination for active regeneration, and guests at the Grand Hotel Primus have numerous sports options available, including morning yoga with a

certified instructor which is shown on the hotel room televisions every morning.

The new drinking hall at the Hotel Radin at the Radenci Spa is expected to be completed in May this year, where guests can take the Henn drinking treatment three times a day, in which they drink mineral water directly from the curative spring.



Photo: Sava Hotels & Resorts

Holidays Worth the Money

“Our guests first of all look for holidays which offer personal care, and then for socialising and adventures. They are also interested in new products and services. We plan them according to trends on the market, the behaviour of our guests, the specifics of the local environment, and sustainable tourism,” say sources at Sava Turizem.

They note that in the last two years guests have been choosing holiday destinations that provide integrated experiences. “This means that they are interested in the story of their destination, which has to be unique, authentic, genuine, part of the local environment and having a sustainable signature. This inspires guests and convinces them to return to the destination and become brand ambassadors. A very important role is played here by paying careful attention and the hospitality and friendliness of the people at the destination,” say company sources. “We only go on holidays for a short time, but guests are increasingly putting value for money higher on their



Photo: Krka Spas



Photo: Krka Spas

list, meaning that the holidays they reserve have to be first of all worth the money they are paying,” they say.

They note that there has also been a change in the perception of what constitutes luxury tourism in the last two years. “The redefinition of luxury is a move away from five stars towards simple outdoor accommodations. Luxury in this sense relates to freedom, nature, purity, sustainable tourism and local experiences, i.e. fitness for the soul and a wonderful sense of well-being. The people who choose this type of holiday are usually people who lead very full, intense, active lives and are looking to take care of their body and soul and spend some quality time with their family,” say sources at Sava Turizem.

Medically Supported Relaxation Programmes at Krka Spas

Krka Spas include the spa resorts of Dolenjske Toplice and Šmarješke Toplice, the Talaso Strunjan seaside centre, the Otočec Hotels with one of Slovenia’s best-known castles and an attractive golf course, and the Hotel Krka, a business hotel in Novo Mesto. “At our health centres we have a very wide range of health services for rehabilitation after injury and diseases of the locomotor system, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and we also operate modern diagnostics centres with various specialist clinics. We are also expanding our wide range of medical knowledge to include preventive medicine,” say company sources.

They say that they are the first in Slovenia to offer their guests medically supported relaxation programmes through which they help people overcome civilizational diseases and other difficulties such as stress, weight gain, premature ageing, etc. “There is increasing demand for effective programmes that pave the way back to a healthier and fuller life, and guests are inquiring about them more and more often. At the Šmarješke Toplice Spa the most popular programmes are detox with a VitaDetox cleanse and the SlimFit healthy weight-loss programme, and

the ‘Healthy Ageing for a Longer and Better Life’ and ‘Manage Stress and Live Peacefully’ programmes at the Talaso Strunjan seaside centre,” they report.

Active Relaxation and Recreation

Krka Spas also offer diverse pampering programmes and active relaxation and recreation. “At the Dolenjske Toplice Spa the guests are primarily interested in the Balnea Wellness Hotel, a hotel with an artistic soul, which features popular programmes for couples. The Just the Two of Us programme includes accommodations (2 nights with half board for two, a romantic dinner or outdoor picnic lunch weather permitting, breakfast served in room and unlimited bathing in the thermal pools) and services included in the individual packages, which offer a focus on pampering, reflexology, relaxation through exercise and proper breathing, and detoxification. We also have a package for couples during pregnancy and a package for seniors. The Dolenjske Toplice Spa thus offers the possibility for two people who are close to one another to stop for a moment, spend some time with each other and harmonise their bodies and souls,” say sources at Krka Spas.

Active recreation programmes are also becoming increasingly popular at Otočec. “The Hotel Sport in Otočec is the only one of its kind in Slovenia – a hotel that encourages its guests to exercise. Its name is no coincidence – right in the entry hall, where all hotel guests can relax, is a punching bag and a set of boxing gloves, and its ‘sports’ rooms are something special – they stand out due to their dominant invigorating yellows, greens, light blues and reds, and sports equipment such as gym ladders, exercise balls, resistance bands for isometric training, etc,” say sources at Krka Spas. There are also numerous opportunities for exercise in the vicinity of the hotel – an adventure park, walking and running trails, outdoor tennis courts and a 75-hectare golf course.

Focus on Wellness Tourism

The people at Krka Spas have been pretty active recently. At the Dolenjske Toplice Spa for instance they are renovating and modernising the outdoor pool with four slides at the Balnea Wellness Centre which will be open before the 2019 summer season, they have renovated the Medical Rehabilitation Centre, and at the Šmarješke Toplice Spa they have renovated the apartments at the Šmarjeta Hotel and the outdoor pool and patio, and installed a water slide at the sports pool. They have renovated the castle winery at Otočec Castle, and at Talaso Strunjan they renovated the apartments at the Hotel Laguna and installed a new pool on the hotel property last year. They expanded the sauna centre at the Hotel Svoboda, and have opened a new beach restaurant called Pinija, i.e. The Stone Pine, and they are also rearranging the facilities at Strunjan beach.

Baby Dragon Ice Cream at Postojna Cave

In addition to the very well-known and also most popular Postojna Cave, which in 2018 was celebrating the 200th anniversary of the discovery of its most beautiful parts and also of its tourism development, more and more visitors are also choosing to visit Postojna Cave Park and to purchase packages that include tours of Postojna Cave, Predjama Castle, the Proteus Vivarium, the EXPO pavilion and other attractions. “In this way our guests are also staying in Postojna longer, as increasing numbers are choosing to overnight here,” say sources at Postojna Cave.

Innovation and product development are a permanent process at Postojna Cave. “The main development guidelines for 2018 have been originality, authenticity and sustainability. The result is a very complex brand called ‘Authentic – Postojna Cave Park’, which includes a series of local products, from local ice creams, including the tasty Baby Dragon



Photo: Postojnska jama

and Brilljant ice creams, to typical souvenirs or the specially designed garden decorations in front of our restaurants, which remind one of the cave train, to an emphasis on the Slovenian identity and our natural and cultural heritage,” say sources at the cave.

They have put a lot of effort into the park’s landscaping, with an emphasis on indigenous Slovenian plant species, and there is also an apiary. “In response to demand at the Hotel Jama, we have also created a ‘Presidential Suite’ with an even higher level of services and options. Another major upgrade is the renovated train boarding platform at the Concert Hall in Postojna Cave, which was named after its discoverer Luka Čeč, and which we opened last spring,” say sources at Postojna Cave.

In April 2019, the Hotel Jama opened a “Museum of Eavesdropping” – authentically preserved but well-hidden spaces within the Hotel Jama complex.

Pets Can Be Left at Day-Care

They pay particular attention to both conservation and limiting impacts on the environment, so visitors to Predjama Castle can get free bus rides from Postojna Cave Park. “We have also stopped using plastic bags at our shops and restaurants, and replaced them with biodegradable bags,” they say.

People who travel with their pets still have access to free kennels, where they can leave them while visiting Postojna Cave. “The wider view, outside of Postojna Cave Park, includes the total renovation of the Hotel Planinka in Jezersko into a unique little boutique hotel with 23 rooms, intended for the most discerning guests. Designs for the renovation of the Hotel Cerknjo and its thermal springs are in the preparatory phase. In short, we are doing a lot of things in line with our business philosophy: ‘We do only what is good for the Cave and the guest.’

This simple motto is also applied elsewhere, in both Jezersko and Cerknjo,” say sources at Postojna Cave.



Photo: Postojnska jama

Fewer Guests from Asia, but More from Europe

They note that their visitors include increasing numbers of families with children, and that the share of individual guests in relation to groups has been on the rise for several years. "There is slightly less demand coming from some of the Asian countries, but demand among the European countries is increasing, so that the number of visitors to Postojna Cave and the other attractions is still growing," they say.

They expect demand for their services to continue to grow, as the expanded range of services has also extended the tourist season. "We are trying to distribute demand more evenly throughout the year and thereby take some pressure off of the high season, as this also makes for a better experience for our guests."

Tourists Charmed by Pastoral Life

Velika Planina is a unique high-mountain Alpine pasture in Slovenia, with a correspondingly unique cultural and architectural heritage. The story of Velika



Photo: Velika Planina

Planina can be experienced by visiting a herder's settlement, where especially during the summer months visitors can see what life was like on the mountain, visit with herders, try some of their local specialities, and learn about the old way of life, how the herders used to pass the time, and how they made sour milk, cottage cheese, cheese and other dairy products, at the herding museum called Preskar's Hut. In addition to lovers of architecture and cultural heritage, Velika Planina is also popular among nature lovers. The broad meadows, endless paths and amazing views from every corner of Velika Planina will first intrigue you and then take your breath away.

During the winter, in addition to skiing, Velika Planina offers very popular night sledding on the 2.5 kilometre-long lighted piste. Sledges are available for hire for winter sports enthusiasts. During the winter, Velika Planina is also popular with hikers, cross-country skiers and other snow lovers. Lovers of skiing on natural snow can choose between the Šimnovc chairlift and the Zeleni rob rope tow, and the Jurček children's rope tow is a perfect place for children and people who are taking their very first turns on skis. Affordable lift tickets are available for both individuals and families.

Foreign visitors are most intrigued by the pastoral life, the making of dairy products, and above all the free grazing of livestock. Tourists are also pleased with the local cuisine, as all of the food is locally sourced. The pastoral specialities also include homemade buckwheat mash and sour milk, and the Zeleni rob Inn features sweet cottage cheese dumplings, homemade stews and homemade sausages and sauerkraut. "The largest number of tourists come from France, followed by Israel, Italy and Germany. We were positively surprised by the numbers of Spanish visitors last year, as Spain was in second place in August, just behind France," say sources at Velika Planina.

The overnight capacities at the Alpe camp and on Velika Planina are planned to be expanded, bike trails will be built on Velika Planina, and adrenaline activities will be added to the menu.

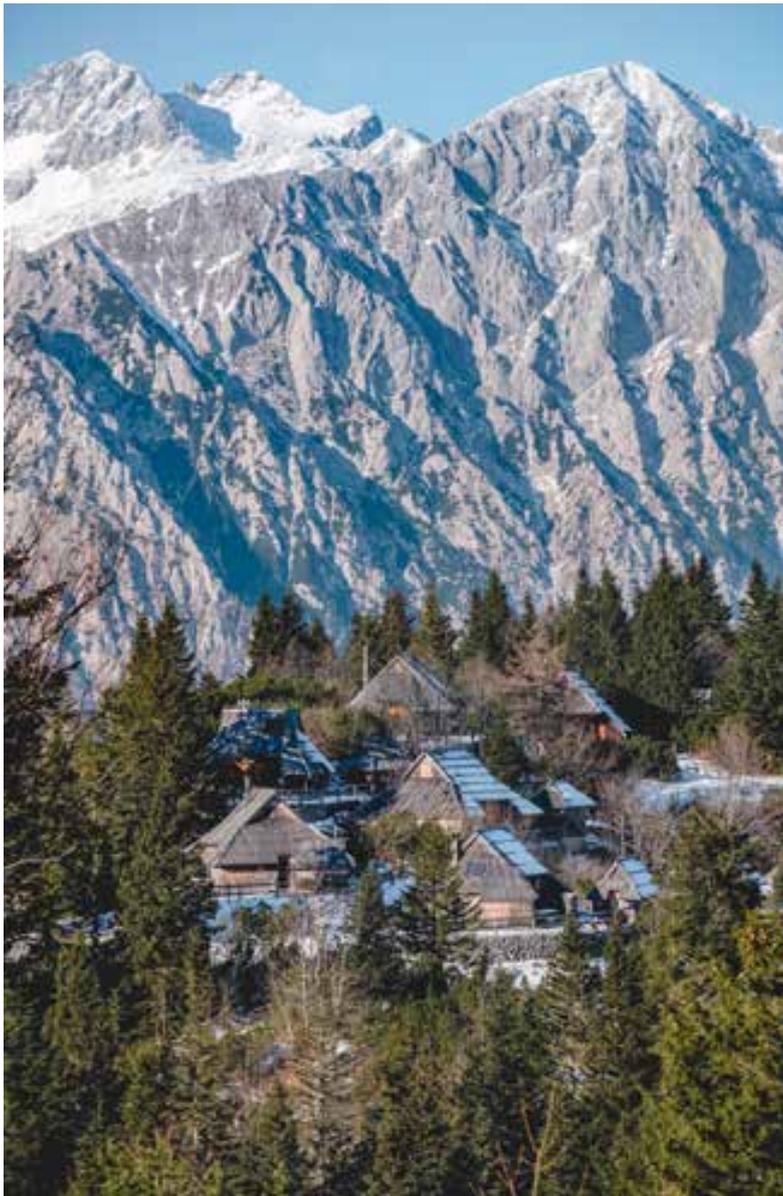


Photo: www.slovenia.info / Teddy Verneuil



**BLEJSKI
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BLED CASTLE



BLED CASTLE - A MEDIEVAL CASTLE, BUILT ON THE TOP OF A 130-METER HIGH ROCK, FEATURES ITS OWN MUSEUM, PRINTING WORKS, WINE CELLAR, FORGE AND RESTAURANT, AND OFFERS SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDINGS. IN SUMMER, THE CASTLE HOSTS A VARIETY OF EVENTS.

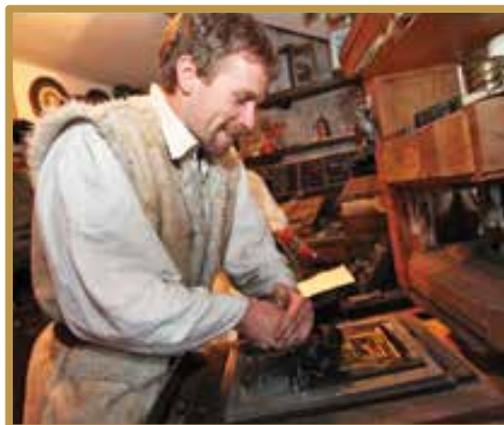




Photo: Krka

Innovative and Patient Friendly Pharmaceuticals

When it comes to health, only the very best is good enough. In 2018, the Krka Group added a number of new products to their roster of prescription pharmaceuticals, non-prescription products, and animal health products. In 2018, also Lek experienced a very successful year.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

Krka's Products Are the Result of Investments in Development and Innovation

At Krka they realise that when it comes to health, only the very best is good enough, which is why they carefully plan the introduction of new medicines with the patient's needs uppermost in their mind. Their products contain the knowledge and experience of Krka experts who are continuously developing new generic products in the latest pharmaceutical forms to provide patients with effective, safe, and high-quality medicines.

Krka's R&D and production operations are characterised by a high level of vertical integration, which brings together development and production processes, and presents the key advantage of Krka's development strategy. It ensures that Krka is able to enter the markets as the first generic manufacturer with high-added-value products. Through systematic research and targeted development, the company

integrates into every product the very latest professional and scientific findings.

By monitoring trends and breakthroughs in medical science, Krka experts are able to respond quickly to challenges related to development, and to market requirements. Having their own production development capacities and the ability to integrate manufacturing, marketing and sales activities enables the company to introduce high-quality, effective and safe products onto the market at just the right time.

Krka registered 23 new products in 52 pharmaceutical forms and strengths last year

In 2018, the Krka Group added 23 new products in 52 pharmaceutical forms and strengths to their roster of prescription pharmaceuticals, non-prescription products, and animal health products. Most (18) were prescription pharmaceuticals, one was

a non-prescription product, and four were animal health products. More than 600 experts are currently engaged in the development of over 170 new medicinal products at Krka.

The company reinvests around 10% of its annual sales revenues in research and development. It plans to further strengthen its pharmaceutical and chemical activities, and its range of prescription pharmaceuticals in key areas, such as the treatment of cardiovascular diseases, diseases of the central nervous system, and diseases of the alimentary tract and metabolism. At the same time, the company is focusing on promising areas, such as medicines for pain relief and the treatment of cancer, antidiabetics, antibiotics, and medicines for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Krka also plans to enter a number of new therapeutic areas.

In key therapeutic areas, they plan to continue to introduce innovative generic products, such as fixed-dose combinations of two or three active ingredients, new strengths, and new pharmaceutical forms. They are also venturing into the area of biological medicines, particularly those for the treatment of autoimmune diseases and diabetes. They are also planning to strengthen their portfolio of non-prescription products and animal health products, in particular the range of companion animal products.

Krka's medicines are used to treat more than 45 million patients every day

The company says that they are at the very top of the global generic pharmaceutical manufacturing industry, perform effectively on existing markets, and are successful in entering new markets. New investments further strengthen this position. Exports account for 93% of overall sales within the Krka Group. "We have a strong network of subsidiaries and representative offices abroad. We are also expanding our production capacities outside Slovenia. More than 45 million patients around the world are treated with Krka products every day," say the company.

Krka has a strong presence in the generic pharmaceuticals markets of Western, Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The company is also strengthening its position in the overseas markets, such as the Middle East, the Far East, Africa, and the Americas. "We have production capacities in Slovenia, the Russian Federation, Poland, Croatia, and Germany. We are therefore most tightly focused on European, Central Asian, and overseas markets," they add.

Products Marketed Throughout the World

In 2018 Lek experienced a very successful year of business in terms of its targets, the company reported at the end of January. Last year they also continued the optimization and adjustment of the production network in Slovenia, through which they are successfully fulfilling the Novartis strategy of focusing on patient-tailored and personalized medications in small quantities, and on medications with high value added, similar biological medications and digital therapies.

They produced three active ingredients for innovative medications that will arrive on the market in the coming years, while at their locations in Slovenia production is already underway on some innovative medications, development has been completed and numerous dossiers submitted for medications on exacting markets and they launched important medications on the Slovenian market.

In 2018 Slovenia Development Center completed the development of and filed 20 registration dossiers for drugs on the markets of the US, Russia, Europe, Canada, Thailand and China, and one dossier for an active ingredient in the USA and Canada. They completed development of a high-quality innovative dietary supplement, Lincomplex™, which is already available to Slovenian users.

They launched important anti-inflammatory medications, drugs for balancing cholesterol, easing prostate problems and treating erectile dysfunction and fungal disorders. As the first to submit a dossier to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on registering a drug with the active ingredient amantadine, they thereby obtained a six-month generic exclusive right to sell in the US market.

In Mengeš they collaborated on the development of three new Sandoz similar biological medications, which entered the market in 2018. They are also involved in various stages of the development of innovative biological drugs. At that location they are constructing a new facility for the production of biological active ingredients, which will further strengthen the role of the location as a key Novartis center for biotechnology. The investment is valued at EUR 38 million.

Since 2003 Novartis has invested more than EUR 2.3 billion in Slovenia. Since then more than half of that has been earmarked for development, and the rest for modernization and expanding production capacity.

It should be noted that Dr. Zdenko Časar and Dr. Jerneja Opara of the Slovenia Development Center last year received the highest Novartis award for outstanding achievements in the area of research and development (R & D Awards).



Photo: Lek



Photo: SIJ

Steel in the Turbines of the Biggest Energy Companies

The SIJ Group launches industrial knives onto the market, Seven Refractories create temperature-resistant products, Belinka Perkemija remain the world's largest producer of sodium perborate, and Talum offer their customers closed-loop recycling.

Andreja Šalamun and Barbara Perko

The SIJ Group have been pretty active in recent years, launching a number of innovations that include SIMOLD S150R precipitation hardening steel, which is used for tools for producing vehicle headlights. "We are also proud of the way we have managed to break through onto the market with a product from the 'Machine building' line marketed by our company SIJ Ravne Systems, where we have successfully put systems equipment or turnkey projects into operation. The first of these is the loading-unloading table for the automated handling of rods, followed by steel ladle transfer cars, a charging table for the straightening machine and the transport system for aluminium ingots," says Aleš Falatov, Head of Marketing at the SIJ Group.

SIJ's Customers Include Holtec, Andritz, Voith and Hobas

The Group's products are used by Holtec, Andritz, Voith, Hobas, Bosch Rexroth and the SMS Group, among others. "SINOXX E770, SINOXX 4923 and SINOXX 4903 steel for turbine blades are incorporated into turbines made by the biggest energy companies, while SIHARD2363 and SITHERM2344 steel for diesel engine injectors goes into the products of a number of major international companies. Our industrial knives are incorporated into internationally renowned brands of machinery for the manufacture and processing of wood, metal, paper, plastic and rubber," adds Falatov.

The SIJ Group, which employs around 7,000 people, points out that, as one of the largest manufacturers of stainless and specialist steels in the



Photo: SJJ

European Union, they bring high value-added to niche steel markets and, as such, are less vulnerable to price pressures and less dependent on volume of production. This allows them to maintain constant operation even in times of uncertainty on world markets – something we have witnessed in the last year.

Developing New Specialist Tool Steel

In autumn 2018, they were developing specialist tool steel for hot working with increased heat conductivity, useful for the manufacture of tools for pressure casting and hot stamping, and were also actively engaged in developing specialist tool steel for cold working with increased wear-resistance for use in industrial knives and rollers for the cold rolling of sheet metal.

The SIJ Group would like, in future, to forge links with end-customers on the European, American and Asian markets. Where does their focus lie? “Mainly on users of high-quality tool and specialist stainless steel in the ‘Industrial knives’ product range. We are also looking for new distributors to help us expand our sales network to the American market. We would like to establish a strategic partnership on the European market for the ‘Machine building’ sales programme, specifically for the production of parts, housings and components of machinery and systems equipment. We are also continuing with an expansion of the portfolio of customers in the area of wrought-iron products for the aluminium industry,” says Falatov, who points that they are always keen to forge new strategic and development partnerships around the world.



Photo: Helios

Helios Group Expanding into Latin America and Africa with Mobihel

“In the last year we have added to our portfolio of industrial coatings a number of important products, and managed to set up e-coat lines in Poland and Russia for application by manufacturers of original vehicle equipment and in Belarus for application in industry,” says Helios Group’s General Director, David Kubala. Their Mobihel and other products are found in products manufactured by well-known companies, and they are currently engaged in entering the markets of Latin America and Africa.

“Our emphasis is on environment-friendly products, which is why we are focusing on developing the most advanced water-based resins,” says Kubala. The new reactor used to produce these resins, which cost more than EUR 3 million, will replace the old reactor for organic-solvent-based resins, and will enable the total annual resins capacity at Helios to rise from 60,000 to 64,000 tonnes.

“We are also continuing to develop resins with high dry-matter content, as well as new industrial coatings for transport and e-coat lines. We are putting on the market a new portfolio of products under the ‘Roof Expert’ brand, which provides professional users with systemic roof solutions,” adds Kubala.

Largest Producer of Sodium Perborate in the World

Belinka Perkemija, a member of the Helios Group, are currently the world’s largest producer of sodium perborate and one of eight European producers of hydrogen peroxide. With their BELOX® brand of products, Belinka Perkemija are managing to meet demand and trends in the biocides market as well, particularly as they relate to requirements for aseptic packaging for the food industry, as they specialise in the production of high-performance, nature-friendly chemical products for various branches of industry.



Photo: Belinka Perkemija

Their products are based on hydrogen peroxides, which decompose into oxygen and water as they work and are one of the most environmentally acceptable compounds. Other high-performance chemical products include peracetic acid, technical gases such as carbon dioxide and hydrogen, and demineralised water of the highest purity.

Seven Refractories Work with the Biggest Ironworks and Steelworks

The Divača-based company Seven Refractories, which develop and manufacture fireproof concretes and taphole clays, produce a full range of monolithic fire-resistant materials. “Of all the products we have

developed in recent years, we would like to highlight our environment-friendly taphole clays and the cement-free chemically bound products used for the most complex applications and enabling rapid installation and a short start-up cycle,” says Group CEO Erik Zobec. As he points out, their goal is to provide their customers with integrated solutions for the installation and repair of industrial furnaces using taphole clays.

The company sell their products on all continents. “Our highest-profile customers are ironworks and steelworks, including NLMK, TATA, VoestAlpine, ThyssenKrupp, U.S. Steel, ArcelorMittal, Aluminium Norf, BMW, RUSAL Aluminum and Heidelberg Cement,” says Zobec, who adds that the biggest engineering and installation concerns operating in the field of fire-resistant materials base their products on Seven Refractories products. “These include Danieli Corus, Outotec and Losa,” he says.

Company Established in India

In 2017 they set up a new sales company with the Dalmia Bharat Group called Dalmia Seven. It is located in Katna, India, where they opened another new plant at the beginning of April 2018. In their assessment, India is one of the most promising markets for monolithic fireproof ceramics, and they expect annual growth of 10–15 percent there in the next few years. They have already established new links in South America, and have also started marketing their products in North America. They are also doing business on the Russian market, and focusing strongly on Germany, where 16 percent of their income was generated in 2017. Other major markets include Italy and Turkey.



Photo: Seven Refractories

They purchase the main raw materials for their products (alumina, bauxite, silicon carbide, corundum, fireclay and fireproof cement) on world markets, mixing them in Divača using their own processes and then shipping them out to their customers. They also develop their own recipes for fireproof concrete and taphole clays.

They are currently developing two innovations: Shot 92 NR 08 Z “shotcrete”, which facilitates the very rapid repair of steel ladles and requires less materials consumption than previous technologies, and the DCS line of products, which enables cement-free products to be used in all weathers because they do not require the use of liquid components, which are sensitive to fluctuations in temperature.

Every Fifth Tube or Canister in Europe Is Made from Talum Billets

Talum is one of the world’s most efficient manufacturers of electrolysed aluminium and aluminium alloys. “The development of our castings production is an important part of our growth, since in addition to low-pressure and gravity casting we have also managed to penetrate the high-pressure aluminium castings market. In the past year we have significantly improved our position in the area of production of highly complex castings for the car industry, which we manufacture using three different casting techniques,” say company sources. “Among other things, our competences and potentials in the area of castings development has been recognised by BMW, who hired us to develop and manufacture complex, load-bearing machinery elements.”

In the field of billets for the production of tubes and canisters, they are one of the largest and most technologically advanced manufacturers in the world. They have developed an alloy for manufacturing aerosol canisters which allows them to produce canisters with thinner walls and excellent mechanical properties. “Every fifth tube or canister in Europe is made out of Talum billets, and we have a 60-percent market share in the segment of billets used for the bottoms of cooking pots, as aluminium is an excellent heat conductor,” say company sources. With their Alu Green Alu Can project they offer their customers closed-loop recycling. They buy manufacturing waste from their customers and use it as raw material for the production of billets for the same customer.

Talum is a market leader on the European market for billets. “Our products’ value-added for the customer includes the low weight of our specially formulated aluminium alloys, top quality and optimal mechanical properties, which are provided through our knowledge and experience,” say sources at the company. They are known as a reliable, regular and timely supplier with excellent post-sales service. “Our billets are used to make tubes and canisters for all of the world’s biggest multinationals in the foodstuffs (Nestle, Unilever, etc.), cosmetics (Beiersdorf, Henkel, P&G, etc.), and pharmaceutical (Krka, Bayer, Roche, Novartis, etc.) industries, and our billets are built into

pots and pans made by WMF, Fissler, Tefal, Iittala, etc. Our foundry castings, which are used e.g. to produce engine blocks, can be found in Volkswagen vehicles. Our main customers for our castings also include Bosch, KTM, Wabco, Kaeser, and Doppelmayr, to name just a few,” say company sources. “The area of application is so wide that you will find Talum aluminium wherever you go, and use it every day.” The areas with the highest potential for expansion of billet sales in the future are India and South Africa.

The company’s staff is constantly looking for opportunities to develop and upgrade their existing technologies in order to achieve even better mechanical properties of their aluminium products and possibilities for manufacturing complex castings and structural parts. “We are heavily involved with e-mobility, as we hope to use our Roll-Bond technology, which is used to make evaporator plates, for cooling batteries in electronic vehicles. We have also developed alternative products made using Roll-Bond technology, such as hybrid photovoltaic panels and vaporisers for heat pumps,” say sources at the company.



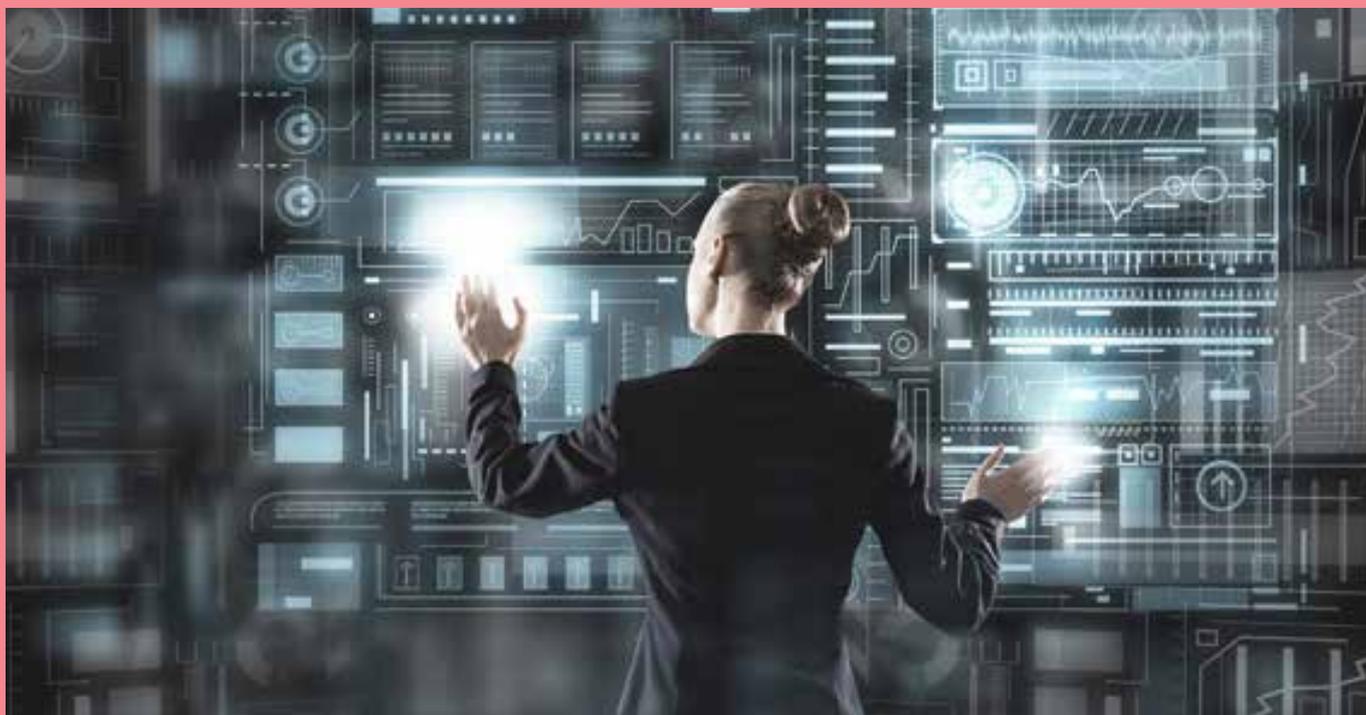


Photo: Iskratec

Products That Respond to the Requirements of Sustainable Development

Technological development, digital transformation, the Internet of Things, renewable energy sources, the circular economy, efficient energy use, smart cities, green technology, AI, electric vehicles: Slovenian enterprises have solutions for all these developments and demands.

Andreja Šalamun

Numerous and rapid changes have taken place in the last few years in the field of smart electronics, occasioned by social transformations that are becoming ever more noticeable. How can companies face the challenges this brings?

Iskraemeco's leading product currently on the market is the AM550 smart electricity meter. As they explain: "The meter has been designed in a modular way, which means that we have a basic model from which we produce numerous variations depending on the needs of the market and those of our customers. This is also what's called a 'fair meter'," say the company. They explain that the essence of the fair meter concept is "ensuring meter transparency in terms of materials and working standards in the supply chain, and incorporating the principles of sustainable development and the circular economy into all processes within the company."

As part of the project, special attention is being paid to conflict minerals and critical materials, and to raising customers' awareness and that of other industry stakeholders. The product and the fair meter concept received a Gold Award for innovation from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS).

Iskraemeco's Products Are Bought by Energy Giants Across the Globe

Iskraemeco are one of the world's leading suppliers of smart metering solutions. As they are keen to point out: "Our customers include electricity distributors throughout the world, including such giants of the industry as RWE, E.ON, Alliander and Vattenfall." They also point out that they are expanding their presence continuously on existing markets in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America. "As our

strategic plan sets out, we aim in the coming years to focus in particular on Latin America and Asia.” The company registered an 18 percent growth in exports in 2018. They are convinced that sales will grow on foreign markets because numerous European and other electricity distribution companies have commenced smart metering projects in the last few years.

They stress that they offer their customers integrated smart metering solutions comprising a smart electricity meter, communication devices, software and the appropriate support services. “As technology and digital transformation advance, we are in the process of designing a large number of solutions relating to the Internet of Things (IoT), e-mobility, smart cities and similar projects,” say the company.



Photo: Iskraemeco

Iskra’s Big Range of New Products

At Iskra’s business unit in Kranj, where they work on low-voltage switch technologies, they have brought out two new installation contactors with a designated current of 40, but in single- and dual-module versions. “Installation contactors are used for automatically controlling electrical devices and installations in housing, offices, shops and hospitals. They are suitable mainly for switching, lighting, heat pumps, air-conditioning devices and similar equipment, and for switching operations involving one- and three-phase electrical motors. Moreover, they operate silently,” they explain.

At the Otoče business unit, where work is carried out on measurement technologies, they have noticed that their own development know-how in the measurement of power quality is a fine match for the growing global needs for multi-point measurement of power quality, in residential and business buildings as well as in industry. On this basis, they have developed a one-phase (WM1) and three-phase (WM3) secondary smart energy meter. “Both are capable of measuring an expanded spectrum of power quality parameters and, within the context of smart installations, enable communication using the very latest industrial and semi-industrial communication protocols,” say the Otoče unit.

They point out that the global market has responded positively to their iMC 784 power quality analyser, developed in 2016, and given them a clear signal that “there is a need for completely autonomous and well-equipped portable versions, alongside built-in installations. We have met electricity distributors’ expectations at different voltages through the newly developed PNA 784 mobile power network quality analyser.”

They add that the software and hardware components for the multi-point measurement and control of electrical current are adapted to the requirements and expectations regarding photovoltaic installation. “We have therefore ensured that our products are acceptable to and can be sold on this specific but growing market.”

Over the last year, the Semič business unit, which is responsible for manufacturing capacitor products, has brought out capacitors for electrical consumer devices (KNB1580), AC capacitors for renewable sources (KNI5048, KNI4053 and KNI4051) and KNM1428-type engine capacitors.

Their Contactors and Switches Have Caught the Eye of General Electric and Siemens

As Iskra say, they have managed to attract customers from major global brands for their installation contactors and bi-stable switches, including General Electric and Siemens.

“With our newly developed SR-100 control relay, we have taken cooperation with one of our most important development partners and customers, the Danish DEIF Group, to a new level. This group is in the first rank of suppliers of decentralised electricity generation by land as well as under the most testing oceanic conditions,” they say.

BUILDINGS INSTALLATIONS

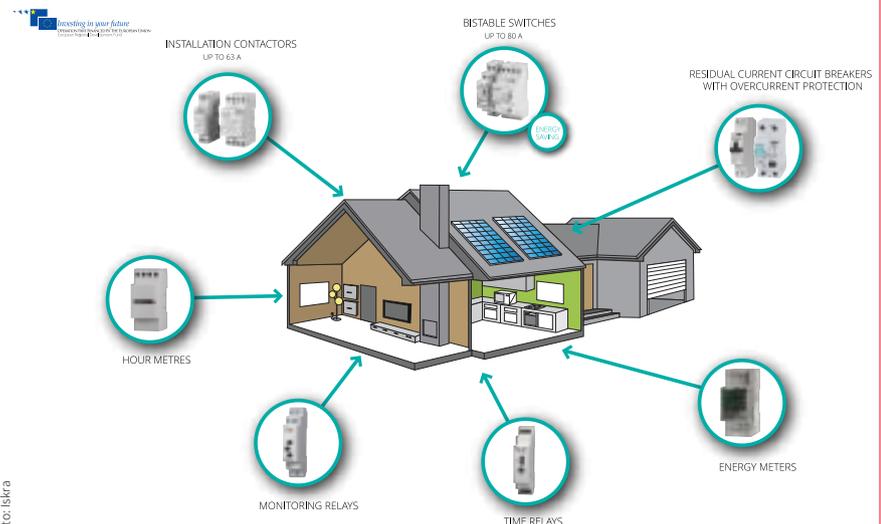


Photo: Iskra

They have tempted an important retailer of electrical materials and components, SCHRACK, into an OEM partnership with their “advanced compact measurement housing,” while they have also strengthened their development and product partnership with the leading global specialist in electrical installations at refineries and similar high-risk explosive environments, the German company R.STAHL, by embarking on a year-long development project involving analogue measuring devices for work in the most testing explosive environments.

In the field of capacitors, they have managed to acquire major business partners with their filters and XY capacitors for eliminating radiofrequency (RF) disturbances in household appliances. “These are global brands such as Miele, Bosch, Whirlpool and Beko,” say Iskra. Their KID capacitors are also used by Končar and Pfiffner.

Links Forged with Producers of Electrical Charging Stations

Iskra reveal that they have adapted their installation contactors and bistable switches to match the corporate image of Siemens and General Electric, and develop a certain portion of their measuring technology manufacturing programme in cooperation with the world’s largest players; they then market these products under their own brand name as well as those of their partners (Siemens, Alstom, Gossen Metrawatt GMC, etc.).

They stress that they would nevertheless still like to establish new partnerships, and are working mainly on establishing new development and sales partnerships on an expanded European market.



Photo: Iskratel

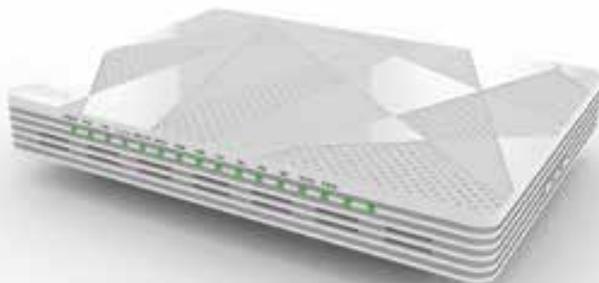


Photo: Iskratel

“We are forging links chiefly with manufacturers of charging stations for electric vehicles, distributors of secondary electricity measuring equipment for industrial use, smart buildings, renewable sources and battery storage units,” say the company, adding that they are continuing to work intensively in the measuring technology field to develop power quality analysers for electricity distributors and industry, and are optimising measuring equipment for transformer station control.

They are specific about their aims: “We would like to establish links between our capacitor programme and new partners in Europe in particular, specifically involving collaboration on products used for renewable sources, such as the KNG-type DC link capacitors and KNI- and KNB191x-type AC capacitors.”

Developing Differential Current Safety Switches and a New Series of Capacitors

The Kranj business unit is currently most focused on differential current safety switches, developing a new type of switch for designated currents of up to 125 A, while Otoče are developing the iHUB family of communications interfaces for IoT support, smart applications for visualising measurement results and controlling consumption in modern buildings and households (IoT support is included, along with a high level of protection of user data through advanced use of the MQTT communication protocol), and a comprehensive range of secondary smart meters for a variety of fields (one- and three-phase, equipped with highly capable wired and wireless communication links and protocols).

The Semič business unit is developing a new series of KNB capacitors for eliminating RF disturbances, as well as a new series of KNG DC link capacitors which should be able to withstand humid conditions at high temperatures over long periods. They are also developing a new version of DC links in large housings (KNG9147).

Collaborating on European Projects

“With the aim of creating an advanced solution for simple energy consumption management and the optimisation of photovoltaic power plants via user-friendly applications (IoT), we are collaborating with the Spanish software companies DEXMA and COSMA on an ENOPTUS development project titled Advanced solution for real-time energy-load management and the optimisation of PV resources,” say the company.

“With the objective of developing new technology for converting water into hydrogen and thereby making a decisive contribution to reducing carbon footprint as one of the more important properties of advanced glassware in tandem with Slovenian development partners (Petrol Energetika, ETI, Hrastnik glassworks), we are collaborating on the OPERH2 project.” They add that the title of the project is “Optimisation of energy conversion for reducing the share of consumption of fossil fuels with hydrogen in the industrial smelting of glass.”

Iskratec Promotes Innovation

With over 70 years' experience, Iskratec is one of Europe's leading providers of communication solutions for the digital transformation of telecommunications, transport, public safety and energy. "With our own development and manufacturing centres, over 900 employees and a local presence in more than 50 countries, we combine experience and expertise with creativity and innovation. We pay a particularly large amount of attention to the latter in our company," say Iskratec. They add that their group is able to adapt more quickly than the large global corporations by responding swiftly to changes, particularly by providing tailor-made solutions. They see this as one of their key competitive advantages.

Solutions Rather Than Products

Their activities are based on the supply of integrated solutions. "We have supplied systems for core networks (virtual IMS – vIMS) and optical access (GPON), with associated end-user equipment (CPE), as well as IoT technology for solutions in the fields of transport, public safety and energy, for existing and new telecommunications partners. In the last year we managed to establish a presence in the testing laboratories of some of the largest European operators with our 10GPON CPE technology, which is the next generation of optical networks."

In line with their strategic policies, the company provide integrated solutions to end-customers on the market. "These are mainly brands strongly integrated into their local environment, from telecommunications operators to railways. Gazprom are one of our very high-profile end-customers. We have been working with them for several years on operational and business communication solutions."

"With our niche network transitions solution, we have managed to become part of the portfolio ecosystem of a world-renowned telecommunications multinational." However, when it provides and integrates integrated solutions, the Iskratec Group's role is reversed: then they are themselves a company with a strong global brand that incorporates components from partner or external suppliers into their products, they explain.

They add that they are establishing a partnership sales network on EU markets and in certain target countries in South-East Asia, South America and Africa, chiefly in the field of broadband optical access solutions.

New Generation of Optical Access Solutions

The company recently completed the development of a new generation of optical access (GPON) solutions, with the associated end-user equipment (CPE). "We are developing the new iteration of a core network system (vIMS) for high user capacity (10 million or more), and are moving all components of the solution to the Open Stack cloud platform. Iskratec's vIMS solution provides a wide range of telecommunications functions and interfaces, high operational

Photo: Iskratec



"The initial contact was exceptionally important. This was followed by a process of verifying Iskratec's expertise, and particularly its optical access solution (GPON). The Norwegian market is moving towards providing an optical network for all households in the country, which is why we needed to find a business partner to help make this possible. One of our conditions was that it had to be a European partner – because of the relationships involved, ease of understanding and development of the technology. The Iskratec Group impressed us with their responsiveness and their ability to provide solutions compatible with our operators' equipment. We were looking for a solution that could be integrated into the existing network – and Iskratec have been incredibly successful in this regard. Currently, for us, they are the number one provider of broadband solutions."

Kurth V. Tviberg, CEO of Tantec Digital AS, CIP (Certified Integration Partner) of the Iskratec Group in Norway, on why they chose the Iskratec Group over a number of strong global ICT competitors.

availability with geo-redundancy, support for local survival at marginal locations, and the management of subscribers and services via a centralised portal," say the company.

They are also investing in an operational communications platform and applications for the transport sector. "This involves the development of highly reliable platforms for ensuring the reliability of business and operational communications. The solution covers communication needs and requirements in the railway, underground, tram and motorway industries, facilitates the integration of analogue, TDM and IP networks, and provides speech, data and video services for passengers and staff. We are also working on an intelligent IoT platform for solutions in industry verticals."

Safe City a Priority

"Safe City" is an energy and public safety project for which a prototype is being produced in Russia as part of a complex project based on Iskratec's Intelligent Application Platform for Energy (IAPE). "With our partners, we are aiming for prototype installation of an application for advanced electricity management based on an active integration project. The longer-term plans in this area include updates to the public safety and energy solutions so that they provide a basis for upcoming 'smart cities' projects. The latter represent a step forward in advanced, smart management and the continuous exchange of information between all urban environment stakeholders," say Iskratec.

They are also working on a new 5G Security project, the strategic goal of which is to conduct research and innovation work that paves the way for a new generation of broadband 5G-ready products and services adapted to the needs of the public protection and disaster relief (PPDR) sector.



Photo: Pošta Slovenije

New Strategies and Excellent Information Support Are the Key to Success

Sava Express tie SE Europe together, a region in which Intereuropa are more than at home, while Pošta Slovenije are upgrading their existing classic network, Dars are building a second tunnel through the Karavanke, and the Port of Koper continues to expand.

Nina Šprohar

Sava Express Are Luring Road Freight onto the Tracks

The Slovenian national railway company (Slovenske železnice, SŽ) are one of the largest logistics companies in the country, with services that respond to the market and to demand. "We are able to offer not just quick and reliable freight transport, but also numerous additional activities within our comprehensive portfolio. These include transport planning, advice on security and loading operations, high-quality goods transport using classic and combined methods at competitive prices, customs and forwarding services, and sea and road freight transport," say the company. They also maintain and repair freight wagons, and provide security for goods consignments. The company highlight the considerable advantages of having a wide network of partner freight carriers from

other countries. "We provide transport and additional services for a large number of big companies in different fields, including the steel, food, car and oil industries," they add.

SŽ act as a regional bridge between the countries of SE Europe, and take the initiative in designing new products. "We have developed the new Sava Express freight train that connects freight flows from Western and Central Europe with transit operations through Serbia via Ljubljana Zalog, Belgrade and Sremska Mitrovica." As the new train, which came into operation in March 2018, is an attempt to lure freight currently travelling by road onto the tracks, it is also set up to carry smaller quantities of goods. The value-added produced by Sava Express is the option of adding or removing wagons at Slavonski Brod, which enables connections with freight coming

from or into Bosnia-Herzegovina. As the company explain: “The new train connects to transit freight from Austria, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic and other transit countries passing through Ljubljana. Sava Express provides reliable railway transport from Ljubljana to Belgrade, and a ‘one-stop shop’ integrated logistics solution. The new product also includes high-quality distribution in Slovenia, Serbia and those neighbouring countries that are part of the railway undertakings’ organisations, as well as other partners, and door-to-door freight delivery.” They add that they are also planning to enter other markets in the region, either independently or in strategic partnership with other railway undertakings. “Our goal is to take a leading role in long-distance transport routes and offer comprehensive logistics services to end-customers, developing them in tandem with our long-term partners.”

Strong Information Support Contributes to Successful Marketing

Intereuropa provide logistics services in support of Slovenian exports using regular, well-established land routes to all European countries, as well as maritime routes with the rest of the world. “Our logistics business requires a complex logistics solution, as we provide a variety of services optimised to our customers’ needs. The aim is to provide them with more than merely an individual logistics project solution – so, transport and goods storage,” say the company. The company will continue to focus on customers from certain groups. “We see our greatest market opportunities on the markets on which Intereuropa companies are already present, such as those of the former Yugoslavia. Of course, when we spot new market opportunities, we are ready to expand our operations to other markets in South-East Europe. We cover other markets with a partnership network for products carried over land, by air and by sea.” Intereuropa have a competitive advantage when it comes to the services they provide, as their subsidiaries make it easier for them to achieve economies of scale for some services, such as group transport, and they have a better negotiating position in public logistics tenders, which makes them a more equal competitor with international logistics concerns. “Our strong information support, adapted to the specificities of different markets, also increases the effectiveness of the marketing of our services. Our company exploits the synergies of joint sales and improved supply services to customers, which enables us to provide a comprehensive set of logistics services, our own business network, our own warehousing capacities and information support for products,” they add.

New Channels Enable Greater Flexibility

Pošta Slovenije (PS) follow global postal developments in postal and logistics services, and are constantly engaged in updating and overhauling their existing services, as well as developing new ones. “We



Photo: Slovenske železnice

are opening up new channels to get to our customers. These include automated parcel machines, self-service post offices and the PS 24/7 self-service units. These forms of service provision give customers greater flexibility when it comes to the time and place of provision of a service. Of course, we are careful to combine these solutions with the classic post office network,” say the company.

Last September, PS put into operation an outdoor PS 24/7 self-service unit in Koper. This outdoor self-service unit offers customers easy access to selected postal and banking services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As well as a “PS Paketomat” automated parcel machine, the unit comprises a Nova KBM cash machine and a vending machine containing selected products. The first unit was opened in Ljubljana in 2017 at Rudnik shopping centre. “Together with the 24/7 self-service post office on Čopova ulica in Ljubljana, the network of 24 modern automated parcel machines in larger towns around Slovenia and the possibility of sending consignments using the ‘PS Pošlji paket’ app, the two self-service units form an important part of the wide network of classic post offices. With its contemporary look and feel, interesting range of products and services and, in particular, the speed and simplicity of service and 24/7 availability, the units mark a new milestone in the development of PS and its operations going forward,” say the company.

The App Makes It Easier for Customers to Access Their Consignments

With the aim of providing addressees with better notification of when their letters and parcels arrive, PS have also introduced notification of addressees by text messages and e-mail using the telephone number and e-mail address provided by the sender. “Addressees receive a message when their parcel has been despatched by the sender and on the day of delivery. We have recently also offered addressees a new ‘Moja dostava – moja izbira’ app, which enables them to choose the method of delivery themselves,” say the company.



“We have been working with Pošta Slovenije for a number of years and I have to say that we are very satisfied with the quality of our cooperation and the way they go about their work. PS distribute our products every weekday to small bars and large wholesalers alike. As they are available every weekday in practically all parts of the country, we can deliver Coca-Cola and other products to our customers whenever and wherever. That is what makes us competitive.”

Gregor Knez, Logistics Manager of Coca-Cola HBC Slovenija

Distribution of Temperature-Sensitive Products

PS also offer various forms of distribution support. They deliver goods from their online store to online retailers, supplies to classic retailers for their outlets and spare parts to manufacturing companies for their production-related activities. “Companies and sole traders can take advantage of domestic and international business parcel delivery services, and we also offer logistics services, warehousing logistics and order picking.” The company are giving increasing emphasis to services tailored to specific customer segments. “We are making our presence felt in areas in which we previously had no presence, such as freight logistics (white goods, vehicle parts, beverage distribution) and online platforms, and are expanding our services throughout the Adriatic region. We are also trialling the distribution of temperature-sensitive products and attempting to further develop our production-line supply segment services. Companies can make use of app support for the despatch of consignments; this makes it easier to prepare consignments and enables information to be sent electronically,” they explain. Given the upward trend in growth in parcel and logistics services, they are focusing their strategic projects on expanding the capacities of mail sorting and logistics centres, constructing additional warehouse capacities, modernising the machine-sorting of parcels and letters, and optimising IT support and the network of contact points.

On the developed markets of the EU and the US, seven-day same-day delivery of goods from online

retailers, and even delivery within a few hours, is becoming the trend in larger towns and cities. Retailers are looking at various ways of improving delivery from their online stores. One can expect a country of Slovenia’s size to move towards quick, flexible delivery in the future, provided by companies using the “sharing economy” model. “One such company is the Locodels Hrvaška start-up from Croatia, with whom PS have signed a letter of intent on business cooperation for the swift delivery of online purchases in the B2C segment. This is already being tested in the Ljubljana area,” say the company. Locodels offer an innovative solution for daily urban delivery using the “sharing economy” model, with individuals registering via an online platform and providing their own labor and vehicle for the delivery of parcels. These individuals also have the option of sharing their currently “unused” resources with others via the platform, for which they receive payment. This means that the service provider does not have its own capacities but leases them on the market, with an online app being used to manage drivers, orders and deliveries.

Next-Generation Green Delivery Solutions

In June 2018, PS signed a business cooperation agreement with GEN-I in the field of freight e-mobility and next-generation green delivery solutions. The two companies are therefore pooling their knowledge in the area of e-mobility with the aim of providing urban residents with a comprehensive environment-friendly service using electric vehicles driven, as far as possible, by clean solar energy or other carbon-free sources of power. “Through this partnership, we aim to become a leading player and driving force in the field of next-generation green delivery solutions in Slovenia and South-East Europe,” say the company. PS have been phasing electric vehicles into their fleet for a number of years already. In April 2018, the company also acquired the ISO 50001 energy-management standard, the latest ISO system management standard, which is awarded to companies that manage energy in a sustainable and efficient manner.

Podravska Motorway to Become Part of the Pan-European Transport Network

It has been a successful year for Dars, who operate the Slovenian motorway network, as they managed to improve all key business indicators in 2017. As they point out: “Revenues increased on account of stronger vignette sales, growth in freight transport and an increase in tolls, which partly offset the negative impact of changes to the structure of freight transport in relation to EURO emission standards.” They go on to say that “in 2017, the company generated net sales revenue of EUR 442.2 million, EBITDA of EUR 371.8 million and a net profit of EUR 141.1 million.” Despite the growth in freight and private transport, they believe they have managed to ensure sufficient traffic flow capacity even in the face of extensive renovation works. “In 2017



we fully renovated around 26 km of motorway and dual carriageway,” say the company. They add that improvements have also been made to road safety, having overseen a reduction in all types of injury on the road. This year they will extend the 33-km-long A4 Podravska motorway between Slivnica and Gruškovje, which forms part of the integrated pan-European transport network.

Quicker Journeys for Heavy Goods Vehicles

“Our goal is to optimise traffic flow capacity and, at the same time, ensure the highest possible level of safety on the Slovenian motorway network. We aim to achieve this by taking a modern, environment-friendly approach,” say the company. They expect the upward trend in motorway and dual carriageway use to continue. Slovenia is one of the busiest transit countries in Europe, with levels of vehicle use also fairly high up the scale. One of the operator’s main objectives in 2018 has been to commence changes to the toll stations following the introduction of the new electronic toll system for heavy vehicles. They will continue with activities towards the construction of the northern and southern parts of the third development axis, with plans under way for the preparation of project design documentation and the acquisition of the required land. They will also start building a second Karavanke tunnel between the Slovenian-Austrian border.

By activating the state-of-the-art electronic toll system for freight vehicles, DarsGo has provided drivers of heavy vehicles with a toll-collection system that does not stop or slow down vehicles, making their journeys quicker, safer and more comfortable. This system is also more environment-friendly, as most exhaust emissions are produced when vehicles stop or move off. DarsGo enables payment to be made according to distance driven, and ensures flexibility in the event that new road sections are added.

Adriatic’s Number One

The Adriatic’s largest container port and one of the largest ports of entry and exit for cars in the Mediterranean is currently satisfied with its business operations, as transshipment is growing mainly in the container and car sectors – which is an important factor in the Port of Koper’s ability to realise its overall business strategy. Dimitrij Zadel, Head of the port, is also particularly delighted with the fact that several key projects have finally started, which will give new impetus to the development of the port and provide a shot in the arm for company operations generally. “I am mainly targeting the acquisition of additional premises for the storage freight, or the expansion of the concession area, and continuation of the project to extend Pier 1,” explains Zadel. A new record was set in the passenger segment on 22 June last year when they welcomed four cruise ships and more than 3,000 tourists to the port. The number of passengers reached 101,415 in 2018, confirmed Port of Koper, thus exceeding the 100,000 mark.



Photo: DARS

Silk Road Through Koper

The port extended the concession area last year, meaning an additional 43 hectares in the land part of the port. “We should also mention the construction of a new lorry entrance, which will make life easier for freight carriers, which currently gravitate towards the edge of the city centre, and will increase traffic flow capacity. After a break of more than a year, we are continuing with the project to extend the Pier 1, after reaching agreement with the City of Koper on certain mitigating measures to reduce the impact of port-based activities in Basin I on Koper’s residents,” says Zadel, who adds that this is only one of several larger and more important projects under way this year. They are also considering increasing the size of the garage, constructing new berths and leasing larger plots of land for freight storage. All these investments are urgently needed in order to enable us to respond to the ever-greater volumes of trade between Europe and the Far East. The Port of Koper also officially became part of the initiative for a new “Silk Road” last year after reaching an agreement with the Ningbo Zhoushan Group. “Our goal remains unchanged: to become the leading port system for global logistics solutions for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” says Zadel.



Photo: Luka Koper



Photo: Špica

Opening Doors with a Smartphone

Access control using a smartphone, without the need for readers or smartcards. Label-printing in milliseconds, full-featured software solutions for farming and marinas, and meeting the most exacting security requirements.

Nina Šprohar

DoorCloud Will Make Landlords' Lives Easier

Last year the Špica company launched their DoorCloud innovation onto the global market. As owner and Managing Director Tone Stanovnik explains: "This is a solution that enables access to be controlled using a smartphone, without the need for readers or smartcards." It works by using an app to establish a bluetooth connection with doors that can be opened using a smartphone. "Our services could make life easier for AirBnb users. If a landlord installs a smart key on their doors, tenants will then be able to access the property using their smartphone," explains Stanovnik, adding that the neighbourhoods for young families being built abroad would also benefit from DoorCloud. "Families will be renting flats and sharing common areas. Access to the laundry, bicycle storage and multimedia rooms can

be controlled using the DoorCloud smartphone app," he explains.

Špica's flagship product is otherwise "Time & Space", which combines an access control system and time management system. "We have installed a time management system at Samsung's branch offices in the Adriatic region, for example, and provided access control solutions for Assa Abloy, the world's largest provider of door-opening systems. At the Port of Koper, the specific features of which mark it out as critical infrastructure and a place where physical security is of the utmost importance, we installed an access-control system over a single weekend, expanding it with tailor-made solutions," says Stanovnik.

At the Talum company, Velenje coal mine and Ljubljana University Medical Centre (UKC), the company have installed a system for identifying and

tracking clothing labels using RFID (radio-frequency identification) technology. “The main reasons for using the RFID system are security and cost-effectiveness,” Stanovnik explains. “We have found that in most cases workers have significantly more clothing on them than is necessary. The companies have therefore been able to reduce the quantity of equipment supplied, make considerable savings and, because of the new system, spend less time on clothing-related matters, thereby increasing the efficiency and speed of work processes,” says Stanovnik. “We would like to cover the ‘three seas basin’, from the Baltic in the north to the Mediterranean in the south and the Black Sea in the east. The second wave of expansion would include all the countries of the former Yugoslavia. We already have a presence there with the Time & Space system, which we are also expanding into the EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) region. The partners we work with are primarily technology companies, i.e. value-added resellers and integrators. We want to train them to undertake development themselves so that they can prepare ‘boutique solutions’ for their own customers on the domestic market.” The company is currently involved in developing “Zone Touch BIO” terminals that control access using biometric sensors, as well as software solutions for hotel chains that enable smartcards to be programmed for visitors, access rights to be controlled and solutions to be implemented for managing and planning employees’ time at work.

A Few Seconds Instead of Several Hours

“Over the last years, our new ‘NiceLabel 2017’ software platform has become established on the global market, as has the fully overhauled software solution for designing and printing labels and managing labelling processes, the most unique, state-of-the-art and efficient solution of its kind on the planet and one that we introduced to the market in the second half of 2016,” says Matej Košmrlj, CEO of Euro Plus, NiceLabel’s parent company. From the outset, the company have sold their solutions to strong brands. Via a Slovenian distributor of automatic identification systems, for example, they established links, shortly after the company was founded in the 1990s, with Sato, the well-established Japanese manufacturer of industrial printers, which needed a solution for the printing of diacritical marks. Sato were satisfied with the company’s work, which led to new orders and closer cooperation with Sato Europe and, in turn, opened the door to other international markets. “After we introduced our own NiceLabel brand, we began selling software solutions to other leading industrial labelling manufacturers and, by building partnership networks, gradually broke through into numerous manufacturing, trade and logistics companies across the globe,” explains Košmrlj, who adds that they have deliberately strengthened their presence in the segment of solutions for large companies in recent years. They establish contact with those companies via their own partnership networks and,



Photo: Spica

to an increasing extent, directly, as they enable them to digitise their labelling processes throughout the entire supply chain.

“Our solutions are used by well-known companies from a large number of sectors, including Abbott, Arla Foods, Benetton, Continental, Bosch, Gorenje, Hella, Krka, Lonza, Osram, Philips, P&G, Siemens, ThermoFischer and Würth,” adds Košmrlj. In addition to using NiceLabel’s design and printing software, these companies are opting in increasing numbers for the company’s Label Management System (LMS), an integrated labelling system for manufacturing and logistics companies, including specific industrial sectors, such as pharmacy, retail, automotive, food and beverage, and electronic industries. “We recently undertook our largest project to date: an integrated labelling solution for an American giant with 25 distribution centres and 4,000 stores. By using our solution, they have substantially increased their agility, and the time required to prepare and print new labels has come down from several hours or even weeks to a matter of seconds, which enables them to be more flexible and get their products to market much more quickly,” says Košmrlj. Before NiceLabel’s solutions came along, IT professionals in companies such as this needed a considerable amount of time to program labels. Now, specialist users can design,



Photo: NiceLabel



Photo: IRM

print and oversee the process from any department in a simple and transparent way. “Many practical examples prove that companies that employ our software solutions significantly reduce the risk of producing defective signs and characters, incurring the considerable expenses involved in recalling label batches, and losing millions in lost turnover as well as their reputation, which can prove fatal,” explains Košmrlj, who adds that companies that introduce integrated label management systems and provide their business users with direct access to label design programmes and document management and online printing systems are effective in preventing revenue losses. The costs of defects in printed signs and characters are considerably higher than the investment in introducing a state-of-the-art labelling system and training staff to use it.

Investment Recouped in Less Than Four Months

Siemens managed to recoup its investment in the integrated NiceLabel labelling system in less than four months, with the time needed to print labels falling from eight seconds to 300 milliseconds. They rolled the solution out from the pilot plant to 22 other plants (2,000 printers), supplying it to other Siemens Group plants as the best solution available.

“Five years ago, labelling was a highly involved process that lacked standardisation. We have a network of plants and have already employed three different labelling solutions at our main location – or more broadly speaking, five or six label-printing solutions. Several plants operated local domain systems and pursued their own method of procuring and managing equipment. NiceLabel’s integrated labelling solution is now being used by 22 plants in

four different business units, in six European countries as well as in China,” said Leon McDonnell, Head of IT services at Siemens’ manufacturing department. “The largest plant prints 150,000 labels a week on 200 printers, all relying on NiceLabel’s integrated system,” added Michael Buchmann, IT Solutions Architect at Siemens.

IRM Are Developing Several Marina Master Solutions

Vesna Pavlovič, Managing Director of IRM, says that they have developed and put on the market several software solutions last year. “These include the Marina Master advanced CRM, a set of software solutions for advanced CRM (Customer Relationship Management) adapted to the differing requirements of marinas, the myMarina mobile app, which enables marina customers to communicate with staff, and to order general and tailor-made solutions, the MarinaMaster mobile app, which is aimed at staff and enables them to manage the marina wherever and whenever, and Marina Master integration with large globally recognised payment systems such as Freeway and Merchant Warrior.” She adds that these products are already in use in marinas, yacht clubs and ports around the world, from Australia to the Caribbean. “At the moment, we are developing several other Marina Master software products, including solutions for the automation of booking systems and the optimisation of servicing processes.”

Simple Solution for Entrepreneurs

The Datalab company develops, installs and maintains Pantheon business software, and provides advice and professional training in its use. They are headquartered in Slovenia, with offices in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Romania, Ukraine and Switzerland. “In the last year we have launched the Spletna Blagajna, an online checkout app, in collaboration with our partner Telekom Slovenije,” says Maja Fujan. This checkout solution is aimed at small businesses, small tradespeople, the self-employed and voluntary associations that need a simple solution with which to issue invoices in the office or in the field. “The solution works in conjunction with everything the business needs: a computer, telephone or tablet with an internet link, and a printer,” she explains.

“Pantheon is perfect for companies of all sizes and sectors, with strong specialisation in the computer, manufacturing, trade, agriculture and services sectors. We work with Bisnode, Deloitte, DM, Strabag, Deichmann, Hager, Fibernet, Plastika Skaza and other companies,” says Fujan, adding that their information system is a product that enables companies to manage their day-to-day business more effectively. They see strong support and sales reach in their external partners, which allows them to provide high-quality coverage of the SEE region, Ukraine and Switzerland. “We are also open to new partnerships in every country in which our branches are based, as



Photo: Datablab

well as in other European countries. We expect our partners to take over sales activities, implement a business information system, train employees and support the product,” says Fujan.

They are engaged in developing functionalities for and improving Pantheon, from the comprehensive introduction of electronic commerce for their customers (work processes, document systems, OCR) to full-featured solutions for modern farming. “Because of the complexities faced by farmers today, we decided to combine the various forms of agricultural activity into one system that includes apps, various integrations of the Internet of Things, data exchange via online services and back-office functions. We have adapted everything to the needs of farmers’ themselves,” adds Fujan. In the production field, they are developing a strong analytical planning system for finance and accounting work, as well as developing new features for payments abroad. “Every day we make improvements to our software, and we are delighted that 70 percent of all proposals for improvements incorporated into ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) come from the users themselves.”

Meeting Exacting Security Requirements

“We have been offering highly reliable remote-support software for over ten years,” says Saba Resnik, in charge of marketing and PR at XLAB. ISL Online software is frequently updated to enable it to remain in touch with the latest trends in the industry and provide customers with the highest level of security possible. Where do they get their inspiration from? “In addition to the ‘must-have’ remote desktop trends, customer feedback is the thing that gives us our most important ideas for new functions and improvements to existing functions. In April we brought out a new version of ISL Light (ISL Light 4.4), with 40 new functions and improvements, including improved merger and joint use functions, speedier joint monitor use, improved security, new chat functions, a new blinking app icon and many other things,” explains Resnik. Exacting security requirements are the main reason why the company has managed to catch the

Photo: Datablab



“We have been using the PANTHEON program from the very beginning, when we opened the business in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the beginning, PANTHEON was used by an outside accounting company. Since 2010 it has also been used by our own personnel records and wages department.

The PANTHEON program is simple to use, providing a company with everything it needs to keep personnel records, calculate wages and recruit new staff. It contains numerous report-drafting possibilities, and adapts itself to the legislative changes, which are always implemented extremely quickly. In a country going through a major reform phase, this is very important. I would also like to highlight the fact that the program enables processes to be imported so that it can be adapted to every user’s specific requirements. These processes speed up and ease the work process considerably.”

Jasmina Roša, HR and wages manager, DM drogerie markt, Bosnia-Herzegovina

eye of some of the world’s most successful companies. “Our state-of-the-art remote-support software is being used by a number of global brand names in a variety of sectors, including Konica Minolta, Mitsubishi Chemical Systems, AT&T, Mango and Canon.” She goes on to point out that Avast Business, the global online security company, which supplies industry-leading software and services for protecting devices, data and people, has integrated ISL Online into its Managed Workplace RMM (Remote Monitoring and Management) platform, thereby making access to countless remote computers possible. In addition to Europe, the company is focused mainly on the US, where they recently opened an office in North Carolina, Japan, where they have partnered with OceanBridge Inc. and the Santec Corporation, and South-East Asia, particularly Singapore and Thailand. “With its extremely rapid market growth, particularly in healthcare, and its good levels of purchasing power, Vietnam is the next destination to which we will expand our products and services,” says Resnik.



Photo: Cetus

No Barriers for Innovative Enterprises

Better passports, hydraulic models for the world's biggest turbines, high-quality technical components and efficient systemic cleanroom solutions. In their respective fields, innovators are seeking new partners around the world.

Nina Šprohar

Most Reliable Solution on the Market

Cetus are a company engaged in upgrading security paper and commercial print using comprehensive solutions. They produce around four million documents a year and say that they are “very proud of their long-term partnership with the Slovenian government and of having gained the trust of its citizens.” They also collaborate on projects involving central government authorities in Africa, Europe, Central America and the Middle East. In the last year, they have, among other things, developed a system for data capture and processing and the issuing of travel documents in Guinea-Bissau, systems for data capture and processing and the issuing of transport and driving documents in Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar, a criminal register in Equatorial Guinea, tachographic systems in Montenegro and Albania, and numerous other solutions.



Photo: Cetus



Photo: Litostraj Power

In the document production field, the company have upgraded their existing security paper with new protections that prevent it from being counterfeited. “Our most important innovation over the last year has been the new generation of polycarbonate bindings for data pages in e-passports, which have been recognised with a Gold Award for the best Slovenian innovations. The method by which data pages are bound into a passport is one of the key elements of a passport, ensuring protection against forgery and counterfeiting,” say Cetus. This patented solution brings to the market a large number of improvements from the point of view of security, durability, flexibility and compatibility, and the company are sure that it is currently the most reliable solution out there. “The lifespan of the average passport is around ten years, but our innovation almost doubles that. The solution is already in use in Central America and Africa,” say the company.

As far as security paper is concerned, the company focus on comprehensive solutions, i.e. on adding services to products. Passports, visas, identity cards, driving licences and vehicle registration documents are among their most important products. In the area of commercial print solutions, the company highlights solutions for the pharmaceutical, food and cosmetics industries, for which they produce labels, sleeves, wrapping labels and forms. “In addition to Slovenia, our target markets are those of Western and Central Europe, chiefly Austria, Germany and France.” Their development activities are currently most strongly oriented towards the development of new security protections for documents and of comprehensive document-related information solutions.

Hydraulic Model for the Largest Francis Pump Turbine in Europe

Litostraj Power manufacture one-off products to order, tailored to specific projects. “Most of our orders are for Francis, Kaplan and Pelton water turbines.” They used to manufacture mostly new

equipment, but there has been growth recently in the proportion of work they do on the partial or complete refurbishment of old turbines. In 2017 they developed a hydraulic model for the largest single Francis pump turbine in Europe and a hydraulic mould for a Francis driver with the largest fall of water in the world. They also manufacture barrier components such as gates and valves. “We would like to establish new ties with end-customers in particular,” say the company. “In some cases, we are developing project-based partnerships with other suppliers, particularly of generator equipment, and with construction and engineering companies.” Litostraj Power are currently developing several new hydraulic moulds for drivers, all of them specifically optimised to meet the demands of customers.

Cleangrad: The Only Fire Safety Windows under the GMP Standard

Cleangrad provides systemic cleanroom solutions, from the detailed design to the installation stage. As the company explain: “We tailor our cleanrooms to the demands of our customers with the complete integration of doors, media and furniture, in combination with ventilation and technologies. Our installation team are trained under the GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) standard and place great emphasis on health, safety and cleanliness. This enables us to ensure that cleanrooms are handed over to our customers on time.” They support the qualification of cleanrooms in accordance with cGMP (Current Good Manufacturing Practice), FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) requirements, and also provide 48-hour service operations throughout the whole of Europe and the spare parts supply. Cleangrad have their own development centre in which they are constantly engaged in developing new and improving existing products according to customers’ instructions and also in collaboration with them. “Last year we have developed, manufactured,



Photos: Sibogroup

tested and installed a fire safety window for a known customer under the GMP standard, and we are still the only provider of this type of solution. Our customers are mainly large pharmaceutical concerns, such as Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline, Mithra Pharmaceutical, DSM, Novartis, Sandoz, Octapharma, Alcon and Zoetis. We would also like to forge new partnerships and enter the German, Irish and Russian markets.” What are they developing at the moment? “Our main development challenges in the coming months will be in connection with cleanroom systems. In 2018, in addition to the fire safety window, we also developed an air-conditioning box and info booth,” they reply.

Solutions for the Pharmaceutical, Medical and Electrical Industries

The Sibogroup provides closure solutions for tubes, containers and other types of packaging, as well as solutions for technically complex products for the

From Start-Up to Established Company

The ABC Accelerator has always shifted the limits of the impossible. The story began with a team of four three and a half years ago, when the first programme helped eight start-ups on their way. Today the ABC Accelerator has more than 130 start-ups in its portfolio, and it brings award-winning start-ups face to face with investors. The ABC Accelerator itself has won a Central European Start-Up Award (CESA) for “Best Accelerator/Incubator Programme” in Slovenia as well as the wider CEE region for two years in a row. The ABC start-ups Homey and Beeping were winners at PODIM, the largest regional start-up conference: Beeping was named “Slovenian start-up of the year” while Homey walked away with first prize at the “PODIM Challenge” competition.

So far the ABC Accelerator has provided help to more than 130 start-ups, which have together collected more than EUR 30 million in investments. The 8th accelerator programme is under way and will take in the ten best start-ups. “The ABC Accelerator has provided Flexkeeping with a huge shot in the arm – in terms of way of thinking as well as changes to the development of the business. As a result, we now have a presence in 13 countries worldwide and manage around 30,000 hotel rooms. Thanks to ABC, we have managed to acquire three very good investors, who are now our business partners,” said Luka Berger, Flexkeeping’s CEO.

pharmaceutical, medical and electrical industries. One of its newest products is the PO50f/20 cap for use in the cosmetics industry.

“Our activities are not geared merely towards producing caps and shoulders but also high-quality technical components for the car, sanitary, telecommunications and other industries, containers for medicines, pharmaceuticals, food supplements and medical devices, and tools for manufacturing those products,” explains Jure Butinar, Head of marketing. “We operate in more than 60 countries around the world, have more than 300 business partners and manufacture more than four billion products every year. Our business partners include standard-bearers in the cosmetics, car, pharmaceutical, oral care and animal feed industries,” says Butinar, adding that almost all the company’s products, with the exception of their breast-milk pumps, are B2B products. Among the products incorporated into globally recognised products from some of the strongest brands are Sibogroup caps, shoulders, electronic device casings, water meshes, printer components and thin-walled food containers.

Last year, owing to an increase in demand and the need to meet shorter delivery times, they have established two new companies, SIBO USA and SIBO RUS (Russia). As Butinar explains: “We would like to be present on both markets with an even greater number of products and tools sold. We also intend to establish production of our products and tools at both locations in the near future.”

Ultracut Cutting-Off Wheels Enable Up to 30% Faster Cutting

“Our business excellence, more than 135 years of experience on the global market, investments in know-how, development, equipment and automation, and our innovations: all of these are factors that give our customers the assurance that we manufacture high-quality abrasives and can meet the expectation of even the most exacting clients,” says Urška Vouri, Head of marketing at Weiler Abrasives (formerly Swatycomet), one of the leading producers of artificial abrasives and synthetic fibres. Technical support is an important element, as the company provide complex technical and technological solutions tailored to the individual customer. “Last year we received a national Gold Award for our solid-core technology for the manufacture of Ultracut thin cutting-off wheels, which enable the thinnest products to be manufactured,” says Vouri. Their innovation reduces the time needed for cutting operations by up to 30% compared with other products – and, in addition to saving time, also cuts down on labor costs and consumption as well as ensuring more precise cutting. “The cutting-off wheels are extremely durable and stable, which ensures that the user is able to work safely and without fuss, providing them with added value.”

List of 100 Largest Exporters

Source: audited and consolidated annual reports of groups/companies for the year 2017. Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES). Ranking criteria: Level of exports in 2017.

Company/Group name	Sector	Exports (000 EUR)	% of foreign sales	Sales (000 EUR)	Number of employees	Value-added per employee (EUR)
1 GROUP PETROL	RETAIL TRADE	2,042,979	45.4	4,496,736	3,297	72,106
2 GROUP GEN	ENERGY	1,868,472	78.0	2,394,837	1,292	96,232
3 REVOZ d.d.	MANUFACTURING	1,575,361	99.2	1,588,689	2,321	75,755
4 GROUP KRKA	MANUFACTURING	1,178,353	93.0	1,266,392	10,832	63,095
5 GROUP LEK	MANUFACTURING	1,134,636	96.5	1,176,092	4,316	90,907
6 GROUP HSE	ENERGY	1,117,182	70.4	1,587,760	3,093	82,789
7 GROUP GORENJE	MANUFACTURING	1,106,217	84.4	1,309,932	11,039	30,419
8 GROUP MERCATOR	RETAIL TRADE	927,787	43.1	2,152,172	18,664	15,625
9 Interenergo d.o.o.	ENERGY	768,139	86.2	891,205	31	173,379
10 GROUP SIJ	MANUFACTURING	651,371	86.2	756,062	3,585	55,624
11 GROUP IMPOL 2000	MANUFACTURING	628,774	94.3	666,723	2,283	53,923
12 GROUP KOLEKTOR HOLDING	MANUFACTURING	449,144	62.6	717,298	5,495	41,456
13 GROUP ADRIA MOBIL	MANUFACTURING	383,350	92.0	416,844	1,640	64,472
14 BSH HIŠNI APARATI d.o.o. Nazarje	MANUFACTURING	320,100	93.1	343,800	1,067	62,975
15 GROUP TAB d.d.	MANUFACTURING	316,611	96.9	326,802	1,352	58,735
16 BELEKTRON d.o.o.	FINANCIAL SERVICES	298,374	98.2	303,862	6	472,912
17 GROUP TALUM d.d.	MANUFACTURING	279,453	81.3	343,621	1,374	43,601
18 GROUP LTH CASTINGS	MANUFACTURING	279,421	99.6	280,581	2,632	49,112
19 GROUP HELIOS	MANUFACTURING	261,160	87.8	297,431	1,772	42,293
20 GROUP HIDRIA	MANUFACTURING	231,901	92.9	249,711	1,843	49,849
21 AquafilSLO d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	226,425	99.6	227,260	819	47,151
22 RENAULT NISSAN SLOVENIJA, d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	215,748	45.1	478,615	114	101,304
23 GROUP CIMOS	MANUFACTURING	207,441	92.7	223,784	3,320	22,596
24 MAHLE Electric Drives Slovenija d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	202,473	95.4	212,273	1,586	35,948
25 GROUP UNIOR	MANUFACTURING	199,544	83.5	239,020	3,086	32,950
26 GEOPLIN d.o.o. Ljubljana	RETAIL TRADE	190,689	57.3	332,804	41	237,301
27 GROUP SLOVENSKE ŽELEZNICE	TRANSP. AND STORAGE	187,904	47.3	397,100	7,403	41,726
28 CARTHAGO d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	179,272	100.0	179,311	714	30,606
29 odelo Slovenija d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	179,110	99.8	179,511	1,032	45,646
30 GOODYEAR DUNLOP SAVA TIRES d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	173,631	82.5	210,441	1,396	48,440
31 GROUP PERUTNINA PTUJ	MANUFACTURING	169,616	66.0	257,113	3,528	23,261
32 CINKARNA Celje, d.d.	MANUFACTURING	164,244	87.0	188,705	869	91,136
33 BOXMARK LEATHER d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	157,422	99.9	157,606	1,787	17,437
34 ADRIA AIRWAYS d.o.o.	TRANSP. AND STORAGE	156,416	99.1	157,794	367	58,107
35 KOLIČEVO KARTON. d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	153,201	93.2	164,369	385	107,397
36 PRESKOK d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	148,720	99.0	150,206	7	576,603
37 GROUP CONTITECH	MANUFACTURING	147,927	97.3	152,020	596	57,440
38 GROUP LUKA KOPER	TRANSP. AND STORAGE	145,554	68.8	211,438	1,073	116,045
39 GROUP DOMEL HOLDING	MANUFACTURING	129,391	92.8	139,358	1,236	43,151
40 GROUP CABLEX	MANUFACTURING	126,098	95.6	131,886	2,543	17,938
41 GROUP LES-MMS	RETAIL TRADE	120,067	57.5	208,633	1,266	44,478
42 Droga Kolinska d.d.	MANUFACTURING	117,326	66.2	177,189	471	78,204
43 GROUP ELRAD INTERNATIONAL	MANUFACTURING	114,762	92.7	123,738	1,532	26,104
44 NOVEM CAR INTERIOR DESIGN d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	113,780	99.9	113,877	698	31,782
45 GROUP ETI	MANUFACTURING	109,317	92.5	118,229	1,680	25,828
46 VALIANT d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	107,880	98.8	109,194	6	282,781
47 GROUP AKRAPOVIČ GROUP	MANUFACTURING	105,255	99.0	106,323	946	57,541

Company/Group name	Sector	Exports (000 EUR)	% of foreign sales	Sales (000 EUR)	Number of employees	Value-added per employee (EUR)
48 DANFOSS TRATA. d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	105,091	94.1	111,656	441	82,720
49 GROUP ISKRAEMECO	MANUFACTURING	104,441	97.5	107,117	775	41,856
50 GROUP TRIMO	MANUFACTURING	103,770	89.1	116,505	547	40,823
51 GROUP RASTODER	RETAIL TRADE	103,200	83.0	124,385	50	389,951
52 Trelleborg Slovenija, d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	99,067	85.2	116,327	811	52,106
53 GROUP PLASTA	MANUFACTURING	94,924	72.0	131,841	749	51,855
54 PAPIRNICA VEVČE d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	94,582	97.2	97,273	261	45,233
55 GROUP KOVINTRADE	RETAIL TRADE	94,029	50.9	184,693	351	46,764
56 KNAUF INSULATION, d.o.o., Škofja Loka	MANUFACTURING	92,792	79.1	117,375	391	97,025
57 PALFINGER d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	91,722	94.8	96,746	546	48,128
58 GROUP CALCIT DP	MINING	89,381	89.5	99,866	221	119,394
59 GROUP TPV	MANUFACTURING	84,690	55.4	152,961	1,115	31,903
60 ŠTORE STEEL d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	84,157	69.1	121,756	525	58,118
61 STARKOM d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	83,690	97.7	85,651	300	54,968
62 Adient Slovenj Gradec d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	82,447	97.9	84,216	639	36,730
63 GROUP VIPAP	MANUFACTURING	81,703	89.1	91,669	469	24,192
64 BAYER d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	81,045	65.8	123,251	121	132,782
65 GROUP SWATYCOMET	MANUFACTURING	80,319	92.3	87,051	830	40,777
66 ebm-papst Slovenija d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	78,425	98.6	79,508	448	28,942
67 DINOS d.d.	UTILITIES	77,170	56.2	137,371	301	50,821
68 GROUP JUB-H	MANUFACTURING	75,884	71.4	106,290	742	38,829
69 FILC d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	75,743	94.1	80,462	313	107,064
70 GKN Driveline Slovenija, d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	75,194	90.8	82,795	402	50,854
71 GROUP ISKRA MEHANIZMI HOLDING	MANUFACTURING	74,455	89.1	83,543	516	38,974
72 GROUP ELAN	MANUFACTURING	74,156	90.4	82,011	794	31,728
73 GROUP INTERBLOCK	MANUFACTURING	73,003	84.9	85,993	350	135,289
74 GROUP PALOMA	MANUFACTURING	71,075	82.7	85,927	653	29,553
75 GROUP FRUTAROM ETOL	MANUFACTURING	70,172	88.2	79,568	317	no data
76 ARCONT d.d. Gornja Radgona	MANUFACTURING	67,536	99.0	68,199	686	29,719
77 ITW Appliance Components d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	67,480	86.4	78,071	324	72,594
78 GROUP ANTICUS	OTHER SERVICES	61,486	86.7	70,925	114	84,144
79 SILKEM PLUS d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	61,083	92.7	65,916	196	69,243
80 LJUBLJANSKE MLEKARNE d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	60,877	36.3	167,608	557	53,143
81 TBP d.d.	MANUFACTURING	60,550	99.8	60,666	829	30,002
82 BRAVOPHONE d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	60,500	100.0	60,500	1	317,066
83 GROUP DON DON	MANUFACTURING	60,204	67.5	89,135	1,439	19,284
84 GORIČANE, d.d. Medvode	MANUFACTURING	59,489	88.1	67,516	204	59,659
85 Continental Adria d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	58,033	68.2	85,042	29	104,118
86 GROUP STEKLARNA HRASTNIK	MANUFACTURING	55,362	96.1	57,629	680	42,846
87 GROUP INTERSPORT	RETAIL TRADE	54,056	53.5	101,128	1,039	17,506
88 TTK d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	53,740	88.5	60,727	202	60,046
89 GROUP ISKRA	MANUFACTURING	52,683	64.0	82,344	1,164	31,745
90 GROUP MEDIS INTAGO	RETAIL TRADE	50,974	61.0	83,618	243	90,868
91 KOMPAS d.d.	OTHER SERVICES	50,478	67.0	75,330	190	42,021
92 AVTO TRIGLAV d.o.o., Ljubljana	RETAIL TRADE	50,003	25.8	194,060	87	80,566
93 INOTHERM d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	49,256	93.9	52,479	237	93,479
94 GROUP PLASTOFORM	MANUFACTURING	48,840	69.0	70,766	599	43,074
95 GROUP INTEREUROPA	TRANSP. AND STORAGE	48,618	32.4	149,889	1,328	31,721
96 ETA d.o.o. Cerklje	MANUFACTURING	48,392	96.4	50,225	891	29,248
97 FOTONA d.o.o.	MANUFACTURING	47,876	98.8	48,480	248	94,300
98 Astellas Pharma d.o.o.	RETAIL TRADE	46,816	80.5	58,139	41	132,524
99 LIVAR, d.d.	MANUFACTURING	46,010	82.0	56,121	528	36,483
100 GROUP ALPINA	MANUFACTURING	44,305	78.0	56,833	1,442	14,058

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is a pioneering European grower of organic hemp, a trusted producer and supplier of superior cannabidiol **CBD**.

What makes **CBD PHARM** 100% natural are the certified seeds, the exceptionally fertile European soil, and our knowledge of organic farming. When it comes to harvesting, we are all about traditional methods. **CBD PHARM** is meticulous in ensuring the maximum levels of beneficial elements are preserved in every step of the process.



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