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Edition South East Europe

Discover Slovenia

July 2019

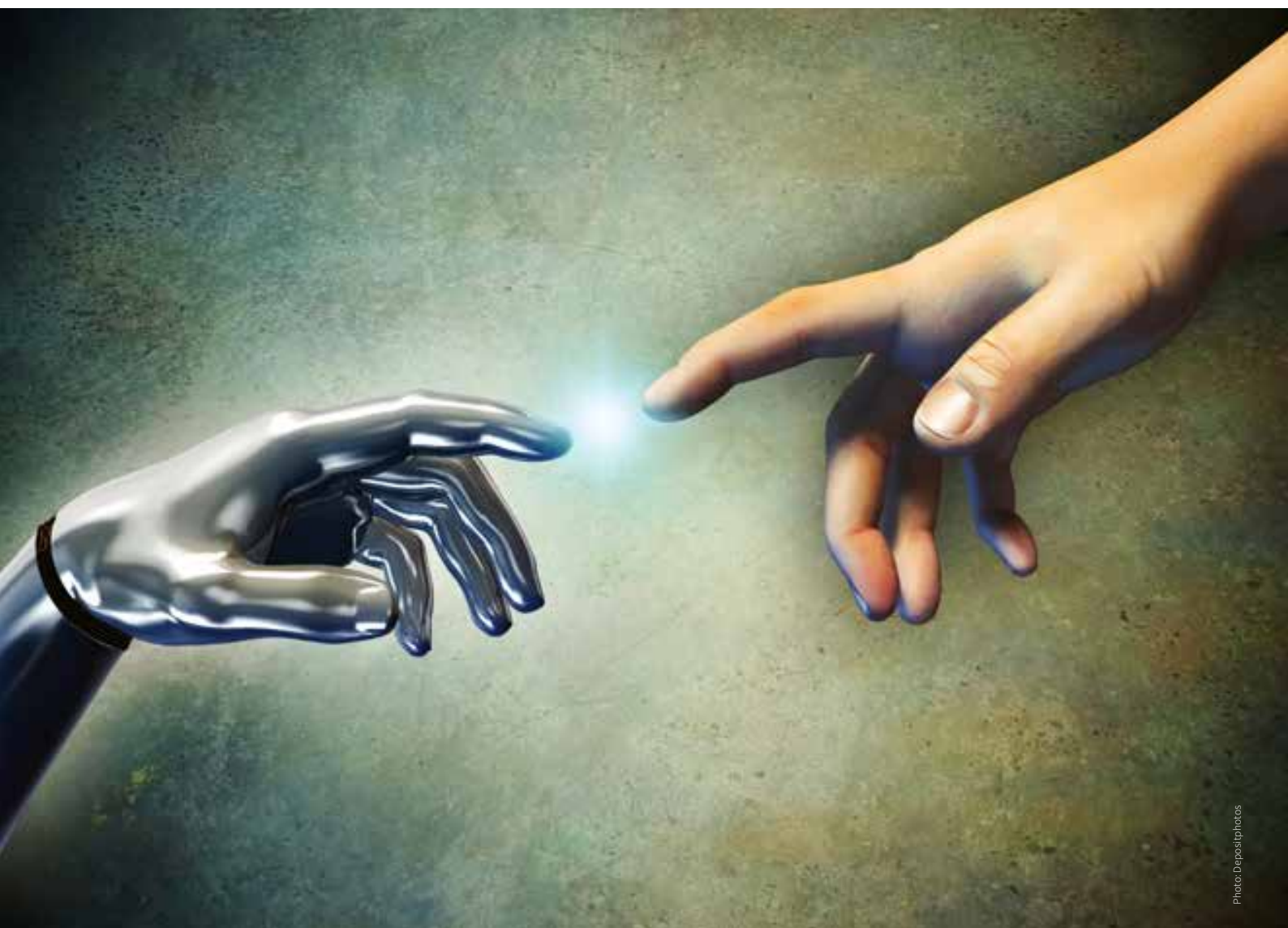


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Discover Slovenia

Edition South East Europe

July 2019

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THE WORLD OF INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS AND ELECTROTECHNICAL PRODUCTS

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What's New in Slovenia?

The fact that there's nothing new is actually good news. For the sixth year in a row, Slovenia has been recording economic growth that is nearly two percentage points higher than the EU average. The growth is predicted to slow down this year, but the forecasts agree that it is still going to be higher than 3%. What lies behind these statistics?

First, the role of industry in Slovenia should be highlighted. It accounts for 24% of the GDP, which is the third highest share in the EU. Even Germany, a recognised industrial powerhouse, is behind Slovenia in terms of industry's significance for its GDP. Slovenia exports the largest portion of its industrial products, the majority of which are exported to the EU, even though exports to other countries, especially Southeast Europe, are increasing as well. But it's not only exports, as imports from these countries are growing rapidly, too.

Slovenia is also doing well in the investment sector. Two years ago, it adopted the Investment Promotion Act, which has made it considerably easier for both domestic and foreign investors to carry out new projects. Slovenia has also developed many support mechanisms to attract new investors: from financial subsidies to workforce training programmes. We are witnessing a true investment boom, which of course is also powered by demand on the global markets.

After several years of crisis, during which companies were over-leveraged, the economy tightened its belt and managed to deleverage itself. Today Slovenian companies are among the least indebted in the EU, and investment in technology and equipment has been recording substantial growth in recent years.

Domestic consumption also continues to grow. Slovenia has a high savings rate, the banks are full of cash, but purchases are increasing in all areas as well.

The price of housing has gone up significantly due to high demand, and people are now purchasing more equipment, cars, and telecommunications items, and also spending much more on travel and recreation.

Slovenia is a country in which the majority of people have a tertiary education. It has a highly-qualified workforce that has good command of digital technologies and foreign languages, making it attractive to foreign investors. Combined with a stable energy supply at competitive prices along with good infrastructure, there are numerous reasons why Slovenia is still a good place to do business.

But storm clouds are gathering, and this shouldn't be ignored. The trade war between the US and China, in which the EU is also bound to be indirectly involved, is going to undermine the world economy and, first and foremost, it is going to make international business operations more unpredictable, and hence at least more expensive or less profitable for participants like Slovenia. Even though we have a global economy in place and a trend of reducing customs duties and other obstacles to business operations between countries, recent instabilities have caused the closing of, or at least limited access to, certain markets. We also can't ignore the increasing environmental requirements that business operations must comply with. Last but not least, we must also bear in mind the shortage of skilled human resources in the pool of Central and Western Europe.

The business community has no other option but to view all this as a challenge. A challenge to introduce changes and seek new, innovative approaches to overcoming these obstacles. However, both our instincts and numerous facts supported by statistical analyses and comparisons show that the Slovenian economy is significantly better prepared for a potential recession in the next business period than it was for the crisis ten years ago.

Today Slovenian companies are among the least indebted in the EU, and investment in technology and equipment has been recording substantial growth in recent years.



Foto: Barbara Reja

Samo Hribar Milič
Editor-in-chief



Photo: www.slovenia.info / Domen Grögl



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: 2,080,908 (1 January 2019)

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: 3.3%

(Consensus Economics, June 2019)

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.

Official
gateway to
information
on Slovenia



Top Slovenian 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 190) Trading Across Borders
(WEF)

10th

(out of 190)
Resolving insolvency (DB)

12th

(out of 63)
Prices (IMD)

12th

(out of 28) Innovation
Union Scoreboard

19th

(out of 190)
Getting electricity (DB)

24th

(out of 137)
Higher Education (WEF)

34th

(out of 63) IMD World Digital
Competitiveness Ranking

35th

(out of 137)
Innovations (WEF)

35th

(out of 137) Technological
Readiness (WEF)

39th

(out of 137)
Infrastructure (WEF)

50th

(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



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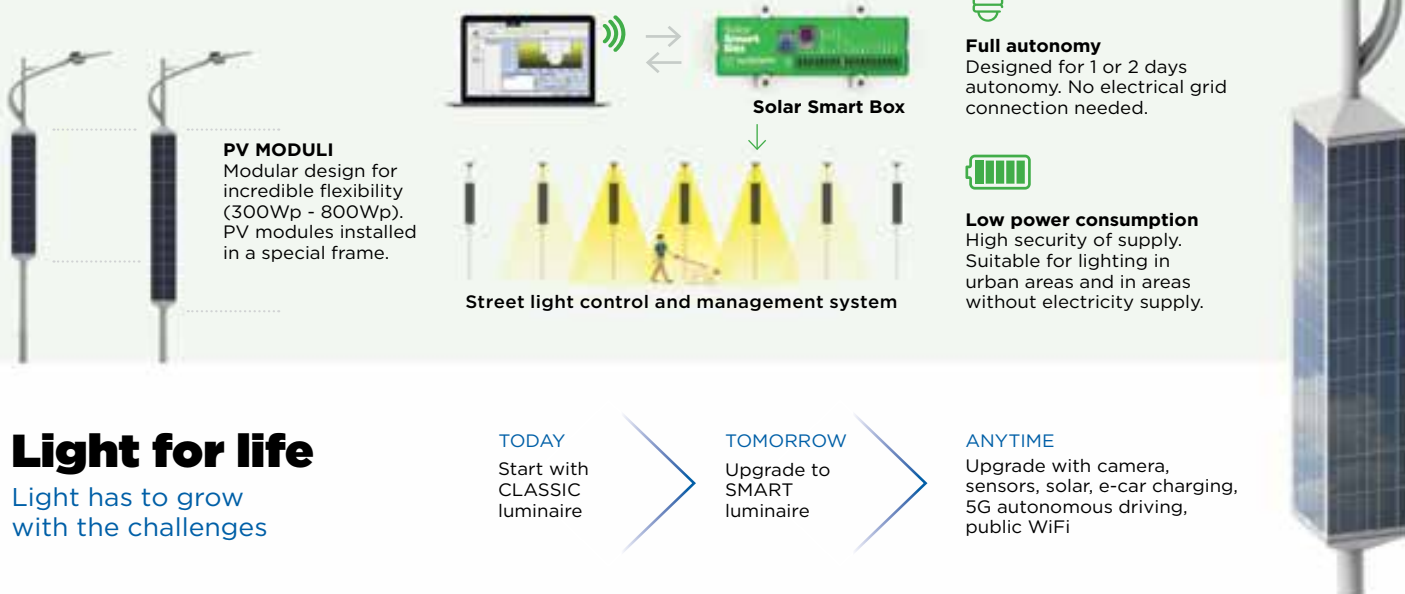
MODULAR SYSTEM

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Light has to grow with the challenges

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TOMORROW

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ANYTIME

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Be ready for tomorrow's challenges. Be LUMENOVA!



Trade With Slovenia Is on the Increase on Markets of Southeast Europe

Companies can establish contacts with the countries of Southeast Europe more easily as a result of their shared history and existing business contacts, knowledge of languages, business practices and mutual recognition of brands.

Darja Močnik, GZS Analytics

In 2018, the volume of Slovenia's trade with the SEE countries amounted to EUR 7.6 billion, or 10.5% more than in 2017.

The countries of Southeast Europe (hereinafter: SEE), which include Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Albania, are important economic partners of Slovenia both in terms of the import and export of goods, as well as inward and outward foreign direct investment. Companies can establish contacts with the countries of SEE more easily as a result of their shared history and existing business contacts, knowledge of languages, business practices and mutual recognition of brands.

In addition to the European market, SEE is the second most important market to Slovenia in terms of trade volume (including Croatia). In 2018, the volume of Slovenia's trade with the SEE countries amounted to EUR 7.6 billion, or 10.5% more than in 2017. The overall trade with the SEE countries accounts for 12.4% of Slovenia's total trade volume. In 2018, exports to SEE countries increased by 8.7%, while imports grew by 13.5%. Exports of goods to the SEE countries increased from EUR 3.6 billion in 2008 to EUR 4.6 billion in 2018 (a nominal growth of 30.4%), while imports grew from EUR 1.6 billion in 2008 to EUR 3 billion in 2018 (an 85% increase). Exports to the SEE countries account for 15% of Slovenia's overall exports, while imports from such countries account for 9.8% of the total.

The total value of trade amounted to EUR 2 billion by the end of March 2019, or 13.2% more than in the same period in 2018.

As regards the value of Slovenia's external trade, neighbouring Croatia ranked first in 2018 among the SEE countries (EUR 4.2 billion, or 6.8% of Slovenia's overall trade), followed by Serbia (EUR 1.5 billion or 2.5% of the total), Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUR 1.3 billion or 2.2% of the total), North Macedonia (EUR 307 million or 0.5% of the total), Montenegro (EUR 114.5 million), Kosovo (EUR 104.8 million) and Albania (EUR 47.5 million).

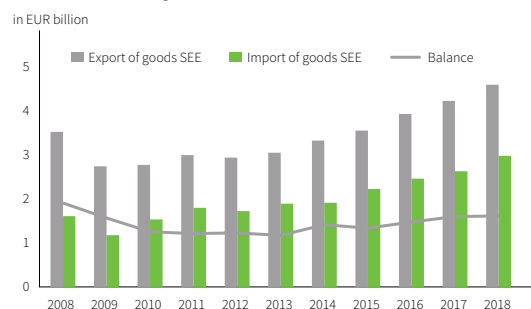
An increase in trade with the SEE countries was recorded again in the first half of 2019. The total value of trade amounted to EUR 2 billion by the end of March 2019, or 13.2% more than in the same period in 2018, of which total exports accounted for EUR 1.2 billion (an increase of 15.4%) and imports EUR 751 million (a 10% increase compared to the first quarter of 2018).

According to the latest data (for 2017), the majority of Slovenian companies were involved in Croatia among the SEE countries (a total of 12,097 companies were exporters and 11,086 mainly micro-enterprises were importers). The majority of exporters to the SEE countries came from the group of micro- and small enterprises (83%), which recorded 23% of the overall exports to the SEE. On the import side, the distribution is similar (69% of micro- and small enterprises recorded 34% of the overall imports from the SEE countries).

Total trade (exports and imports) in EUR million	2017	2018	Growth in % 2018/2017	2019 (Jan-Mar)
Total SEE	6,909.7	7,636.2	10.5	1,960.8
Albania	53.1	47.5	-10.5	13.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,250.1	1,342.9	7.4	324.4
Croatia	3,764.1	4,194.9	11.4	1,098.5
Montenegro	107.7	114.5	6.3	25.8
North Macedonia	289.3	307.0	6.1	80.4
Kosovo	102.5	104.8	2.3	25.1
Serbia	1,343.0	1,524.7	13.5	393.5

Source: SURS

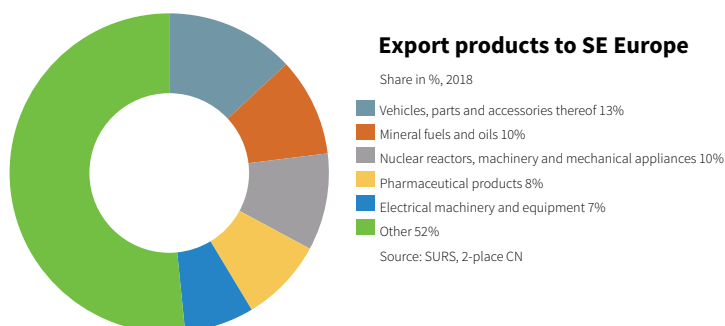
Trading of goods between Slovenia and Southeast Europe



Source: SURS

Exports (in EUR million)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Jan-Mar)
Total SEE	3,552.1	2,760.3	2,795.5	3,020.6	2,961.5	3,071.2	3,349.8	3,581.7	3,963.0	4,261.4	4,631.7	1,209.2
Albania	36.7	41.9	41.4	39.8	37.6	35.5	33.2	36.8	44.2	47.5	43.8	11.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	642.2	513.8	556.8	593.9	583.5	557.3	564.0	611.3	678.5	732.5	782.6	189.0
Croatia	1,723.9	1,282.0	1,264.4	1,424.0	1,356.7	1,484.3	1,775.0	1,864.3	2,076.0	2,256.6	2,511.1	678.3
Montenegro	126.1	91.2	86.2	88.6	85.3	80.9	70.2	76.3	86.2	96.2	100.4	22.8
North Macedonia	183.7	163.1	144.6	152.8	155.1	168.2	166.2	161.9	175.6	185.2	192.6	47.7
Kosovo	85.7	88.7	89.0	91.8	88.7	80.3	83.0	88.5	93.9	101.3	103.3	24.7
Serbia	753.9	579.7	613.0	629.7	654.6	664.8	658.3	742.5	808.7	842.1	898.0	235.1

Imports (in EUR million)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Jan-Mar)
Total SEE	1,621.1	1,185.9	1,546.2	1,813.1	1,735.3	1,906.4	1,929.2	2,242.5	2,478.3	2,648.3	3,004.5	751.5
Albania	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.5	5.6	3.7	1.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	311.7	236.4	330.0	396.4	364.8	351.5	356.8	385.6	433.5	517.6	560.3	135.4
Croatia	836.3	642.5	793.2	926.7	943.5	1,069.0	1,084.1	1,371.1	1,506.9	1,507.5	1,683.9	420.1
Montenegro	40.1	17.6	26.3	27.0	25.7	21.0	12.4	8.8	10.5	11.5	14.1	3.0
North Macedonia	45.7	24.9	32.8	39.9	35.1	50.7	58.6	74.1	86.3	104.1	114.4	32.7
Kosovo	3.2	2.7	5.9	5.9	1.6	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.4	1.2	1.5	0.3
Serbia	383.3	261.4	357.3	416.5	364.0	411.9	415.4	400.2	438.3	500.9	626.6	158.4



Record levels of trade with Croatia

Trade in goods between Slovenia and Croatia has grown for the seventh consecutive year, both in terms of imports and exports. In value terms, Slovenia has exported almost 50% more goods to Croatia by over the last decade, while imports from Croatia have doubled. The value of Slovenian goods exported to Croatia amounted to EUR 25 billion in 2018, or 11.2% more than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 1.7 billion, or 11.5% more than in 2017. Croatia's entry into the EU also contributed significantly to the higher trade growth rates. Croatia ranks third among Slovenia's export partners, and fourth among its import partners.

In 2018, Slovenia recorded a trade surplus of EUR 827 million with Croatia. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia again saw exports of goods to Croatia rise by 22.6%, while imports increased by 13.5%.

The products exported by Slovenian companies to Croatia in 2018 are ranked as follows in value terms: petroleum oils or oils obtained from bituminous minerals (9.1% of total exports), passenger cars (8%), electricity (5.7%), medicinal products (5.5%), aluminium - raw (2.6%), and motor vehicles for the carriage of goods (1.7%). The largest exports from Croatia to Slovenia included electricity (10% of total imports), motor vehicle parts and accessories (5.9%), aluminium panels and sheets (4.3%), petroleum oils or oils obtained from bituminous minerals (2.4%), and medicinal products (2%). There are more than 12,000 companies in Slovenia that export to Croatia (of which 93% are micro- and small enterprises) and more than 11,000 importers, with the majority of them employing less than 50 people.

In value terms, the amount of goods Slovenia exported to Croatia rose by almost 50% over the last decade, while imports from Croatia doubled.



Slovenia has consistently recorded a trade surplus with Serbia, which amounted to **EUR 271 million** in 2018.

Trade surplus with Serbia

For the fifth consecutive year, trade in goods between Slovenia and Serbia has been on the increase, while a growth in the import of goods has been recorded in the past four years. In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to Serbia amounted to EUR 898 million, or 6.6% higher than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 627 million, or one-fourth higher than in 2017. Among Slovenia's partners, Serbia ranked seventh in 2018 as regards the export of goods, and thirteenth as regards imports. Over the years Slovenia has recorded a trade surplus with Serbia, which amounted to EUR 271 million in 2018. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia's export of goods to Serbia rose by 7.4%, and its imports by 3.6%.

In 2018, the largest exports of Slovenian companies to Serbia included passenger cars (12.2% of total exports to Serbia), medicinal products for retail sales (8%), tractors and other towing vehicles as well as motor vehicles for the carriage of goods (3%). The most common imports from Serbia to Slovenia included aluminium panels (12% of total imports), medical apparatus and equipment (9%), refrigerators and refrigerating equipment (3.5%), and hot-rolled flat iron products (3.3%). Almost 3,500 Slovenian companies are exporters to Serbia (including over 500 large and medium-sized enterprises), and more than 2,000 companies are importers from Serbia (including approximately 400 large and medium-sized companies).

In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to North Macedonia was **EUR 193 million**, or 4% more than in 2017.



Slightly over **3,700** Slovenian companies are exporters to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Imports of goods from Bosnia and Herzegovina rose by as much as 80% over the decade

Trade in goods between Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has recorded growth for the sixth year in a row. Over the past ten years, Slovenia has seen its export of goods to Bosnia and Herzegovina rise by 22%, while its imports have grown by 80%. In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to Bosnia and Herzegovina was EUR 783 million, or 6.8% more than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 560 million, or 8.2% more than in 2017. In terms of the value of the export of Slovenian goods, Bosnia and Herzegovina ranked tenth in 2018 among all partner countries, and sixteenth in terms of the import of goods. Throughout the years, Slovenia has recorded a trade surplus with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which amounted to EUR 222 million in 2018. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia's export of goods to Bosnia and Herzegovina rose by 5.2%, and its imports rose by 2.5%.

Slovenia's exports to Kosovo have increased for the sixth year in a row, while imports have grown over the past two years.

In 2018, the largest exports of Slovenian companies to Bosnia and Herzegovina included passenger cars (8% of total exports to Bosnia and Herzegovina), petroleum oils or oils obtained from bituminous minerals (8%), medicinal products in retail sales (7%), and tanned leather (5%). The largest imports from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Slovenia included pumps and compressors (10% of total imports), aluminium oxide (7%), insulated wires and cables (5%), and leather products (5%). Some 3,700 Slovenian companies are exporters to Bosnia and Herzegovina (including around 450 large and medium-sized enterprises) and 1,300 companies are importers (including around 270 large and medium-sized enterprises).



Imports of goods from North Macedonia have increased this year

Trade in goods between Slovenia and Macedonia (renamed North Macedonia in February 2019) has recorded a growth trend for the fourth consecutive year. In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to North Macedonia was EUR 193 million, or 4% more than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 144 million, or 10% more than in 2017. In terms of the export of goods from Slovenia to North Macedonia, the latter ranked twenty-fifth among the partner countries and twenty-eighth in terms of imports. Slovenia has consistently recorded a surplus with North Macedonia. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia's exports of goods to North Macedonia rose by 5.8%, while its imports increased by 33.7%. Some 1,500 Slovenian companies are exporters to North Macedonia (including around 320 large and medium-sized enterprises), and 359 companies are importers (including around 100 large and medium-sized enterprises).



A high trade surplus with Kosovo

In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to Kosovo was EUR 103 million, or 2% more than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 1.5 million, or 24% more than in 2017. Slovenia's exports to Kosovo have increased for the sixth year in a row, while imports have grown over the past two years. In terms of exports of goods, Kosovo ranked thirty-second in 2018 among all Slovenian partner countries, and eighty-sixth in terms of imports. Throughout the years, Slovenia has recorded a large surplus with

Kosovo. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia saw exports of goods to Kosovo rise by 23.5%, and imports by 75.6%. There are some 800 companies in Slovenia exporting to Kosovo, and over 60 importers.



Import growth exceeded export growth in Slovenian trade in goods with Montenegro in 2018

In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to Montenegro was EUR 100 million, or 4.3% more than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 14.1 million, or 23.3% more than in 2017. Slovenia's exports to Montenegro have increased for the fifth year in a row, while imports have grown since 2016. In terms of the value of the export of Slovenian goods, Montenegro ranked thirty-fourth in 2018 among all partner countries, and fifty-fourth in terms of the import of goods. Throughout the years, Slovenia has recorded a surplus with Montenegro. In the first quarter of 2019, exports of Slovenian goods to Montenegro rose by 6.3%, and imports of goods by 6.2%. Some 1,200 Slovenian companies are exporters to Montenegro and over 1,300 companies are importers, mainly micro- and small enterprises.



Trade with Albania worth EUR 50 million

In 2018, the value of Slovenian exports to Albania was EUR 44 million, or 7.7% less than in 2017, while the value of imports reached EUR 3.7 million, or 34% less than in 2017. In terms of the export of goods, Albania ranked fifty-first in 2018 among all Slovenian partner countries, and seventy-third in terms of the import of goods. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia's export of goods to Albania rose by 24.4%, and imports by 134%. There are some 300 companies in Slovenia exporting to Albania, and over 50 importers.

Services: the dominance of travel and transport services

According to provisional and unaudited figures, Slovenia's trade in services with the SEE countries accounted for EUR 2 billion in 2018, or 8.3% more than in the previous year. Slovenia records a services trade deficit with SEE countries (EUR 166 million in 2018). The export of services to the SEE countries accounts for 11.2% of Slovenia's total exports of services, while on the import side this share amounts to 21.8%. In 2018, exports of services to the SEE countries increased by 6.2%, to nearly EUR 900 million. The export of travel

services (spending by tourists from SEE countries in Slovenia) represents the major part of services exports (just under half of the overall total to SEE countries), followed by exports of transport services (one sixth), telecommunications and computer services (nearly 10%), and other business services (17%). Exports of transport services mean, in particular, a service provided for clients from SEE countries by a logistics chain comprised of the Port of Koper, Slovenian Railways, road hauliers and other supporting links in logistics.

According to the data for 2017, Croatia is the most important for travel services among the SEE countries (due to spending by Croatian tourists in Slovenia), accounting for 62.3% of overall services exports to Croatia, followed by the export of transport services. Travel is also the most important export service from Slovenia to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia (ranging between 25% and 30% of overall services exports from Slovenia to each country). In Albania and Kosovo, however, exports of telecommunication and computer services prevail in services exports, followed by transport services.

In 2018, imports of services from SEE countries increased by 10.2%, to nearly EUR 1 million. The main import services include transport services (two fifths of total imports of services from SEE), travel by Slovenian tourists as well as telecommunication and computer services and other business services (ranging between 15% and 17% of the overall services imports from SEE).

According to the data for 2017, Slovenia's travel services imports are highest for Croatia among the SEE countries (due to spending by Slovenian tourists in Croatia), accounting for 54.1% of overall services imports from Croatia, followed by transport services imports. Travel services are also the most important export services present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Imports of telecommunication and transport services are the largest in Serbia, North Macedonia and Kosovo. The import of transport services is Slovenia's most important import service with regard to Albania.

Slovenian foreign direct investments in the region

In 2018, Slovenia's outward direct investments in SEE countries amounted to EUR 4,171 million, or 4.2% more than in 2017. This represented more than two thirds of all of Slovenia's foreign direct investments. Croatia was once again ranked first in 2018 with respect to the value of Slovenian outward foreign direct investments. According to data from the Bank of Slovenia, the value of Slovenian investments in Croatia stood at EUR 1,951 million at the end of 2018 (a 7.3% increase on 2017). The share of Slovenian investments in Croatia relative to total Slovenian foreign investments is 32.2%.

In the last decade, the majority of countries from SEE have ranked in the top places among all targeted investment destinations for Slovenian companies. After Croatia comes Serbia, where in 2018 the value of Slovenian investments amounted to EUR 963 million

Slovenia records a services trade deficit with SEE countries.

In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia saw the export of goods to Montenegro rise by 6.3% and imports by 6.2%.

In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia's goods exports to Albania rose by 24.4%, and imports by 134%.

Croatia was once again ranked first in 2018 with respect to the value of Slovenian outward foreign direct investments.

In 2018, inward direct investments from SEE countries in Slovenia increased by more than one tenth.

(16.9% of all Slovenian outward foreign investments). Serbia was followed Bosnia and Herzegovina with EUR 525 million (8.7% share), North Macedonia with EUR 383 million (6.3% share), while Kosovo is ranked eighth with EUR 174 million of investments and Montenegro ninth with 157 million. Albania is ranked twenty-fourth with EUR 18 million of Slovenian investments. The largest increase in Slovenian investment in 2018 was to Croatia, where a 7.3% growth in direct investments was recorded relative to 2017, followed by a 7% growth in North Macedonia, 3.8% growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Slovenia's investments decreased in Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro.

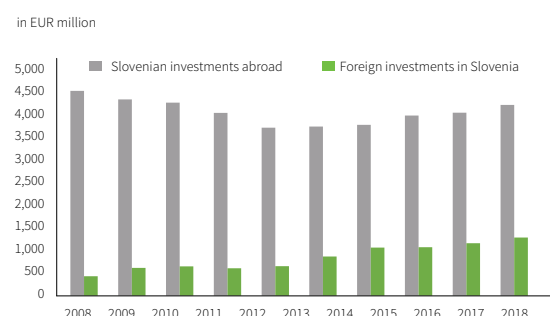
Slovenian foreign direct investments in selected countries (in EUR million)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Croatia	1,487	1,626	1,819	1,951
Albania	21	10	18	18
Bosnia and Herzegovina	481	515	505	525
Montenegro	157	173	157	157
North Macedonia	396	416	358	383
Serbia	996	1,015	962	963
Kosovo	198	188	183	174
SEE countries	3,735	3,942	4,003	4,171
Of total outward FDI	68.4%	69.0%	67.1%	68.8%

Source: Bank of Slovenia, July 2019

On the other hand, the inward direct investments of SEE countries in Slovenia increased in 2018 by 10.8% to EUR 1,270 million, or 8.4% of all foreign direct investments in Slovenia. Direct investments were the largest from Croatia (EUR 990 million), accounting for 6.5% of all direct investments in Slovenia. The latter increased 4.4% compared to 2017. This was followed by Serbian direct investments in Slovenia (EUR 172 million), investments by Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUR 70 million), Montenegro and North Macedonia (approximately EUR 19 million). Croatia ranks sixth among major investors in Slovenia, followed by investments from Serbia (rank 13), Bosnia and Herzegovina (rank 16), Montenegro (rank 27) and North Macedonia (rank 31).

Investments with SEE



Source: Bank of Slovenia



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Foreign direct investments in Slovenia (in EUR million)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Croatia	927	895	948	990
Albania	0	0	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	32	57	56	70
Montenegro	7	11	18	20
North Macedonia	6	8	18	18
Serbia	81	87	106	172
Kosovo	0	0	0	0
SEE countries	1,053	1,058	1,146	1,270
Of total outward FDI	9.1%	8.2%	8.2%	8.4%

Source: Bank of Slovenia, July 2019

The opportunities for Slovenian companies on the markets of SEE are mainly in the areas of:

- energy and renewable energy sources (hydro, wind and solar energy, oil and gas),
- ecological projects (environmental protection, systems for building wastewater treatment plants, sewerage, rehabilitation of degraded industrial areas),
- infrastructure (transport connections) and construction, car industry,
- agriculture and food industry,
- tourism (seaside, mountain and historical-cultural tourism),
- retail,
- digitalisation of public administration.

Who's Who in SEE countries

Reference Slovenian companies on the markets of SEE countries:

- **Croatia:** Petrol, Gorenje, Triglav Osiguranje, Impol (TLM Šibenik), Krka, GEN-I, LTH, Calcit, Perutnina Ptuj (Pipo Čakovec), AquafilCRO (subsidiary of AquafilSLO), Interenergo, Helios, Lesnina, Autocommerce, Intereuropa, Fragmat, Jub, Lisca, Sportina, Kras Sežana, Terme Olimia (owner of Terme Tuhelj).
- **Serbia:** Gorenje, Štark, Impol Seval, Don Don, Perutnina Ptuj, Triglav, NLB Banka and Mercator.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Petrol, Krka, Boxmark Leather, Lek, Goodyear Dunlop Sava Tires, Cablex-T, Alpina, Gorenje, Kolektor Sikom, Iskra mehanizmi, Fructal, Mahle Letrika, ADK, NLB.
- **North Macedonia:** Zavarovalnica Triglav, Zavarovalnica Sava, NLB Banka, TAB MAK, Gorenje, Krka-Farma, LTH Learnica, KB Prvo penzijsko društvo, Perutnina Ptuj, Intereuropa, Salus, Iskratel, Iskra, Štubelj, Igea, Podgorka (Celjske mesnine, Celjske mlekarne), Kras, Eta.
- **Albania:** Gen-I, Gorenje, Krka, Mercator

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Economic relations between Slovenia and the countries of the Western Balkans are very good.



Photo Depositphoto

In Southeast Europe, Slovenian Products Are Synonymous With Quality

In Southeast Europe, Slovenian products are synonymous with quality and Slovenian brands enjoy a good reputation. The upward trend in Slovenia's merchandise trade with the countries in the region continued in 2018.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

Economic cooperation between Slovenia and the countries of the Western Balkans is expected to further strengthen.

"Economic relations between Slovenia and the countries of the Western Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) are very good," according to the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ). For example, Slovenia is one of Kosovo's largest trading partners, and Slovenian business contacts are established throughout the region. Slovenian products are synonymous with quality, and Slovenian brands enjoy a good reputation. Likewise, the countries of SE Europe rank at the top of Slovenia's targeted investment destinations.

Trade is up by a tenth

While the Slovenian economy remains predominantly focused on the EU (including Croatia), the SE Europe region is its second most important partner in terms of merchandise trade volume. The upward trend

in Slovenia's merchandise trade with the countries in the region continued in 2018. The trade volume amounted to EUR 3.4 billion in 2018, up 9.4% on 2017. In 2018, exports to the region increased by 8.5%, while imports increased by 15.7%. Slovenian exports reached EUR 2.1 billion, and imports 1.3 billion.

With regard to Slovenia's international trade in 2018, Serbia ranked first among the countries of the Western Balkans (EUR 1.52 billion), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUR 1.34 billion), Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Albania.

In which areas has there been progress?

"Economic cooperation between Slovenia and the countries of the Western Balkans in merchandise trade, investments, and trade in services is expected to further strengthen in all promising areas", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, adding that

economic forecasts for individual countries in the region are promising as well. The economic growth of the countries in the region is forecast at 3.7% for 2019 and 2020 (last year it stood at 3.8%, and was based primarily on the growth of public spending and net exports).

Increased connections and joint market appearances

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes that increased connections between individual business entities and joint foreign market appearances would further benefit Slovenia's economic activity and strengthen economic cooperation.

The Ministry added that the Western Balkans markets cannot be considered as a whole, but rather as individual state economies with which Slovenia has been cooperating intensively for years. Practically all major and successful Slovenian companies are present in these markets, "while increasing numbers of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises have recently started entering the market, focusing on niche markets and looking to internationalise their business in the face of competition."

Obstacles are not insurmountable

"With ongoing internationalisation, Slovenian businesses can encounter obstacles in foreign markets, including those of the Western Balkans. These range widely from administrative and linguistic obstacles to insufficient financing, but are not insurmountable", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pointed out.

Businesses should enter foreign markets prepared, researching the market and checking their foreign partners' credentials, the Ministry added. For help, individual businesses entities can also turn to Slovenian diplomatic and consular representative offices in all countries of the Western Balkans.

Increasing numbers of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises have recently started entering the market, focusing on niche markets.

Energy, environment, infrastructure

Slovenia enjoys a number of competitive advantages in SE Europe due to the region's shared history, familiarity with business practices, knowledge of languages, and brand recognition and business contacts from the past. "There are many opportunities for the Slovenian economy in various areas of cooperation, such as energy and renewable energy sources, environmental protection, infrastructure, agriculture and food industry, tourism, and digitalisation," according to the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Slovenia has diplomatic and consular representative offices in all countries of the Western Balkans.



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Niko Herakovič
from the
Ljubljana Faculty
of Mechanical
Engineering argues
that the concept of
the factories of the
future is conceived
“very lightly.”



Photo: Depositphoto

A Factory in Which We'll Build Future on Our Own

In June 2019, a smart factory demo centre opened in Slovenia. This is the only such centre in the country, whose goal is to demonstrate the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies in a real industrial environment.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

Among others, the Factory of the Future Strategic Development-Innovation Partnership (SRIP ToP) promotes cooperation in the education-research-industry triangle.

A smart factory demo centre was built in the Handling, Assembly and Pneumatics Laboratory (LASIM) at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Mechanical Engineering with the financial support of Kolektor Group. The centre was launched in early June this year, and is the only such demo centre in Slovenia. The goal is to demonstrate the innovative use and implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies and the smart factory concept in a real industrial environment.

Experts claim that it will be vital to know artificial intelligence in the future, because it will upgrade all current technologies. According to Niko Herakovič, Head of the LASIM lab and the Department of Manufacturing Technologies and Systems at the Ljubljana Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, artificial intelligence will upgrade everything we have and help

people offer solutions faster than they would be able to on their own. Among the obstacles preventing the faster, more effective and large-scale introduction of such changes, he drew attention to the often superficial understanding of what a smart factory actually is.

Because it is conceived “very lightly”, and especially because everyone understands it in their own way, now entrepreneurs have the opportunity not only to visit but also spend some time at the smart factory demo centre. The goal is to attract as many companies as possible, and to bring the concept of open innovation to life in practice.

Factories of the future

Among others, the Director of the Factory of the Future Strategic Development-Innovation

Partnership (SRIP ToP), Rudi Pajntar from the Jožef Stefan Institute, is in charge of cooperation in the education-research-industry triangle. At the Future Factories event held at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the end of May, Pajntar noted that the digital revolution had already impacted the manufacturing industry. The digital connectivity of all participating stakeholders influences the value added and transforms the manufacturing environment. He sees the future role of factories not only in manufacturing products, but also (and primarily) in accumulating experience and transferring knowledge to new generations.

Future skills

The Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive manager, Samo Hribar Milič, reported that the value added per employee in Slovenian industry averaged around EUR 45,000 last year and that over EUR 60,000 per employee were generated by companies that together achieved EUR 10 billion in exports.

As pointed out by the General Manager of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sonja Šmuc, the goal of the economy is to increase the value added per employee to EUR 60,000 by 2025, and therefore it is crucial to invest in human resources and enhance the skills of staff. "It's vital for us to be able to predict which skills we'll need in the future," she added.

Domel, Yaskawa, Gorenje Orodjarna and Iskratel: The importance of young people and open innovation

According to the Chairman of the Board of Domel Holding, Matjaž Čemažar, Domel is pursuing the goal of raising the added value per employee by implementing digitalisation in business and manufacturing processes, and by connecting artificial intelligence with manufacturing processes. In his opinion the biggest current challenge is applying artificial



Photo: KrekArt

intelligence to manufacturing processes. In turn, he believes the biggest challenge for Slovenian industry in general is connected with the education and training of young people. Completely different expertise than that currently provided by the Slovenian education system will be required in the future. If you do not possess all the required expertise yourself, open innovation is the only way.

Hubert Kosler, Director of Yaskawa Europe Robotics, also highlighted the problem associated with the skills required for managing the factories of the future: both skilled people and a right company strategy are vital for this.

The goal of the business community is to increase the average value added per employee to EUR 60,000 by 2025.

Simple jobs will withdraw from Europe, in as much as they have not already. Asia is driving technological development forward, but we should not be pessimistic because Europe has the tradition and expertise required, it simply needs to invest in development.

The owner "Bodočnost d.o.o. Maribor" is selling an administrative-production complex encompassing an administrative building, two production halls, two warehouses, associated premises and two entrances for trucks and towing vehicles. The area of all recorded and unrecorded premises totals 2,812 m². The complex stands on 12,463 m² of land, which is divided into four cadastral parcels owned by the Republic of Serbia and used by Bodočnost d.o.o. Maribor. The complex is intended for different types of business activities and is located in the Mladenovac industrial park.

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- The complex can be expanded to 9,000 m² based on the urban plans

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Smart factories are not something we will achieve overnight. Some have not even mastered automation yet.

The Director of Gorenje Orodjarna, Boštjan Dokl Menih, agreed with this, adding that they dedicate special attention to training older employees. All three companies also provide scholarships for young people.

For years Kranj-based Iskratel has been cooperating successfully and closely with knowledge institutions in Slovenia and Europe, as well as countries where they sell their products, such as Russia. In April this year, they held the first Iskratel Innovation Day for secondary-school and university students, and they have engaged as partners in the socially responsible project "Inženirke in inženirji bomo" (We're Going to Be Engineers) and the initiative "SKOZ – Vsak dijak v podjetje!" (SKOZ: Every Student to the Company!) since 2018. Last year the company participated in the Slovenian Economy Open Day, which takes place under the aegis of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In addition, they are heavily involved in the Smart Cities and Communities Strategic Development-Innovation Partnership, especially in the area of

security. 5G Security (5G Varnost) is their latest "safe and smart future" project. This is a Slovenian project with international support, with the Ljubljana Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Telekom Slovenije and OSI Sistemске Integracije involved as consortium partners.

Siemens Slovenia: Digitalised production is the foundation of a smart factory

In practice, smart factories are an environment where intelligent devices, machines and equipment are interconnected into a system capable of permanent improvement and self-optimisation.

This is how a smart factory is defined by Matej Kupljenik, Head of Digital Industries at Siemens Slovenia.

According to him, the concept of connectivity is not limited only to physical production, but also includes elements of planning, logistics, development and maintenance, which it combines into an autonomous manufacturing supply chain. Digitalised production is the foundation of a smart factory. Its building blocks are

Over the past three years, a new pillar of Kolektor Group has been taking shape at an accelerated pace: Kolektor Digital, which operates within the domain of smart factories of the future. Kolektor has defined five priority areas: artificial intelligence, digital twins, machine vision, robotics and a smart factory platform. Valter Leban, a member of Kolektor's Board of Directors, points out that innovation and research go hand in hand. The mission of research is to generate new knowledge about the foundations on which phenomena are based and facts are observed. In turn, the mission of innovation is to create new products, services and business models that generate economic benefits. Kolektor Digital has built a platform that is based on open innovation and combines the area-specific expertise and innovation of the corporation, the innovation of start-ups and the applied development of research institutes and universities.

Nonetheless, "it's very important that the companies' innovative development in the applied research segment is also supported by the state. A best-practice example is the GOSTOP project within the framework of SRIP ToP, in which Kolektor developed a smart factory of the future platform up to stage five of digital maturity in cooperation with the Jožef Stefan Institute, the Ljubljana Faculties of Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Computer and Information Science, and other partners," Leban explained. Before that, the corporation had achieved stage four of digital maturity, which means that they knew what was going on and why something happened. With stage five of digital maturity they will reach the stage of predictability, which means they will be able to predict what will happen. According to Leban, the last stage (i.e., stage six) remains the biggest challenge. That is when Kolektor's manufacturing process becomes completely autonomous.



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based on the digital twin concept, its production and business systems are interlinked and it has the integrated control of products and processes in place at all stages of their life cycle. The competitive advantages of smart factories are shown in the flexibility of production, which forms the basis for effective adaptations to new business models. In addition, the smart factory concept increases production effectiveness, reduces costs, increases the quality of products, and provides a high level of trackability and energy efficiency.

According to Kupljenik, the effects of digitalisation or the implementation of smart factories are currently most visible in the automobile industry, which launches highly personalised products to the market quickly, effectively and on a large scale. Smart factories entail

automatisation and a method of exchanging data in industry, which closely links automatisation with new IT solutions and integrates it into the IoT concept (the introduction of cloud-based technologies). We are talking about new digital technologies, software tools, smart devices, self-learning systems, upgraded human-machine interfaces (HMI), a high level of robotisation and the use of artificial intelligence and cognitive computing – all this constitutes the smart factory concept.

When?

Kosler told us he knows two or three companies that are building factories of the future. In turn, in Kočevje his company is introducing attributes of such a factory at the level of automatisation, but there is still a long way to go before a proper factory of the future is achieved. Yaskawa is pursuing the i3-Mechatronics concept, which they have already implemented in a factory near Tokyo and that involves a triple acceleration of production and significantly shorter supply times. It will be launched in Slovenia next year.

At the Future Factories event, representatives of the business world and scientists drew attention to the fact that automatisation is only the first step in a long process, and that it in no way makes a factory of the future alone. Because many companies have not even mastered automatisation yet, smart factories are not something we will achieve overnight.

Newly emerging technologies require skills that people do not have. The training cycles are long, which is why it is vital to adapt the education and professional-training system.



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Slovenia, the European Union's Current Star Performer

Domestic demand is becoming increasingly important for future economic trends

Bojan Ivanc, CFA, CAIA, chief economist at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Analytics Department

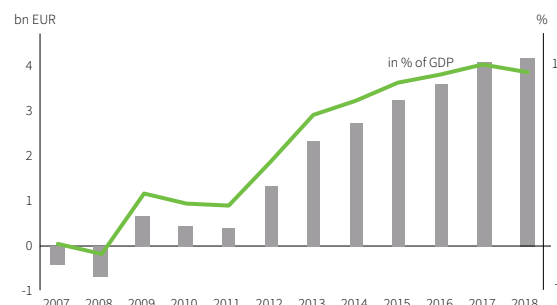
Growth in 2018 equalled **4.5%** of GDP, and is forecast to reach **3%** in 2019.

Slovenia's growth continues to exceed the EU28 average

The Slovenian economy has been growing over the last six years. In the first quarter of 2019, Slovenia recorded a relatively high economic growth of 3.2% and an even higher seasonally adjusted growth, standing at 3.7% (mainly due to the difference in the number of working days). 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 (2%) 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.

Trade balance (goods & services)

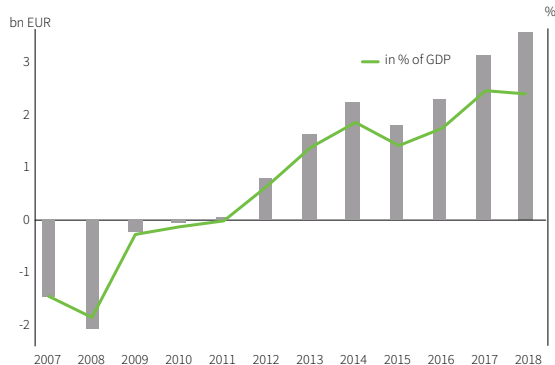


The forecasted economic growth rate of 3% in 2019 is based on the creation of jobs and growth of wages, and also on consumer optimism and investments. Lower interest rates stimulate domestic sales, particularly of durables (vehicles) and real estate, as well as construction. The financing conditions remain favourable, and alongside firms' significant internal resources from retained earnings are continuing to provide for solid growth in investment by the corporate sector in Slovenia. Trade will slow somewhat due to slightly worsened conditions for exports to the main European markets, but growth in exports in 2019 will remain at 5%. The wage growth and increase in employment are expected to additionally boost the growth of private consumption. Slovenian consumers are otherwise a bit less optimistic this year, but the optimism level remains above the average for the last few years.

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. Export growth was up 8.7% in the first quarter of 2019 and import growth was up 8.5% on the same period last year. The high growth in merchandise trade is driven by growth in industrial production, which was 4.3% higher in the first quarter. 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.

Current account balance

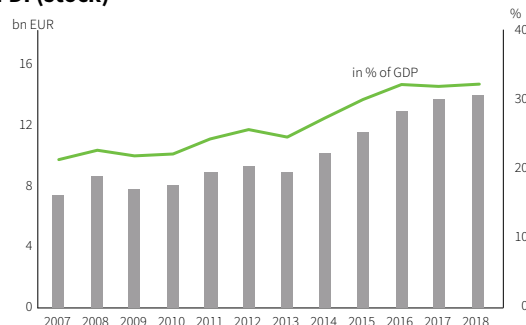


Slovenia's economy is solvent, with low levels of debt

Slovenian firms have tightened up their balance sheets and improved their organizational structures over the last decade. The net debt to EBITDA ratio declined from 6 to less than 2.3, while cash now accounts for 6.4% of assets. Value-added and the number of employees were up 7.6% and 4.6%, respectively. Value-added per employee exceeded EUR 44,000 despite the higher growth (+7.4%) in the prices

of the input commodities that Slovenia's export economy needs for production. ROE was over 9.1%, while companies earmarked 5.3% 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.

FDI (stock)

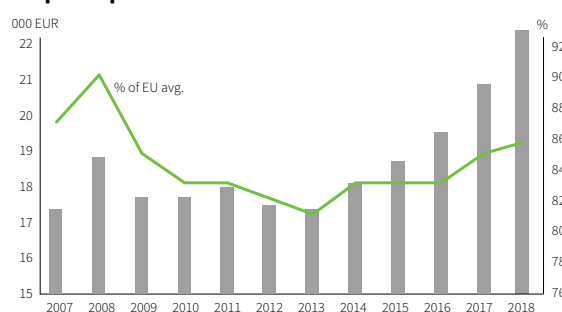


Consumers have woken up

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 labour market. According to register figures, the workforce in employment was up 3.2% both in 2018 and in the first quarter of 2019. The employment of foreign nationals is increasing, which coincides with rapid growth in construction, manufacturing and other services. In the first quarter of this year, half of all newly employed persons were employed in construction and manufacturing.

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 5.1% in 2018, 3.1 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. Slovenia's unemployment rate remained low in the first quarter of 2019, falling to 4.4% (euro area 7.8%).

GDP per capita



Labour productivity rose from EUR 34,000 to over EUR 44,000 over ten years.

R&D expenditure (mio EUR)**Wage growth increasing, real estate prices rising**

The average wage was up 4.6% in the first quarter of 2019 in both the private and public sectors. In the private sector, wage growth (+4.3%) was driven by good corporate performance, gradual growth in productivity, labour shortages and the associated upward pressure on wages, and an increase in the minimum wage. The highest wage rises were recorded in trade, accommodation and food services, and support service activities, i.e. in sectors with the largest labour shortages and the highest percentage of minimum wage workers. Wage growth in the public sector (+5.6%; general government sector +6.4) was higher owing to the agreed wage increases at the end of last year, and to a minor extent due to the minimum wage increase. Average gross wages in 2018 were 3.4% higher, and net wages were 2.9% higher. The growth in the private sector 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 2018, while growth in consumer loans stood at 11.8%. Both loans to households and corporate loans have been growing in 2019. Growth in corporate loans has been improving since December 2018, and reached 3.5% in March 2019. Year-on-year growth in housing loans increased to 5.2% in the first quarter of 2019, while year-on-year growth in consumer loans remained high at 12.8%.

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% 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.

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 3,337 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 (April SLO 1.7% and EU-28 1.7%), 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.

The ILO surveyed unemployment rate fell to below 5%

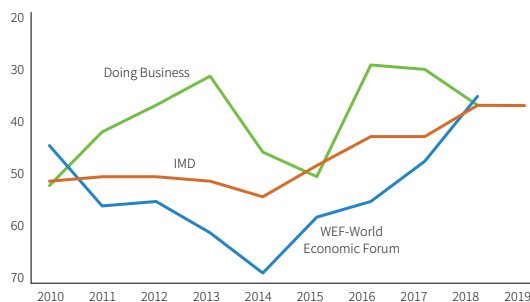
GDP growth

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. The risk of import tariffs on European cars and car parts being introduced by the US is increasing, which would hit the European economy hard. 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 over 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 labour 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, labour and capital) are the key performance determinants for Slovenian exporters. Owing to its integration into global value chains via Germany, it is

Ranking



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

important for the global flow of goods to remain 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.

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The Three Seas Initiative strives to reduce the differences with Western Europe.



Photo: Nik Jevšnik/STA

The goal of the summit was to accelerate the development of the economy and society.

Objectives Are Clear: Boosting Connectivity in All Areas

The fourth summit of the Three Seas Initiative, hosted by Slovenia and President Borut Pahor, along with the business forum that took place in parallel, made it possible to present several energy, digital, infrastructure and innovation projects that would connect the Three Seas region even more strongly in the future.

Nina Šprohar

The objectives of the Three Seas Initiative, which brings together twelve EU countries, are clear: boosting connectivity in all areas, strengthening transport routes and carrying out as many joint projects as possible to make the region between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Seas more competitive with Western Europe. The speakers at the event, which took place in Slovenia, noted that differences are visible everywhere, including in the mentality, adding that while aspirations are generally high, funding is the main problem.

There are a total of over forty joint projects, and the improvement of the electrical grid between Slovenia and Croatia, the 5G digital highway and the construction of the second railway track between Divača and Koper, are definitely among the most important ones.

“Our results are good, but they could be even better,” said the President of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Boštjan Gorjup, stressing that the goal of the summit was to accelerate both economic and social development. The Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Šarac stated that the forum opened opportunities for further cooperation and investment, and that the main goals of the initiative are promoting economic development and enhancing EU cohesion and transatlantic ties.

Open to foreign investors, including the US

At the presidential panel, the Polish President Andrzej Duda noted that alongside private-public partnerships the amount of EU funds used will be key to the

The region is open to both foreign investors and potential partners, including the US.

further development of what he believes is “currently still a considerably neglected region”. He is primarily concerned about the differences between Eastern and Western Europe, which are visible everywhere. The Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović added that the difference between the east and west can be seen not only in industry, economy and transport, but also people’s mentality. “Connectivity has been increasingly important for us since the fall of the Berlin Wall. We wish the standard of living was the same for our people as in other EU member states,” noted Kitarović, adding that they are always open to both foreign investors and potential partners.

These also include the US. The second summit of the Three Seas Initiative, held in 2017 in Warsaw, was also attended by the US President Donald Trump, and this year the US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry attended the event in Ljubljana. He “promised” Europe energy independence from Russia. However, the Director-General for Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development at the German Foreign Ministry, Miguel Berger, who did not attend the presidential panel, later explained that the situation is nonetheless not as black-and-white as presented by Perry, because “Russia is not the only country supplying natural gas to Europe”. By saying this he wanted to highlight the fact that by building the southern gas corridor, natural gas will be supplied from Azerbaijan and the connection will run through the southern EU member states. “Thus Germany will gain nothing from the billion and a half euros it will invest in the project, because the natural gas will remain in the south of the EU,” noted Berger, while stressing Germany’s intent to help in the project.

Energy independence

At the energy panel, the Slovenian Minister of Infrastructure, Alenka Bratušek, noted that the focus should be on sustainable energy and low-carbon economy, and that the goal is to remain high on the

ladder of green countries. “Time flies, the climate conditions are clear, but unfortunately not everyone is keeping their promises specified in the Paris Agreement,” she added, expressing her concerns. Bratušek highlighted the importance of joint decision-making, which should take place at the EU level rather than fall on the shoulders of individual member states. “With these efforts, we could get rid of coal, oil, gas and other environmentally unfriendly energy sources once and for all,” she concluded.

The Czech President Miloš Zeman advocated the revival of connections between the countries in the Danube, Odra and Lába basins, suggesting enhancing the initiative with a safe water supply dimension because that is one of the most pressing problems. The Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó called for words to finally turn to action because Hungarians want easier access to the alternative sources of energy. “Otherwise we’ll be forced into long-term arrangements with Russia,” he warned.

In this regard, Perry explained that the US is offering not only an alliance, but also technology and assistance in shaping the EU’s energy supply. “The US produces energy for many countries using different ways,” he stressed, adding that this would enhance the EU’s collective power and safety.

Uroš Salobir from Eles, a Slovenian electricity system operator, presented the smart-grid projects FutureFlow and Sincro.grid. “Coal will gradually disappear from the energy mix and there’ll be a big problem with flexibility. The solution may be a central storage, the use of natural gas or active consumers,” he said, adding that such a platform must be established at the

The US Secretary of Energy, Rick Perry, explained that the US is offering not only an alliance, but also technology and assistance in shaping the EU’s energy supply.

The Slovenian electricity system operator, Eles, highlighted the importance of the smart-grid projects FutureFlow and Sincro.grid, where cooperation among countries is key.

The Three Seas Initiative brings together twelve EU countries in the triangle between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black seas. It was established after economic relations between the EU and Russia had cooled down. The first summit was held in 2016 in Dubrovnik, and the next one will take place in Tallinn.



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Photo: Nina Sprohar

Countries in Southeast Europe are well aware of the importance of key strategic-development topics. They are already cooperating intensely in many areas, while at the same time seeking opportunities for further improving and strengthening infrastructure connections.

international level due to the need for decentralised solutions and diversified investment. "Cooperation and clearly set goals are key," he concluded.

Martin Novšak, the Director of GEN Energija Group, which also includes the Krško Nuclear Power Plant, stressed that nuclear power is an important energy source for Slovenia, and therefore also proposed the construction of the second block of the nuclear power plant, which would reduce emissions. At GEN Energija they think that the south-eastern EU countries are well aware of the significance of the key strategic-development topics. "Countries are already cooperating intensely in many areas, while at the same time seeking opportunities for further improving and strengthening infrastructure connections. As one of the industries that are fundamental for the operation of developed societies, energy is undoubtedly the central meeting point that provides numerous opportunities for even closer cooperation," Novšak added.

"If we want innovations on the market, we also need innovations at the government level."

The following five innovative companies from the region presented themselves at the innovation panel: Microblink (Croatia), Vpplant (Poland), Elcom (Slovakia), Efos and Cosylab (Slovenia). Aleš Cantarutti, from the Slovenian Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, called upon them to inform the authorities in their countries what they should do and where they need to be even more active to stimulate innovation and improve the business environment. He thinks that all too often young, start-up companies receive too little attention in the EU.

According to Izet Ždralović, Microblink, which operates in most countries between the three seas, focuses on innovative infrastructure projects. "I believe we have the technology that can also reach the global level in digital identity," he said.

Mark Pleško from Cosylab called for more open markets and greater boldness, because innovations also involve some risk. "I see cooperation opportunities everywhere, 110 million people live in this area and

we have enough knowledge to form connections with anyone," he commented. Their latest project (i.e., the Centre for Advanced Cancer Treatment and Research) brings together partners from medicine, science and the business world. "We could obtain funds through the Berlin Process initiative because they plan to invest a full half a billion euros in this region's infrastructure to help it catch up with the development of other EU member states. The term "infrastructure" should cover not only roads and water supply systems, but also high-tech infrastructure," explained the director and co-owner of Cosylab. The initiative includes eight countries, with the Montenegrin Minister of Science being the driving force behind the project. "All major European research centres are helping us, and the EU decided to invest EUR 5 million in a study that will show if it makes sense to build such a high-tech centre within the region," added Pleško.

The General Manager of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sonja Šmuc, noted that the region has extensive knowledge in technical fields and the natural sciences, and that these innovations show we have a high-quality education system and are hungry for success. "But the fear of failing is still too great, and we still don't respect the innovators and entrepreneurs," said Šmuc, calling for changes in these cultural attitudes. The Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry seeks more cooperation with the government, which should make faster decisions. "If we want innovations on the market, we also need innovations at the government level," she commented. Cantarutti added that in most cases the problem is finance, but that we also have other funds available that can help entrepreneurs.

In favour of greater transport connectivity

The speakers agreed that connectivity and cooperation are the most important in transport, because it extends beyond national borders. According to EU Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc, transport connectivity is key to economic and social development.

Here, too, Eastern Europe is being neglected. "A train ride from Tallinn to Constanta takes three and a half days, whereas it only takes a day to travel the same distance from Gothenburg to Barcelona," said the Polish President Andrzej Duda, providing an example of poor transport connections. In recent years, the Three Seas region has spent a full EUR 100 billion on the development of transport connections, but the participants agreed that this is still not enough. The Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid drew attention to the related environmental issue, proposing that the transport sector be restructured in such a way that will make it not only competitive, but also clean.

Over two-thirds of goods transhipped at the Port of Koper to meet the needs of Central Europe

At the event the representatives of the Port of Koper, Slovenia's largest port, highlighted the importance of

A train ride from Tallinn to Constanta takes three and a half days, whereas it only takes a day to travel the same distance from Gothenburg to Barcelona.

Slovenia as a strategic country in terms of transport and logistics routes for the wider region. New opportunities for cooperation with the countries included in the Three Seas Initiative are opening up, especially with regard to the rail connection between the port and the mainland. In recent years, Slovenia has invested heavily in modernising its rail network.

Over two-thirds of goods are transhipped at the Port of Koper to meet the needs of Central Europe. "We literally connect Central Europe with the sea," they commented. But the Port does not make a lot of business with other countries in Southeast Europe, except Serbia. "There are still strong business ties going back to Yugoslavia, but due to poor transport connections and the vicinity of other ports it's difficult to be competitive on these markets." This is how they summed up the issue of poor transport connections.

The largest markets, on which the Port holds a majority share in container transshipment, include Hungary and Slovakia. "Our presence is also growing nicely in the Czech Republic, even though the west of the country has stronger traditional links with the ports in the north. We're also working well with Poland, especially its southern parts, where we can still offer the advantages of the Port of Koper," they reported, being aware that their success can be credited primarily to good rail connections with these countries.

Government institutions must start working together and with companies

Digital transformation and cybersecurity were the main topics discussed at the digitalisation panel. The speakers agreed that setting up a new 5G network is key to meeting the goals set in this context. Due to high data transfer speeds and high security standards this would form the basis for further development. According to the President of the Slovenian Digital Coalition and the Chairman of the Association for Information Technology and Telecommunications at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Igor Zorko, digitalisation allows us to reach beyond national borders and forge even stronger links with neighbouring countries.

"Companies need a stimulating environment and procedures that will make it possible to upgrade the infrastructure in a simple manner and adapt to changes in business models," commented the General Manager of Comtrade System Integration International, Klod Kolaro. He added that government institutions play an important role in this process. According to Kolaro, business forums form a link between the key players, allow the flow of information and the exchange of views between companies and institutions, and provide the opportunity to form connections. "Companies such as Comtrade can offer global insight and know what modern technology brings along, and can definitely transfer this to the local market. Government institutions must start working together as soon as possible and, together with technological partners, must help create innovative solutions that can also find their place on foreign markets," he added.



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Slovenian companies have a good record in infrastructure-related projects.

Construction of Various Infrastructure Projects in Full Swing in Southeast Europe

The projects, which are financed by EU cohesion funds, are also attractive for Slovenian companies.

Andreja Šalamun

Pomgrad has been interested in the markets of Southeast Europe for several years now, and has carried out a series of construction projects in the region, especially in Croatia.

“The markets of Southeast Europe are interesting for Slovenian construction companies from various aspects, because they use EU cohesion funds for infrastructure projects, which in Slovenia have already been nearly all used up,” explains Kristian Ravnič, the member of the Pomgrad management board. According to Ravnič, Slovenian companies have good references in this field, especially for the renovation and construction of water supply and sewage systems, wastewater treatment plants, and environmental projects, as well as the construction

and modernisation of the railway infrastructure, energy projects (especially the construction of hydroelectric plants), tourist accommodation and the like.

Andrej Likar, the CEO of Geoportal, also believes the infrastructure sector has great potential in the countries of Southeast Europe. He expects many new projects in the next decade, in which Slovenian companies could also be involved. “Compared to the countries of Central, Northern and Western Europe, the countries in Southeast Europe are lagging behind greatly in all sectors, including infrastructure.”

According to him, the markets of Southeast Europe offer good opportunities to participate in projects. "The drawbacks are usually connected with the way the calls for project applications are prepared and with ensuring suitable project quality and supervision," Likar notes. He believes that opportunities lie practically everywhere, at all levels of infrastructure development (i.e., the level of road, railway, maritime, and energy infrastructure as well as in environmental projects). Geoportal wants to participate in infrastructure project competitions as a consultant in consortium with other companies: "We're open to any form of cooperation with other consulting companies."

Several projects already implemented successfully

Pomgrad has been interested in the markets of Southeast Europe for several years now, and has carried out a series of construction projects in the region, especially in Croatia. "For several years now we've been trying to capture the markets in the neighbouring countries that are like our home market, and generate part of our revenues there. Therefore we're also enhancing our activities in Croatia, where two years ago we purchased a 100% share in Čakovec-based Tegra, through which we're performing quite a few activities," Ravnič explains.

Project competitions co-funded by the European Union are currently the most relevant for Pomgrad, and another important segment is competitions related to tourism infrastructure investment: "Both private and public large-scale structural engineering projects and community and transport infrastructure construction projects show market potential."

In recent years, Pomgrad has primarily been involved in tourism projects in Croatia, but it has also won its first major public procurement project: the construction of the University of Zagreb campus in Varaždin, worth EUR 11 million.

The construction of a waste management centre in Šibenik is next

Pomgrad has recently entered another project in Croatia. As the leading company in the Slovenian consortium that also includes Pomgrad and VGP Drava Ptuj, the Slovenian construction company GH Holding signed a 26.5-million-euro contract with the Šibenik-based municipal waste management company Bikarac for designing and building a waste management centre for the City of Šibenik and its surroundings. "The largest portion of funding for the project is provided by the EU Cohesion Fund, and the rest by national funds (the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency

In the next decade, many new projects are envisaged for Southeast Europe, in which Slovenian companies could also be involved.

Southeast Europe is an important market for Slovenia's national railway operator Slovenske železnice d.o.o. (SŽ), which thinks this region has great development potential.

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The scheduled Ljubljana–Belgrade, or “Sava Express”, line includes three trains a week in each direction. Via Ljubljana, Zalog, Belgrade and Sremska Mitrovica, this line connects the freight flows from Western and Central Europe with transit operations through Serbia.

Veljko Flis from the railway construction company SŽ Železniško gradbeno podjetje highlights the opportunities on the Montenegrin market.

Fund, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, and the City of Šibenik). The contractual work entails the construction of a state-of-the-art mechanical biological treatment facility, whose end products will include recycled products and energy sources that can be used again,” Ravnič reports.

The region has great development potential

Southeast Europe is also an important market for Slovenia’s national railway operator, Slovenske železnice d.o.o. (SŽ), which thinks the region has great development potential. Therefore, SI-Cargo Logistics, a subsidiary of the Slovenian railway freight operator SŽ-Tovorni promet, operates in Belgrade, which also markets cargo transport in the region that bypasses Slovenia. “In Croatia, where we have a SŽ-Tovorni promet subsidiary (i.e., SŽ-TP Podružnica Rijeka), freight transport is already operated independently by SŽ-Tovorni promet. In addition, SŽ-Tovorni promet increasingly operates as a regional integrator,” reports SŽ, adding that at the company’s initiative a scheduled freight train line between Ljubljana and Belgrade, or the “Sava Express” line, began operating in March 2018, with three trains a week in each direction. “Via Ljubljana, Zalog, Belgrade and Sremska Mitrovica, this line connects the freight flows from Western and Central Europe with transit operations through Serbia. In Ljubljana, the new train is linked to the transit operations of customers in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic and other countries that run transit through Slovenia,” SŽ explains, adding that the new service provides reliable rail transport from Ljubljana to Belgrade, a comprehensive logistics solution in one place, high-quality distribution in Slovenia and Serbia as well as their neighbouring countries organised by rail operators and other partners, as well as door-to-door freight shipping.

“The good condition of the railway infrastructure is a necessary precondition of a comprehensive high-quality transport service, and we must admit that this is far from optimal in the region,” SŽ notes.

Millions for railway infrastructure

Veljko Flis, from the railway construction company SŽ Železniško gradbeno podjetje, highlights the opportunities on the Montenegrin market. “Slovenian companies can be involved in all the envisaged railway infrastructure reconstruction and modernisation projects in this country because we have the appropriate references from Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia and even Montenegro,” he stresses. According to Flis, projects are financed through loans and EU pre-accession assistance funds. “The Podgorica-based company Železniška infrastruktura Crne Gore, which operates the rail network, utilises the loan funds granted by international financial institutions, such as the Czech Export Bank (ČEB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBDR) and European Investment Bank (EIB), as well as the pre-accession assistance funds (within the IPA and WBIF),” he reports, adding that over EUR 150 million have been invested in railway infrastructure since 2006, of which EUR 12.8 million were invested in 2018 alone.

Many more opportunities in Montenegro’s rail network

According to Flis, the rail network in Montenegro (with a total length of 330 km) is divided into three routes. The just over 169-kilometre-long line between Vrbnica and Bar is a single-track electrified line. With the 2016–2019 renovation of the line between the Serbian border and the Kos station, the train speed was increased from 50 to 80 km/h, which is also the maximum train speed in this area. Flis added that



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their company carried out two projects in this area: the reconstructions of the Trebešica and Kos stations, together with the reconstruction of the Kos–Kolašin line, which mostly runs through tunnels. The section of that line between Kos and Bar has not been renovated yet, and with its renovation a train speed of 75 to 100 km/h could be established. “The Vrhnica–Bar line is one of the most demanding in Europe in terms of maintenance and use, but it’s the most important transport route for Montenegro’s economy and, together with the Port of Bar, a freight link with Central Europe,” Flis explains.

The second route comprises the nearly 57-kilometre single-track electrified line between Nikšić and Podgorica. With the 2006–2012 renovation, the train speed along the Nikšić–Danilovgrad section was increased to 75 km/h and along the Danilovgrad–Podgorica section to 60 km/h. “The geometric characteristics of the current line allow the projected train speed of 75 to 100 km/h. Our company reconstructed the Nikšić station in this area,” reports Flis.

The third route comprises the single-track line between Podgorica and the Albanian border, with a total length of just under 25 km, which is not electrified. The geometric characteristics of the current line allow the projected train speed of 80 km/h. The train speed between Podgorica and the Tuzi station is 70 km/h and between the Tuzi station and the Albanian line it is 60 km/h.

“An analysis of the three main railway routes in Montenegro shows that its railway infrastructure is not in the best condition, which is the result of insufficient investment between 1992 and 1999, reduced freight transport during that period, as well as the inability to obtain loans,” Flis adds.

The plan is to win at least a third of the proposed projects

From 2020 to 2023, Montenegro plans to overhaul 30 km of current lines and renovate nine railway tunnels with a total investment value of EUR 36 million.

“Our business plan is to win at least a third of these projects until 2023,” Flis reports.

He further explains that the development of the rail network in Montenegro is closely linked to the Port of Bar: “The rail network development plans envisage a connection with Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the future Adriatic-Ionian rail network and a connection with Kosovo, including the construction of the Plevlja–Bijelo Polje line as a link to the Belgrade–Bar line.” Flis believes these projects are a good opportunity for his company and other Slovenian firms in Montenegro.

From 2020 to 2023, Montenegro plans to overhaul 30 km of current lines and renovate nine railway tunnels with a total investment value of EUR 36 million.

The Vrhnica–Bar line is one of the most demanding lines in Europe in terms of maintenance and use.



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The advantages of Slovenian companies primarily lie in the provision of environmentally friendly forms of energy.

Southeast Europe: Region With Only Partly Used Potential and Capacities

The Slovenian energy market in Southeast Europe is well-known and considered to still have considerable room for growth, especially in some areas.

Andreja Šalamun

The situation in the energy industry varies across Southeast Europe, but the region is gradually opening up and following EU market trends.

According to Holding Slovenske elektrarne (HSE), the situation in the energy industry varies across Southeast Europe, among other reasons because some countries are EU member states and others are not; the non-EU countries are, however, members of the Energy Community (EC) or the WB6 group. HSE argues that EU member states should follow the EU legislation and directives, but their local legislation (not only the laws governing the energy industry, but others as well)

has not been fully harmonised, and even where it has been formally harmonised, the situation is different in practice. "In all these countries it's possible to trade in electricity with companies registered in their home countries (in the EU), but the procedures for obtaining such a status are fairly complex and, according to energy specialists, unnecessary. To engage in distribution activity you need to have a locally registered company with all the required technical staff. In

some EC (WB6) countries, the market is significantly liberalised (e.g., Montenegro), whereas in others a local company or even two licenses (e.g., in Bosnia-Herzegovina) are required for wholesale,” explains HSE.

In the company’s opinion, the deficiencies are primarily the result of great exposure to legislative and regulatory risks, and the lack of proper price signals in the region (e.g., not all countries have a stock exchange, there are no liquid markets, and so on), which is why the financial and credit exposure is also high. “The failure to pay for or supply and accept energy is another obstacle preventing the expansion of trade. Trade and the free flow of energy are further limited by an uneven allocation of cross-border trade capacities, various taxes on electricity imports or exports and turnover taxes, which in some countries, such as Romania, are incomparably high,” the firm notes. Nonetheless, HSE believes the region is gradually opening up and following EU market trends.

A well-developed petroleum product market

“Southeast Europe can be regarded as a region with only partly used potential and capacities in the energy industry,” Petrol explains. According to Petrol, the petroleum product market in some countries, such as Croatia and Serbia, is well developed, which is also reflected in the presence of companies from other nations. In turn, some

The European Commission recently published an assessment of member states’ draft national energy and climate plans up to 2030, with a special emphasis on renewable energy, contributions to energy efficiency and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. “As the countries of Southeast Europe move closer to European integration this will also put new demands on the energy sector, which will, like elsewhere, dictate new approaches, strategies and most likely modifications of some business models, which currently fail to sufficiently address the environmental and other aspects of the business,” Petrol concludes.

markets still have plenty of room for growth. Based on Petrol’s estimates, while the region is good at using water resources to produce electricity it still lags behind in other forms of energy production, including the environmentally friendlier ones: “in this regard there’s much unused capacity and many opportunities, including for Slovenian companies.”

The presence of foreign investors is growing in the region, especially in the former Yugoslav countries. “More foreign investment in the future also means more investment in knowledge, technology and infrastructure, which is why this area is expected to grow rapidly. For example, in Croatia energy companies are among the firms with the highest revenues,” reports Petrol, which expects the energy industry to see strong growth in Southeast Europe, “especially

According to Petrol, the region is good at using water resources to produce electricity, but still lags behind in other forms of energy production, including the environmentally friendlier ones.



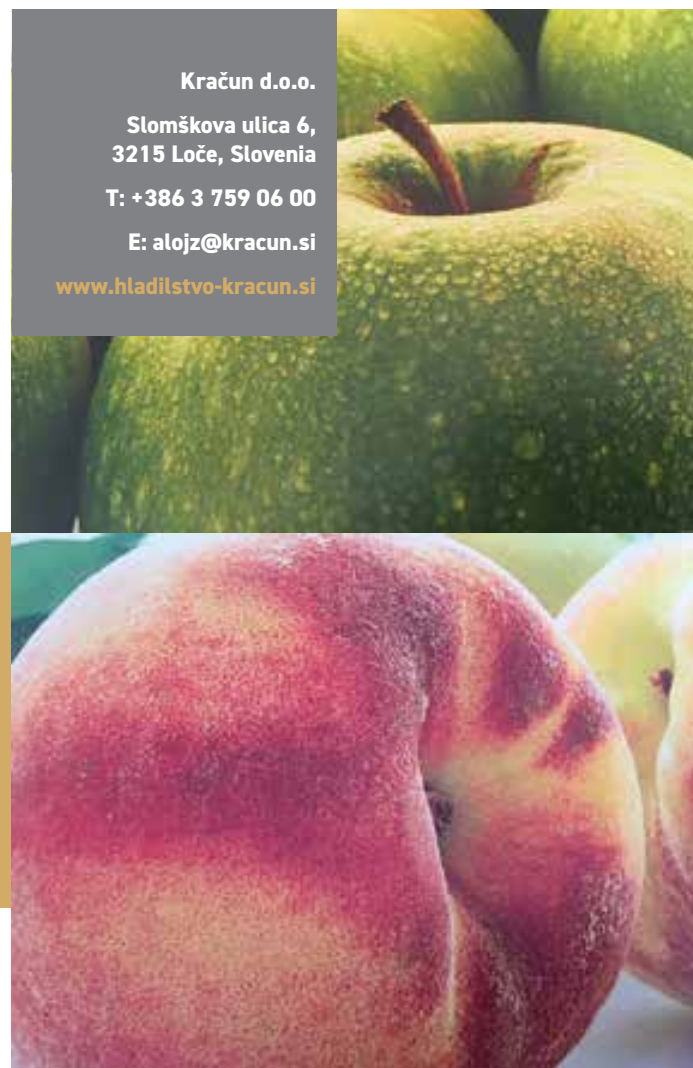
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in connection with the environment, which will also affect the business strategies and models of market players.” This will happen thanks to some countries in this region moving closer to the EU, which already has ambitious recommendations and strict restrictions in the energy industry for its members states.

Seeking opportunities in the liberalisation process

According to Geoplin, which trades in natural gas, some of the natural gas markets in Southeast Europe have already been fully or nearly fully liberalised, especially in terms of accessing transmission capacities and warehouses and, subsequently, end users. In some countries, such as Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the markets have not yet been liberalised, but this is expected to happen in the following years. “Certain infrastructure projects have been implemented to improve the liquidity and reliability of supply on these markets, and other projects (e.g., the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal on the Croatian island of Krk) are expected to be carried out in a few years,” Geoplin explains.

Geoplin sees an opportunity for Slovenian companies and itself in the markets where such liberalisation will take place, and in which they will consequently be able to take an active role. “In addition, new potential is opening up for investment in projects related to efficient energy use and the application of renewable energy sources in this region,” the company notes.

Geoplin has been actively present on the Croatian natural gas market since 2014, whereas in Serbia the right conditions for such involvement have not yet been established. To consolidate Geoplin’s position on the markets where it is already present and increase its market share in the retail segment, the company has worked in consortium with Petrol to purchase the Croatian natural gas distributor Zagorski Metalac. In addition, its acquisition of the

Croatian natural gas trading company Crodux Plin is also in its final stage.

Knowing how people think is an advantage

“Slovenian companies are well acquainted with the mentality of people living in Southeast Europe, which gives us an advantage over certain competitors,” says HSE, adding that the fact that these companies have been present in the region since the very beginning of such trade also means a lot. This way they know all the market players, and are able to keep abreast of changes that bring new opportunities. HSE has been present on these markets for a long time now, successfully navigating between problems and opportunities, which is why both local and international participants also identify it as an important partner. It plans to expand its presence on these markets in all segments of trade. “The main challenge is primarily the integration of new markets via market coupling mechanisms. An additional challenge is providing flexible, non-standard products in the region, where we’re holding a relatively competitive position due to our flexible production portfolio, good access to other European markets and highly developed intraday trading segment,” the HSE explains.

Experience and knowledge should be transferred to markets in Southeast Europe

Petrol agrees that Slovenian companies are important and high-profile players on the markets of Southeast Europe. “The opportunity in the energy industry is that companies transfer the experience and knowledge obtained in international development and innovative projects, including on the most competitive foreign markets where they have participated in recent decades, into practice on the markets of Southeast Europe,” the firm argues, adding that the opportunities for this will increase with the greater development and openness of these markets. “The advantages of Slovenian companies primarily lie in the provision of

The presence of foreign investors is growing in the region, especially in the former Yugoslav countries.

Geoplin sees an opportunity for Slovenian companies and itself in the markets where liberalisation will take place and in which they will consequently be able to play an active role.



environmentally friendly forms of energy. Either independently or as partners in business projects, they can provide best-practice examples in building, setting up and launching infrastructure projects, can offer their knowledge arising from understanding operational integrity and customers' and buyers' needs, as well as state-of-the-art technologies," explains Petro.

Smart cities

Petrol also highlights the importance of projects connected with smart and environmentally friendly cities. Within this context it is possible to identify opportunities related to environmentally friendly energy, such as smart cities, electric vehicles (cars and public transport), comprehensive cloud services as part of public services, car-free areas for pedestrians and cyclists, and the construction and implementation of environmentally friendly urban infrastructure and many other practices. "This will demand a different approach, which will again be an opportunity for Slovenian companies that have experience and knowledge in this area, which they can use effectively to offer comprehensive energy solutions adapted to the new requirements and lifestyles," explains Petrol.

It sees digitalisation – now a key part of any industry's operations – as another opportunity for Slovenian companies on the markets of Southeast Europe. "This aspect, too, offers potential for Slovenian companies, which, due to the highly developed Slovenian business environment and supporting infrastructure in this area, and its well-developed products and services, have advantages over firms from other areas in Southeast Europe. This involves not only well-established, large companies, but also smaller ones, such as start-ups, or business consortiums of established companies and start-ups that can make good use of such opportunities through innovative solutions and position themselves effectively on the markets of Southeast Europe, in which the energy industry is one of the most promising sectors, and the most open to innovation," stresses Petrol.

Opportunities lie in smart cities, electric vehicles (cars and public transport), comprehensive cloud services as part of public services, car-free areas for pedestrians and cyclists, and the construction and implementation of environmentally friendly urban infrastructure.

Some markets are more liquid than others

"Today practically all European countries are connected via cross-border capacities, but every country can also be treated as an independent trading zone," notes GEN-I, emphasising that due to the increasingly effective connectivity of markets, countries now have a greater influence on each other through structural changes

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arising from their local characteristics. "Some markets remain more liquid than others. A further difference is also that Western Europe has many renewable energy sources, whereas Southeast Europe is dominated by conventional sources and is therefore less flexible. A complete overview of the various interactions and connections among markets is therefore vital for successful trading," GEN-I explains.

"Slovenian companies are well acquainted with the mentality of people living in Southeast Europe, which gives us advantage over certain competitors," says HSE.

Many regulatory obstacles and challenges

On the one hand, the situation in the energy industry in Southeast Europe is full of opportunities because the markets are developing in the direction of transparent operations, but on the other there are still many regulatory obstacles and challenges. "The diversity of regulatory frameworks also results from the fact that some countries are members of the EU and others aren't. Long years of experience in dealing with EU regulations enable companies to use their knowledge to help create more liquid and transparent markets, even where such transformations are still at an early stage of development. Unfortunately, non-EU members states in Southeast Europe follow EU regulations and legislation very slowly, which causes bigger differences in this area," reports GEN-I, adding

that there are many opportunities in Southeast Europe for Slovenian companies to contribute to the energy industry, especially with regard to the transfer of knowledge and technology, as well as the country's links with Western Europe.

GEN-I plans to maintain its position of a leading electricity retailer and at the same time expand its retail operations to other energy sources. Currently the company is very active in setting up systematic portfolio models because it is aware that increased production of renewable energy makes it possible to more effectively manage the global portfolio in the production mix of non-flexible conventional sources and very flexible renewable energy sources. In this regard, it is very actively developing its energy services in the direction of green transformation, and thus expects to also market and offer the services it already provides to Slovenian customers in other countries of Southeast Europe.



Gojak Agenzia d.o.o., Koper, Slovenia, in partnership with INTERPOLIMERI S.p.A., Padova, Italy-

a leader in the distribution of plastic raw materials with offices and warehouses all over Europe. Interpolimeri offers the best technical and the most economical solutions. We have a number of technical experts and specialists dedicated to each specific application: film, compounding, injection and blow moulding, extrusion and coating.

Thanks to the knowledge of the market and business connections in this part of Europe and Balkan, with a warehouse nearby Belgrade, we are present on the territory of Ex-Yugoslavian countries with technopolymers from leading international producer LG Chem.

After being for many years official distributor of Exxon Mobil products in Italy and several EU countries, Interpolimeri S.p.A. is now covering also the markets of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Nord Macedonia and Albania. In this new mission, Interpolimeri commits to help customers to address their challenges through strengthened technical, marketing and supply chain capabilities.



Efficient programme for comprehensive corporate transformation

Transformation Lighthouse helps companies create an innovative environment that leads to the development of solutions allowing them to penetrate new market segments

Transformation Lighthouse helps companies understand and carry out changes, thus ensuring global competitiveness. "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 holistic manner. It is essential to work hand in hand with companies to change their culture and manner of operation. This leads to a new, innovative solution a company may use to enter a new segment," says Urška Jež, Managing Director of Transformation Lighthouse.

Optimisation processes using start-up methods

Transformation Lighthouse connects companies with coaches who have been involved in corporate consultancy for decades. With our partners from the US, UK, Switzerland and Germany we have designed a comprehensive programme, supported by the partners' technological platforms, that includes innovation, digitalisation, and launching or optimising internal processes according to the methodologies of start-up companies. And most importantly, changing the mindsets of employees, starting with the management. "The programme is modular, so that clients can decide for themselves which is the easiest or best way to begin," says Urška Jež.

They take their clients' challenges seriously

They offer companies in the Balkans a comprehensive approach to digital transformation, changing employee mindsets and the introduction of an innovative culture. Their key difference as regards the implementation of changes is that they



"We offer to companies in the Balkans a comprehensive approach to digital transformation, a change in employee mindsets and the introduction of an innovative culture," says Urška Jež, Managing Director of Transformation Lighthouse.

thoroughly analyse each client's challenges together with the client, and jointly address them. Their steps and achievements are thus measurable, and this is what clients like.

Most often they start with competitions between groups to address business challenges (hackathons), since the employees may acquire new skills through these in a very short period of time, they come up with something new, such as innovative and feasible ideas, and they have fun. "This is a turning point in understanding the way young people think, and how to do things in an unconventional manner. And from this point onwards, we 'dig' together with the client until the final solution is found – a new product or service. We change employee mindsets on our way. This is no overnight solution. These processes take time. It is crucial, therefore, to come very quickly from an idea to an end product, that brings about improvements of internal processes to the

clients or a totally new market positioning," stresses the Managing Director.

A window to the world

Urška Jež says that Southeast Europe is a hotspot for young talents. Transformation Lighthouse has helped connect them for quite some time with the sites, companies and activities they are interested in. Through their ecosystem, the participating coaches and mentors, they can connect such talents with global partners. The fastest way to achieve this is by means of hackathons attended by the youth individuals, company management and their international mentors. These connections, however, are very individualised, as they wish to remain known as a company that develops high-quality links.



**TRANSFORMATION
LIGHTHOUSE**

PROMO



Photo: Kolektor

All Kolektor subsidiaries in the region operate successfully and achieve their production targets.

Increasing Numbers of Slovenian Companies Are Returning to Southeast Europe

Radovan Bolko, President of the Board of Management of Kolektor, expects continued hiring in the countries of Southeast Europe, where Kolektor employs more than 700 people. He says that the business environment in the region is seeing accelerated development and favours new investments.

Ana Vučina Vršnak

Kolektor brings advanced production technology, development processes, and organisational models to the region.

Kolektor is relatively well-known in the countries of SE Europe. In Serbia, you have Kolektor ATS in Novi Sad and Kolektor Etra close to Belgrade, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina you have Kolektor CCL in Laktaši. What is your assessment of the cooperation between these subsidiaries and their operations?

The main objective of Kolektor is growth. The opening of new production plants and partial relocation of production follow our strategy of internationalisation and globalisation. This includes searching for the best and most suitable production line locations. We identified these opportunities in the countries of SE Europe where the business

environment is seeing accelerated development and favours new investments, particularly those creating new jobs.

Our companies in this part of Europe are at various stages of development. As you mentioned, we have three subsidiaries in the region: Kolektor CCL with three production locations and a fourth under development, Kolektor ATS in Novi Sad, and Kolektor Etra Beograd, which joined our group in the last year. All three operate successfully and reach their production targets. This year, Kolektor ATS will generate EUR 6.2 million in sales revenues. A proportion of sales is created by in-house development, and the rest by transfers within the group. The company will pursue a similar strategy in the future as well. For Kolektor Etra Beograd, the planned sales revenue for 2019 is at just over EUR 5 million. Furthermore, the company aims for a 100% increase in revenues by 2023.

Kolektor CCL was our first company in the Balkans. The decision to build the Laktaši production plant goes back more than 13 years. We increased the volume of trade from EUR 1 million in 2005 to over EUR 26 million in 2018. Our goal is to reach EUR 75 million in total revenue by 2025.

How many people do you employ at the subsidiaries, and what are your plans for the future?

Kolektor CCL has almost 500 employees in three locations, Kolektor ATS has 115, and Kolektor Etra Beograd has 87. If we are to implement our strategy and reach growth in this market, we will need a new, skilled, and highly qualified workforce, which means that the number of employees will undoubtedly grow over the next few years.

Do you face a shortage of highly skilled workers at these subsidiaries – seeing that this is a problem for many companies in Slovenia? Perhaps these employees will work in Slovenia in the future?

Finding skilled workers is a problem in this part of Europe as well. Due to a shorter tradition of industry, we have to invest more in employee training. We also face a fluctuating workforce, as Western companies actively recruit skilled workers. It is our aim that highly skilled workers from the region remain there and thus contribute to the development of Kolektor and the local communities.

Are you planning new investments in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina or in other countries of SE Europe?

We signed a memorandum on cooperation with the Mayor of Prijedor in February this year, and thereby laid the foundation for our fourth production plant in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The construction of a 2,500 m² production hall is expected to conclude by end of this year. Plans for the expansion of production in Kolektor Etra Beograd and Kolektor ATS have also been prepared.

What does a Slovenian company such as Kolektor bring to this part of Europe?

Kolektor brings advanced production technology, development processes, and organisational models. Thereby, it actively contributes to economic development and employment growth in the region. We strive to link commercial entities, educational institutions, and other important regional players, and to strengthen the export potential and internationalisation as much as we can.

What are your predictions on the development of industry in SE Europe in the coming years?

There is great potential for development in the part of SE Europe where Kolektor is present. Key to this are moderate labour costs and a strong interest in education and development. However, many challenges remain in terms of political stability and ensuring a sustainable and reliable business environment.

What about new technologies? What role does Kolektor Digital play in this area?

For Kolektor, digitalisation offers an opportunity to improve business and production processes, and above all the potential to develop new business models in the areas of digital services and products. As a new strategic division which is being established, Kolektor Digital addresses challenges that similar companies face in switching to smart factories. We have the advantage of domain knowledge that enables us to develop Industry 4.0 technologies, such as intelligent collaborative robots, artificial intelligence for process optimisation, and machine vision. These knowledge areas and projects are highly relevant for our companies in this region. Several are already actively participating in these projects.

Are Slovenian companies in SE Europe able to take advantage of the region's potentials? Is there enough cooperation with respect to their knowledge of the region?

Increasing numbers of Slovenian companies are returning to this region. There is still much potential. However, both European and global firms have already established a strong presence in the region through investments. We have some advantages due to the similarities among our languages and shared cultural knowledge. And the resentment caused by bad business decisions made by some Slovenian companies in the past is largely forgotten. There are no reasons why cooperation should not increase further.

What else could be done to enhance cooperation?

Above all, Slovenia should take an interest in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. This area has its own characteristics and way of doing things, which we know and understand. It would be wise to strengthen our presence in this area across all segments. This will facilitate business development and improve cooperation.

Kolektor CCL in Bosnia and Herzegovina has almost 500 employees at its three locations, Kolektor ATS in Novi Sad has 115, and Kolektor Etra Beograd has 87.

Finding skilled workers is a problem in SE Europe as well. The aim of Kolektor is that highly skilled workers from the region remain there.

The construction of a 2,500 m² production hall in Prijedor in Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to conclude by end of this year. Plans for the expansion of production in Kolektor Etra Beograd and Kolektor ATS in Novi Sad have also been prepared.

Slovenian Companies Active in Southeast Europe

Many Slovenian companies are present in all the countries of Southeast Europe and see further opportunities for improving economic cooperation.

Ana Vučina Vršnak



Photo: Zavarovalnica Triglav

David Benedek, Authorised Representative of the Zavarovalnica Triglav Management Board

“The Triglav Group is the leading insurance-financial group in Slovenia and the Adriatic region. We’re present in six countries of Southeast Europe. Our vision is to focus on the customer to dynamically develop new ways of doing business that form the basis for the Group’s responsible long-term development, and at the same time make our operations profitable and secure. In line with our strategy, which underlines comprehensive customer relationships, we develop strategic partnerships and form part of dynamic business ecosystems in all markets. We’re always open to collaborating with companies whose business activities complement our business model. Here we’re establishing on an omni-channel approach by suitably activating all sales channels, including banking sales, via healthcare and assistance providers.

We expect the long-term accelerated growth of insurance markets in the region, and a subsequent increase in the share of the total premiums accounted for outside Slovenia. Our activities aimed at growth and development are prudent and oriented towards ensuring a long-term increase in the Group’s value.”



Photo: Pomurski sejem

Janez Erjavec, Chairman of the Management Board of Pomurski sejem d.o.o.

“Our international trade fairs and quality assessments, especially the AGRA International Fair of Agriculture and Food, connect Slovenia with the EU and Balkan countries, and the wider Southeast Europe. We’ve been cooperating the longest and closest with Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and we’re also enhancing our cooperation with other countries in this area. We’re forming connections with various ministries in the region, professional and chamber organisations, the media, as well as individual entrepreneurs, business people and experts. Together with the exhibitors, the professional community and institutions, we seek and find topics that provide important orientations for the future. We also have our representatives in individual countries, with whom we cooperate in concrete arrangements with exhibitors, the participants of expert assessments and business visitors. We are always open to new collaborations.

EU expansion also offers the opportunity for better cooperation in all areas. We’re glad that this idea is also supported by the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, which holds a conference of agriculture ministers every year before the official opening of the AGRA fair; the conference is attended by EU ministers of agriculture and the agriculture ministers of EU candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) and potential candidate countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo). The participants also attend the AGRA fair, which is an excellent opportunity for professional and economic cooperation.”



Photo: NLB

Andrej Lasič, Assistant to the Management Board for Corporate and Investment Banking at NLB

“The NLB Group is the largest international financial group headquartered in Slovenia, and the only financial institution focusing exclusively on Southeast Europe. With our seven banks, we’re present on six markets (in Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo) and we’re a systemic player (i.e., our market share exceeds 10%) on five of these. We know the local environment extremely well and we understand the people’s language, culture and mentality. This means we can offer the solutions the region needs – that is, universal banking, investment and insurance services.

We see our opportunity primarily in the cross-border project financing, and in the leasing and factoring activities, which are again available to us after the recent successful privatisation. Of course our goals are even bigger than that; for example, in Serbia we see great opportunities for further growth and increasing our market share. As a systemically important financial institution, we’re of course also aware of our responsibilities and, in addition to achieving good performance and good financial results, we seek to contribute to a better quality of life in the entire region.”



Photo: Mlekarna Celeia

Marjan Jakob, Director of Mlekarna Celeia

"In Southeast Europe, Mlekarna Celeia's products can be found in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and North Macedonia. We see the greatest potential for expanding our business in the existing markets, where there's still room for sales growth. We're also interested in Albania and Bulgaria, with whom we've recently already tried to establish some form of cooperation, and we plan to continue these activities in the future. In all these markets we're linked to our distributors, who distribute and sell our products for us. We also have business connections with some companies in Croatia.

We primarily see potential for better cooperation between Slovenia and other countries in Southeast Europe in the abolition of customs and other duties on importing our products into non-EU countries. Customs and other duties significantly decrease our competitiveness, and thus our chances for growth on these markets. We also see potential in forming stronger connections between the Slovenian agricultural policy and food-processing industry and other countries in Southeast Europe, especially in the sense of seeking symbiosis in processing and marketing dairy products."



Photo: Nataša Müller

Robert Otorepec, CEO of Celjski sejem d.o.o.

"In Southeast Europe, Celjski sejem d.o.o. is primarily present in the former Yugoslav countries. As a former Yugoslav country, Slovenia forms a point of entry or a bridge between these countries and the EU in the trade show industry. Every year, our trade fairs are attended by exhibitors from Southeast Europe; the majority come from Croatia, but there are also a few from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

A few years ago we introduced a partner country for our International Trade and Business Fair (MOS), and we are looking forward to establishing cooperation in other areas as well. Just recently, we've signed a memorandum of understanding with the Zagreb Fair. The first step within this cooperation will be the hosting of the joint fair Energetika – Interklima, which will be held in Celje in even years and in Zagreb in odd years.

The former Yugoslav countries should become better aware of the fact that every country in itself is a very small market with limited resources, and therefore – except through certain niche products – we can't become important players on the global market by working alone. Forming connections with bigger and economically more developed countries is necessary and welcome for all these countries, but it's very difficult to establish equal relations at this level. However, by forming connections with other former Yugoslav countries they could significantly increase their market and the selection of available labour force, raw materials, knowledge and capital, and hence penetrate the global market more easily."



Photo: Don Don

Aleš Mozetič, Chairman of the Management Board of Don Don d.o.o.

"The company Don Don is currently present on the following markets: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and North Macedonia. We see potential in the markets of Romania, Albania and all the way to Greece in the south, but at the same time we're also interested in the Visegrád countries (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia). We have our own production and distribution with all our programmes in place in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. The second group of countries are markets where we're present with a combination of our own distribution company and a distributor or partner. On these markets we're connecting and seeking new opportunities with partners, searching for suitable locations and of course including new employees.

It's difficult to evaluate the present status of and possible improvements to Slovenia's cooperation with other countries in Southeast Europe. From the perspective of our company, we can say that we're cooperating with these countries and plan to further expand this cooperation in the future. We have our local traditional products, which we distribute on these markets. We're competitive and have our advantages, which we plan to use to the greatest extent possible."





Photo: Gospodarsko razstavišče

Iztok Bricl, CEO of Gospodarsko razstavišče d.o.o.

“Gospodarsko razstavišče (GR) is a company specialising in the organisation of trade fairs, conferences and other events. We’re promoting the meetings industry through the Slovenian Convention Bureau, the Ljubljana Convention Bureau and the company Toleranca Marketing, which in cooperation with the Slovenian Convention Bureau hosts the Conventa trade show – the largest business-to-business event in the meetings industry in Southeast Europe. Since the very beginning, Conventa has been held at the Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre (Gospodarsko razstavišče). This year has already seen the eleventh edition of the event, which each time also features the GR as Slovenia’s leading events centre. Via Toleranca Marketing or its channels, such as the Kongres magazine, which is considered the leading specialised meetings industry medium in Southeast Europe, we inform the professional community of the developments and achievements in the meetings industry at the GR.

In 2017, we founded a joint venture with the Dekon Group from Turkey called Dekon.SI, in which we have a 50% ownership share. Dekon.SI is the first international professional conference organiser (PCO) in Slovenia. We’re organising high-profile congresses together.

In the trade show industry, we’ve been a member of the Central European Fair Alliance (CEFA) since 2011. This association brings together twenty-two trade show companies from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe with the aim of enhancing the international importance of trade shows in the region. The GR has hosted several important events for this association, most recently the CEFA General Assembly in June 2019.”



Photo: Pivka perutninarstvo

Nataša Matjašec, Head of Exports at Pivka perutninarstvo d.d.

“Through our Delamaris and Pivka brands we’re presenting ourselves independently on different markets through our companies abroad and contractual agencies or selected distributors. The Delamaris brand has been present on the wider European and global market for 140 years, and is currently present on twenty-three markets. As an expert with a long-standing tradition, we’ve become known as a manufacturer of high-quality food products. We control the entire production process, from the selection of raw materials by checking the origin of sea fish, to the end products made from our own recipes and meeting high internal standards. We promote sustainable fishing, and the quality of our products is confirmed through our numerous medals, awards and national and international certificates of quality, such as IFS, FDA, EAC and MSC.

With its various high-quality parboiled chicken products, the Pivka brand, which is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year, is present on fifteen markets. As a manufacturer we ensure high quality using an integrated approach to controlling all aspects of a product’s creation. 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 from the manufacturing centre, and control of all stages of production and distribution to retailers or end-customers. The feed and products are regularly controlled in our independent in-house laboratories.

Activities for both brands are targeted at the German market, where we already have a registered subsidiary, and at the Polish market, which we plan to enter through our selected distributor. With regard to the markets in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine and China, we’re still in the process of selecting long-term partnerships with agents and distributors that can credibly represent our brands in the pre-prepared food and healthy snacks segment. Because the Delamaris and Pivka products have a long shelf life they also allow us to reach geographically remote markets, such as Russia, Australia, China, the US and the Gulf countries. In turn, the fresh and parboiled Pivka products are primarily distributed on the European markets, such as Germany, Austria, Sweden, Benelux, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and North Macedonia.”



Photo: Metronik

Saša Sokolić, Member of the Management Board of Metronik d.o.o.

“In Southeast Europe, Metronik is present in all the former Yugoslav countries and Bulgaria. We have offices in Zagreb and Belgrade with a total of thirty-five employees, with whom we offer better support to local users and also cooperate with local systems integrators. We operate similarly in this region as in Slovenia: as an established provider of innovative solutions for automation and digitalisation in industry, smart buildings and infrastructure companies.

We help our users improve the stability of their processes and the quality of their products, establish control over and transparent insight into processes, lay the foundations for optimising and reducing costs and increasing productivity, and comply with the principles of Industry 4.0 and the Internet of Things.

We’ve noticed that the demand for such solutions is growing sharply in Southeast Europe, but for now the local providers are still lagging behind us. The area of expertise we specialise in definitely has considerable potential for further strengthening the cooperation between Slovenia and the Southeast Europe region. Therefore our goal is to further enhance our presence on these markets.”



Photo: Špica

Tone Stanovnik, Director of Špica International

“Špica International is the leading Slovenian provider of digital transformation solutions for workforce management and supply chain management. For thirty years now, Špica has been making sure that the processes in companies are automated. We’ve always treated the former Yugoslav market as our natural home market, on which we’ve also developed the Frontman supply chain management solution in addition to the Time&Space workforce management system.

In the Adriatic region, as we like to call it, we’ve founded five sister companies – that is, in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Montenegro. These companies already generate half of the consolidated revenues in the entire group. In October 2018, we announced a strategic partnership with the Hungarian IBCS Group, a premier applications solutions integrator in the enterprise mobility market in Central Europe. Our goal is to provide supply chain management solutions in all the countries bordering the three seas – that is, the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Seas.

The rule in the ICT industry is that the narrower the product-marketing segment, the more you need to target the international market. Slovenia has excellent conditions for this, as recently reflected in its exports. I believe Slovenians are born exporters or, as IT specialists would say, ‘exporters by default’. Wherever they turn, they have less than one hour’s drive to reach the border. Because the Adriatic region isn’t too far away, we can visit our customers personally by car, but of course the frequent trips have now been pretty successfully replaced by video conferences.”



Electronics

In addition to a range of component elements for the automotive industry, the company makes casings and housings for electronics, a variety of custom-made aluminium and alloy heat sinks, together with cases for electronic equipment and amplifiers.

MALI-E-TIKO engineers elements of the most complex design, manufactured using multi-axis CNC milling machines.

Heavy-duty Equipment

MALI-E-TIKO manufactures elements and parts for road vehicles and construction equipment, heavy-duty machines, components for professional ironing systems and heating solutions, inox steel road and other signs, as well as a range of metal cabinets and storage systems.

MALI-E-TIKO’s metal processing services include milling and turning, as well as the welding of all types of materials (TIG, MIG and MAG welding). The company employs certified European welding engineers and holds EN ISO 3834-2 and EN 1090-2 certificates. In addition to sandblasting, MALI-E-TIKO’s contractors also provide surface protection (galvanised coating), anodising, chromate coating, as well as powder and wet coating. Additional services encompass engraving, including laser engraving, and screen printing.

Product Development

The company collaborates with its clients in product development, employing 3D technology (PTC Creo, AutoCAD) for design, as well as the latest software for CNC programming. Among other services, MALI-E-TIKO provides laser cutting of steel, stainless steel and aluminium, as well as CNC punching and bending of materials using modern CNC machinery (Trumpf, Gasparini and LVD).

Partners in Germany, Austria and Italy

MALI-E-TIKO products supply its partners in Germany, Austria and Italy. Germany is the company’s main market, where clients include ANNAX GmbH, BOMAG GmbH and Veit GmbH; in Austria – Swarco Futurit GmbH and Palfinger AG; and CAEN S.p.A. in Italy. Through a number of its Slovenian partners MALI-E-TIKO manufactures can be found in many parts of the world, including the Middle and Far East, South America, the UK, Hong Kong and Japan.

The companies MALI-E-TIKO works with are leaders in their respective fields. Moreover, their partners include them in current and future projects, thereby transferring know-how and engineering expertise.

Professional Metal Products Since 1988

MALI-E-TIKO provides a wide range of products and services in the manufacture of elements and components from sheet metal for the needs of the electronics and automotive sectors, including parts for heavy machinery and equipment, which requires expert knowledge of metal processing and machining.

Holding ISO 9001-2015 certification, the Tržič-based MALI-E-TIKO manufactures components for, amongst others, the electronics and car industries, as well as elements for commercial vehicles and construction equipment.

MALI-E-TIKO

Visitors from the Western Balkans countries experience Slovenia as an open, hospitable and family-friendly destination.



Photo: www.slovenia.info/ / Nea Culpa d.o.o.

In 2018, Slovenia recorded 218,898 arrivals from Croatia, which is **12.2%** more than in 2017, and 527,116 overnight stays, or **16.4%** more than the year before.

Slovenia is an Open, Family-friendly Destination

The majority of guests from Croatia opt for vacations in mountain and spa municipalities, whereas Serbian visitors are primarily interested in active winter vacations, natural spas and the Slovenian coast.

Darja Kocbek

By the end of June, Postojna Cave, which is celebrating the 200th anniversary of guided tours to the cave this year, recorded a one-third increase in the number of visitors from the Western Balkans compared to the same period last year.

The majority of tourists from Southeast Europe that decide to visit Slovenia come from Croatia and Serbia. According to Karmen Novarlič, Head of the Corporate Communications Sector at the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO), visitors from the Western Balkans countries generally experience Slovenia as an open, hospitable and family-friendly destination.

The number of Croatian visitors is growing

Among international visitors to Slovenia, Croatian guests are in fourth and fifth places in terms of arrivals and overnight stays, respectively. Last year, the STO recorded 218,898 arrivals from Croatia, which is 12.2% more than in 2017, and 527,116 overnight stays,

or 16.4% more than the year before. Over the first four months of 2019, 95,169 Croatians visited Slovenia or 5% more than during the same period last year. They accounted for 240,765 overnight stays, which is 4.8% more than in the same period last year. The majority of guests from Croatia opt for vacations in mountain and spa municipalities.

An average Serbian visitor stays in Slovenia for 2.6 nights

Last year, the STO recorded 137,517 visitors from Serbia, which is 10.4% more than the year before. They accounted for 376,163 overnight stays or 16.9% more than in 2017. In 2018, Serbian visitors accounted



Photo: Alen Franetič

for 3.37% of all international overnight stays in Slovenia. "The positive trend on the Serbian market continues this year. Over the first four months, 53,470 Serbian tourists visited Slovenia, generating 141,651 overnight stays or 6.36% of all international overnight stays in the country. This ranks Serbia in ninth place," reported Karmen Novarlič. An average Serbian visitor stays in Slovenia for 2.6 nights. Over the first four months of 2019, arrivals by Serbian tourists increased by 12.3% compared to the same period in 2018 and overnight stays were up 2.3%.

"Business overnight stays in Ljubljana account for a large share. Serbian guests are primarily interested in active winter vacations, natural Slovenian spas and the Slovenian coast in the summer. They largely stay at hotels (82%)," explained Karmen Novarlič.

The number of visitors at Postojna Cave is up one-third compared to last year

By the end of June, Postojna Cave, which is celebrating the 200th anniversary of guided tours to the cave this year, recorded a one-third increase in the number of visitors from the Western Balkans compared to the same period last year. "It is mainly individual guests that arrive from Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia, as well as organised tourist and school groups. We caught their attention with our informative website www.postojnska-jama.eu, where they can obtain all the key information in their native language even before they visit our park and also buy their tickets online," reported Mateja Rosa from the Public Relations Office at Postojnska jama d.d.

Tours of Postojna Cave, Predjama Castle, the Vivarium and the Expo are available in seventeen languages. There is also increasing demand for visiting the new attraction – the Secret Rooms of the Hotel Jama – which reveal the secret parallel world of the former political system, which visitors from the Balkans were all too well acquainted with. According to Mateja Rosa, an increase in primarily Croatian visitors is expected at Postojna Cave at end of the year, when they are staging the world's largest live

nativity scene (a true cave spectacle) for the thirtieth year in a row.

Pleasure is the common denominator of all visitors. At Postojna Cave Park this is provided through the flexible and diverse services and activities on offer, ranging from conventional site visits to adrenaline adventures, VIP tours, interactive experiences for children, outstanding culinary delights and accommodation at the Hotel Jama, which is among the best reviewed hotels in Slovenia.

In the Balkans Rogaška Slatina is considered a destination with pristine natural surroundings

The Atlantida Boutique Hotel in Rogaška Slatina is also satisfied with the number of arrivals from the Balkan countries this year. Overnight stays are up 10% compared to the same period last year, which the hotel considers a success and meets both its expectations and plans. "The increase in overnight stays is definitely influenced by the fact that our hotel is becoming more recognisable on these markets," reported Mojca Korpar, who is in charge of marketing at the hotel. In the Balkans Rogaška Slatina is considered a destination with pristine natural surroundings, coupled with tradition and an excellent hotel-wellness service. "Due to proximity we're an excellent choice for quick weekend getaways," she added. Predictions for the coming months show that the number of visitors from the Balkans, dominated by Croatians and Serbs (mainly coming from Zagreb, Istria and Belgrade), is going to increase further.

"There's definitely still room for development in tourism on these markets. This applies to both our hotel as well as Slovenia and Rogaška Slatina. Further opportunities primarily lie in the cooperation between the destination and the business community, additional activities offered to guests in the form of cultural and entertaining events, additional restaurants and experiences," explained Korpar.

In 2018, there were 137,517 visitors from Serbia, or 10.4% more than the year before. They accounted for 376,163 overnight stays, or 16.9% more than in 2017.

Due to its proximity, Rogaška Slatina is an excellent choice for quick weekend getaways.



Photo: Atlantida Rogaška



In Bled Croatian visitors account for 94% of all visitors from the Balkans

Bled is satisfied with this year's visits from Croatia, which account for 94% of all visits from the Balkans. According to Matjaž Završnik, the Director of the Bled Culture Institute, over the first five months the number of guests from the Balkans was up 6% on the same period last year. From January to the end of May 2019, there were 5,003 visitors from Croatia compared to 4,504 last year, which means their share increased by 11%. The number of guests from other Balkan countries amounted to 309 between January and May, compared to 504 during the same period last year.

"I think the increase is primarily the result of promotional activities on the Croatian market, Croatian guests visiting the nearby ski resorts during winter vacations, and visits during holidays and week-ends. We'll be happy if these trends continue until the end of the year," said Završnik.

Croatian and Serbian tourists are especially interested in winter tourism and skiing in the Pohorje Mountains

In January Croatian visitors accounted for 19% of all overnight stays in Maribor, which is the largest share among all international visitors. Serbian tourists were in fourth place with a 6% share. In February, Croatian and Serbian visitors accounted for 22% of all overnight stays in Slovenia's second largest city, whereas in March their share was 10%. "Tourists from Croatia and Serbia are especially interested in winter tourism and skiing in the Pohorje Mountains. The demand is slightly lower in the summer, but visits to major events or festivals, such as the Lent Festival and Martinmas celebrations in Maribor, are on the increase," reported Monika Jurišič Hlevnjak, an advisor at the Maribor Tourism Office.

According to Hlevnjak, visitors from the former Yugoslavia still consider Slovenia an outstanding tourist destination, especially because of its diversity and the high-quality range of services offered, as well as its proximity. "I think Slovenia still has great potential in the former Yugoslav countries," she added.

Over the first five months of 2019, the number of guests from the Balkans visiting Bled was up 6% on the same period last year.

Croatian and Serbian tourists are especially interested in winter tourism and skiing in the Pohorje Mountains.

Tourism and the meetings and events industry

According to Karmen Novarlič, cooperation with Slovenian tourism partners in Croatia and Serbia is excellent. She also highlighted good cooperation in the meetings and events industry. The Slovenian Convention Bureau has recently launched the Slovenian Ambassador Programme, and on this occasion the Director of the Serbian Convention Bureau, Igor Kovačević, also presented Serbia's Ambassador Programme. Both countries also cooperate well in exchanging tourism-related knowledge and experience.

Cooperation between the Slovenian and Croatian tourism industries is likewise intense and successful. Novarlič highlighted the cooperation between the Natural Spas of Slovenia Association and Croatian spas with regard to promoting spa and health tourism as a good example.

"The STO is performing a series of marketing-communications activities on the Croatian and Serbian markets. It presents Slovenia to the target audiences as a green, active and healthy boutique destination with high-value-added tourism products," Novarlič

Arrivals and overnight stays in Slovenia by tourists from SEE countries (2018)

	Tourist arrivals			Overnight stays		
	2018	I - XII 2018		2018	I - XII 2018	
		share	I - XII 2017		share	I - XII 2017
			index			index
from Bosnia and Herzegovina	66,927	1.51%	113.5	195,513	1.75%	127.2
from Montenegro	12,536	0.28%	104.8	32,525	0.29%	117.3
from Croatia	218,898	4.95%	112.2	527,116	4.72%	116.4
from North Macedonia	22,436	0.51%	107.3	65,652	0.59%	117.1
from Serbia	137,517	3.11%	110.4	376,163	3.37%	116.9

Source: SURS

explained. On the Serbian market, the STO and representatives of the Slovenian tourism industry annually attend the International Fair of Tourism in Belgrade. In recent years, the STO has been carrying out an advertising campaign on Belgrade trams featuring photos of Slovenian spas and ski resorts. Every two years, it also holds a workshop on Slovenian tourism in Belgrade (a working meeting between the representatives of the Slovenian tourism industry and interested parties in Serbia).

Every year, the STO holds the Slovenian Tourism Days in Zagreb (occasionally also at other locations in Croatia) intended for the public. In addition, it attends the Slovenian tourism workshop each year; this is a meeting between Slovenian tourism providers and the Croatian business community interested in Slovenian tourism. In recent years, the STO has been carrying out an extensive outdoor advertising campaign in Zagreb featuring photos of Slovenian spas and ski resorts.

Culture is also at the forefront of presentations of Slovenia and the Slovenian tourism

"In recent years, the STO has also carried out a series of digital media activities (i.e., communication with the target audiences on social networks) on both markets, and conducted several digital campaigns in



Photo: www.slovenia.info/ Uroš Leva

Croatia alone," reported Karmen Novarlič. The STO also offers study tours for the media and representatives of tour operators and travel agencies. "Culture and the cultural tourism range of services and products continue to be at the forefront of presentations of Slovenia and its tourism. As you will recall, culture has been the main promotional theme of Slovenian tourism in 2018 and 2019," she added.

**The STO has
41,986
Facebook and
Instagram followers
from Serbia and
26,738 from
Croatia.**

The first nine experiences with the Slovenia Unique Experiences label

In December 2018, the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) awarded the **Slovenia Unique Experiences label** to the first nine 5-star experiences representing unique authentic premium quality experiences.

You may experience luxurious camping amidst nature with full hotel room comfort at Garden Village in Bled, where you spend the night in a tree house in the middle of a forest with its own gardens. You can spend short natural science holidays in Slovenia in nature reserves in Notranjska and Istria, with exceptionally diverse fauna and flora. The story of a soldier from the Isonzo Front in Kobarid is intended for all explorers of historical memory trying to uncover the human experiences during WW1 that changed the world and life in that part of Slovenia.

Are you interested in Ljubljana? Prepare yourself for a true individual castle experience at Ljubljana Castle where, led by live costumed characters, you enter a time machine to see the history of the city – a good way to merge, through a memorable experience, the turbulent castle history, local urban identity, care for environmental sustainability and gastronomy. Another tour worth taking is the "Moustache Tour", a long-awaited cultural tourism product offering an exclusive insight into the true Slovenian soul and the essence of the Slovenian identity. This multisensorial experience will enable you to get to know the giants of Slovenian culture.

What about the coast with olive oil and fish? Experience a vintage gourmet tour by taking a nostalgic drive in legendary classic cars – the Lisjak family tour guides, also olive millers, will take you on an educational journey that follows the traces of ancient indigenous olive trees growing on the most beautiful vantage points in the area. An unforgettable day on the Fonda fish farm is a story (and an anti-globalism manifesto) about a boutique fish farm in the middle of the protected area of Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, where the fish eat better than most people. The story is told by a family of biologists and nature conservationists.

Take a trip to the depths of Slovenia. In Mežica in Koroška, you can visit the largest lead and zinc mine in this part of Europe, closed in 1988, by taking a kayak tour. This experience is an example of good practice of how industrial heritage, along with cultural tourism, may be authentically and sensitively integrated into today's context without any unnecessary interventions and embellishments. You can now visit Postojna Cave by taking a tour called "In the Footsteps of Luka Čeč", a man who was the first person at the beginning of the 19th century to dare to explore the mysterious and then still unknown world of the Postojna caverns. The alternative cave adventure takes visitors into side tunnels otherwise closed to mass tourist groups.

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
Database of Slovenian Exporters

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



LJUBLJANA
ARBITRATION CENTRE
AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY OF SLOVENIA



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.

An ecosystem of talented and capable professionals in Slovenia and abroad

5.

World-class consultants with vast knowledge and experience

6.

Priceless opportunities for data mining with access to countless databases

7.

Relevant, high-quality business information on markets and actors



Business – Conference Centre

Our premises feature multipurpose halls, classrooms, and council rooms of all sizes and purpose, as well as an event hall with a view to Ljubljana Castle. All of them are equipped with state-of-the-art and user-friendly equipment, and can be rented by the hour, day, week, or even month. The same goes for offices with all necessary infrastructure.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

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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



Photo: Alfastreet Marine

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.

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



Photo: Adria Mobil

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.

Among glamping home 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



Photo: Adria Dom

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 home 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. "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.



Photo: Hidria

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.

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,



Photo: Akrapovič

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 97 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 purchased several Pipistrel electric drive systems that are normally used to power our Taurus Electro G2 aircraft. They 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, the VTOLs will be in public use by 2025. 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.



Photo: Pipistrel

"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



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.

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



Photo: Domel

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 for the regulation of heating and air-conditioning in residential and business buildings to partners in over

"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

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 recently introduced three major new products. 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.

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



Photo: Danfoss Trata



Photo: Pinar



Photo: Skaza

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 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 Skaza 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.”

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 spirit 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



Photo: Steklarna Hrastnik

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.



A GLOBAL FAMILY OF BRANDS



SUPERIOR SANITARY SOLUTIONS



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.

An innovative range of yoghurts, the 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 therefore take 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 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



Photo: Gorenjka

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 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.

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,



Photo: Žito



Photo: Don Don

The Aktiva Group – safe, clean and organised SE Europe region

With the synergy of knowledge, experience and boldness we aim to develop top-quality services in the fields of security, cleaning and maintenance.

ABOUT THE GROUP

The Aktiva Group consists of companies engaged in the protection of clients and property, cleaning and facility management.

We are establishing long-term partnerships in the region

When fulfilling the needs of customers, we always consider their requirements and expectations. On this basis we want to establish long-term partnerships and cooperation. Our competitive advantage is the knowledge and experience as well as the creativity and entrepreneurship of our employees; they, together with our business partners, are the most important element in the successful operation of the Aktiva Group.

SECURITY

Our customers see us as a reliable and verified partner. Therefore, they trust us to take care of one of the most important human rights – their safety.

Comprehensive security services

Our comprehensive personal security services ensure outstanding security for both companies and individuals. Following the development of technologies and constantly introducing new technical solutions allow us to design safety systems that are adjusted to the security requirements of each individual user.

Committed to quality

The most renowned and largest companies in the region, along with banks, state institutions, and many other customers, large and small, entrust us with their safety.

We have all of the statutory required licences and highly skilled staff for the implementation of security services.

CLEANING

A long tradition, combined with extensive knowledge and wealth of experience, is what distinguishes us from other cleaning service providers on the market.

Professional services

We offer all types of daily and special solutions. Our main objectives are the provision of quality services, satisfaction of our customers and establishment of partnerships with everyone involved in the process.

Some of the most distinguished health, cultural, educational and other public institutions, as well as many other business entities in the areas of trade, tourism, food production and industry, have confidence in our work.

Technical competencies

Due to our modern technological procedures and equipment we are able to provide our customers with top-quality cleaning services.

BUILDING MANAGEMENT

We specialise in the building management and maintenance of different facilities (residential and commercial buildings, shopping centres, etc.).

Custom-tailored services

We offer custom-tailored services in order to provide the best possible care for every facility. The aesthetic and functional perfection of one's living environment are preconditions for a high quality of life and work, and we strive to bring these into the lives of our customers.

PRESENCE IN THE REGION

The Aktiva Group is the largest provider of security, cleaning and building management services in Slovenia and, together with its subsidiaries outside Slovenia, an important actor on the markets of SE Europe.

Indent Serbian company Aktiva Fitep provides the Serbian market and customers with services of equal standard to those in Slovenia. Our customers can



recognise this in the professional services and expert knowledge we provide, as well as in the greater efficiency and higher quality. We offer our services in the entire region of Serbia, and we have regional representative offices in Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Valjevo and Bačka Palanka.

Our services in Serbia include:

- guarding services;
- technical security;
- security-control centre services;
- transport and safeguarding of cash and other valuables;
- risk assessment;
- professional training;
- cleaning of business premises;
- fire protection;
- health and safety at work.

Our branch in Croatia offers:

- guarding services;
- technical security;
- security-control centre services;
- fire protection.

Our goal is to establish a region-wide dynamic system that would offer high-quality security, cleaning and maintenance services that meet the needs of customers, and thus become one of the market leaders.

Our services make the world a better place.



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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 ALIVE 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 ALIVE 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.



Photo: Incom

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.

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



Photo: Delamaris



Photo: Delamaris

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 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 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 says 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.



Photo: Pivovarna Laško Union

EXCELLENT TASTE.
NO PRESERVATIVES. LACTOSE FREE.
Zelene Doline Cheese.

**MLEKARNA CELEIA**



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, Pomurje and 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 themselves 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 exercising, 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 was completed in June this year. 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

list, meaning that the holidays they book 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 accommodation (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.



Photo: Krka Spas

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 and Briljant 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



Photo: Postojnska jama

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



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Photo: Postojnska jama

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 Cerčno 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 Cerčno,” say sources at Postojna Cave.

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 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 specialties, 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. At this time of year, Velika Planina is also popular with hikers, cross-country skiers and other snow lovers. Lovers of skiing on natural snow can choose between the Šimnovec 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 specialties 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.



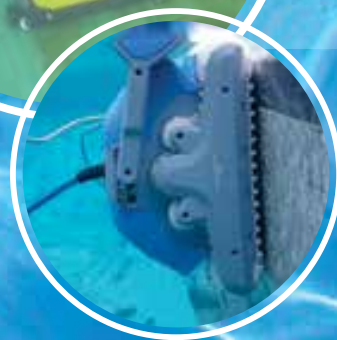
Photo: Velika Planina

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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, Lek also 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 the company's development strategy. It ensures that Krka is able to enter 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. In addition they are 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," says 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 optimisation and adjustment of the production network in Slovenia, through which they are successfully fulfilling the Novartis strategy of focusing on patient-tailored and personalised 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 the Slovenian Development Centre 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, LincomplexTM, 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 this in US market.

In Mengeš they collaborated on the development of three new Sandoz biosimilar 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 biologically 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 modernisation 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: SIJ

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: Belinda Perkemlja

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

With its rich tradition and expertise, the company focuses on the production of high-end CHP units

Metalna Power offers very efficient and highly reliable CHP units, with their operation being monitored from a control centre, run by trained operators from both customer and parent companies.

Metalna Power, d.o.o., established last year, continues to develop the know-how and tradition of Metalna Maribor and Eco power CEA. Metalna Maribor's references and business contacts, which still exist today, are mainly based on some of the largest hydroelectric power plants built in the world, e.g. Haditha and Djerdap. The know-how for the construction of hydroelectric power plants and power plants on the basis of municipal waste arise primarily from Metalna Maribor, whereas the Eco

power CEA's references and expertise are related to the construction of CHP units.

The technical perfection of the completed projects is evidenced by the fact that the company has managed to attract authorised repairers for the leading brands in the sector (MAN, MTU, Jenbacher...), setting them up again under the Metalna Power brand.

Numerous references

Metalna Power's competitive advantages lie in CHP facilities, where most of its references are related to successfully completed high power gas engine projects in Slovenia. It upgrades its activities based on this foundation in the gas and steam turbine market niche, where it operates with two business

partners: KAWASAKI Gas Turbine Europe GmbH for lower power units and Siemens d.d. Power and Gas Division for higher power units, as a long-term priority, complemented by natural or synthetic gas cogeneration systems and separate power generation using diesel engines operating on HFO.

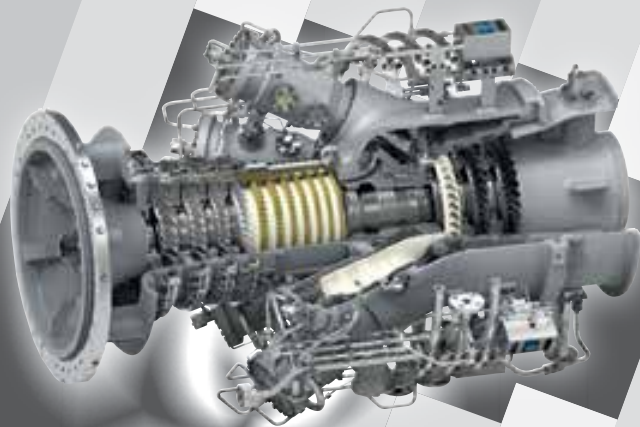
The components of their cogeneration plants are selected on the basis of long-term engine/turbine suppliers' experience and the longstanding experience of its own employees. The best possible materials have been chosen for the facilities and simple solutions used with a focus on maintenance, thus adjusting the repair intervals in order to ensure long-term and continuing operation of the facilities.

PROMO

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OUR BUSINESS
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How Marmor Hotavlje became a global leader of stone solutions

The people of Hotavlje have been quarrying and cutting marble for centuries, now it is used to furnish luxury buildings and mega yachts.

Stone can be much more than just a construction element. In the hands of artists, magnificent, unique and timeless, it displays an amazing variety of ways to add value. To achieve its true magnificence requires an understanding of its "soul", and surgical precision. Only experienced masters have the skills needed to shape the stone. Such as those in Hotavlje, where the stonecutters have been searching for the beauty hidden in rock for centuries. The uniqueness of Hotavlje's marble is its specific colour palette, which goes from dark and light grey to a lush pink and scarlet.



"If you want to remain the best, you have to constantly improve your quality and increase your knowledge. The skills we had in the past are not enough in today's market. Therefore being development-oriented is an extremely important value for both our employees and our company," say sources at Marmor Hotavlje, which was established more than 70 years ago, in 1948, when three centuries of experience and love for working stone were gathered under one roof.

They bring ideas to life

Marmor Hotavlje is working with all types of stone, from natural to artificial. They are constantly searching for new materials worldwide and they are always a step ahead of the rest. Their focus, determination and hard-work has helped them to be able to develop

new techniques of stone processing with completely new innovative ideas and approaches. »Architects and designers bring us their ideas, consult with us about which stone can be used to get a particular look, which finish or thickness is appropriate, what our maximum dimensions are, what kinds of details we can create in bas-relief, and what kinds of stairs, statues, or furniture we can make. In response, we work up high-grade samples and a presentation of the solution," say sources at Marmor Hotavlje.

From a stonecutting company to an engineering firm

The solutions are developed and implemented by a team of more than 150 employees, from engineers, technicians, architects, designers and master stonecutters, who combine the experience of the past with a passion for the future. In addition to modern technology, they are preserving and continuing to develop the knowledge of traditional hand stonecutting skills. In order to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, the company had to transform itself from a stonecutting company into an engineering firm. They operate as a strong and close-knit team, in which everyone knows that a good final product depends on every step in its manufacture.

Worldwide distribution

From the early beginning Marmor Hotavlje was focused on more demanding projects. In the past, that was connected with public buildings, restoration & renovation of cultural heritage, memorials, etc. But having penetrated the luxury furnishings market the core business of the company changed completely. They have finished over 100 vessels and mega yachts in the last two decades, but they are also very active in the fields of private villas, bespoke furniture and art.

Wherever you go in Slovenia and around the world, you will find wonderful marble creations made by the master stonecutters of Hotavlje. In Slovenia you can find different amazing creations such as National University of Ljubljana, Slovenian Parliament, Hotel Kempinski Palace among many others.

Marmor Hotavlje's big success has led to the opening of its subsidiary company in Serbia with the goal to approach the local and foreign markets on a wider scale. One of the proudest projects of the company is definitely the second largest Orthodox church in the world - Saint Sava, where they provided stone solutions for the interior and exterior part of the church. They have also worked on different luxurious project such as HTPC Rajičeva, Urban Villa on Ušička 56, Residential building on Pariška 8 among others.

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 have 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, for example, 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: Talum



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.



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.”

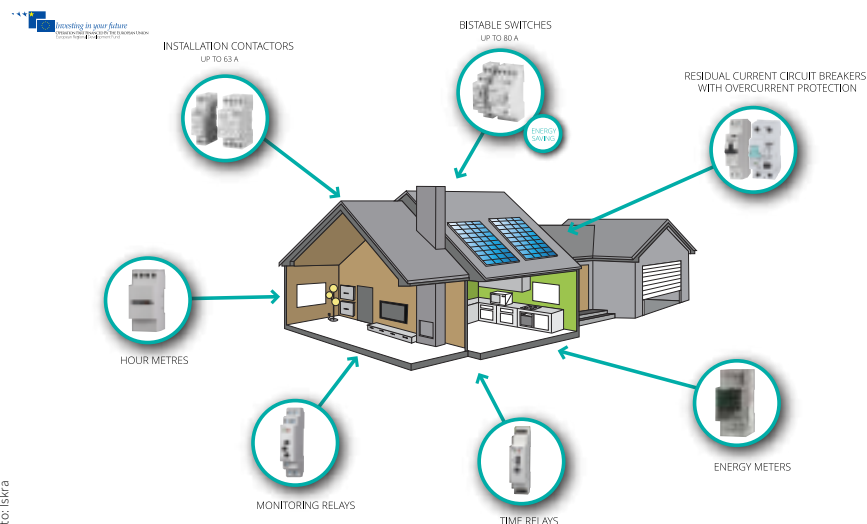
Over the last year, the Semič business unit, which is responsible for manufacturing capacitor products, has brought out capacitors for electrical consumer devices (KNB1580), AC capacitors for renewable sources and converters (KNI5048, KNI4053 and KNI4051) and KNM1428-type engine capacitors.

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



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

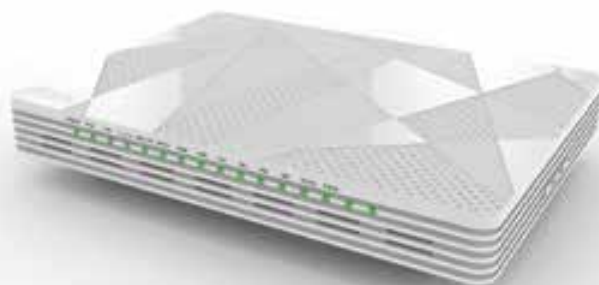


Photo: IskraTel

“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 clear 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, at Otoče they 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, Steklarna Hrastnik), 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.”

Iskratek Promotes Innovation

With over 70 years' experience, Iskratel 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 Iskratel. 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 Iskratel 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. Iskratel's vIMS solution provides a wide range of telecommunications functions and interfaces, high operational

Photo: Iskratel



"The initial contact was exceptionally important. This was followed by a process of verifying Iskratel'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 Iskratel 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 Iskratel 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 Iskratel Group in Norway, on why they chose the Iskratel 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 Iskratel'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 Iskratel.

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 Southeast 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-page 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.

Photo: Pošta Slovenije



“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 week-day 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 Slovenia

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.

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. 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



Photo: Pošta Slovenije

Actively involved in building logistics

between the Balkans, Asia, the US and Europe



By providing excellent general and groupage services at competitive prices the Milšped Group is building an extensive logistics network between the Old Continent, Asia and the US

The Milšped Group has been operating in Southeast Europe for over twenty-five years and, in addition to offering comprehensive logistics services across all of the Balkans, it is also spreading globally. A year ago, it began to actively connect Asia and the Americas with Europe through sea and air transport operated via its branch offices in China and the US.

Leading road transport provider in the region

Milšped is the leading international road transport provider in Southeast Europe for both automobile logistics and general cargo. It uses the latest technology in the field and, by owning a state-of-the-art fleet for both of these segments, provides added value to its customers.

Betting on excellence and speed

Serving as the group's point of entry and exit into and from the Balkans, Milšped Slovenia stands out due to its excellent and fast operations, and credible and skilled logistics team, which always finds the right solution for the customer – either with regard to road transport, customs clearance and brokerage, and warehousing with deliveries across Slovenia, or sea and air transport around the globe.

Extensive groupage network

Milšped Slovenia dedicates special attention to customers that require transport of smaller quantities of goods (i.e., one or only several pallets) from Europe to the Balkan countries, and vice versa. Customers receive the best service at the highest speed and excellent prices. All this is made possible by its extensive groupage network with daily services, or the groupage and LTL service. With its daily groupage service for the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Milšped Slovenia can provide a very good, reliable and fast service to both existing and potential customers. For this reason, shipments from the big systems, partners and customers to whom such a service is very important are also entrusted to them. The company is proud of the long-standing partnership in groupage and LTL transport with large systems all over Europe.

Present in various industries

Milšped Slovenia's customers are from different industries, such as the textile, auto, and production industries, and with the combination of all shipments, it can provide a satisfactory service for all.

Check it out and e-mail your request to gls.slo@milsped.com, or send a general inquiry to office.si@milsped.com.

Milšped's own general transport fleet comprises twenty vehicles (refrigerated, mega and tandem trucks), which supply large chains in the food and other industries (electronic devices, household appliances, textiles, etc.)



Our own fleet of car carriers consists of more than 60 trucks in Slovenia alone, plus the segment of luxury car transport as shown in the photo.





Photo: DARS

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.

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.

Logistics connections between Spain, France, Italy and our warehouse in Ljubljana.

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CALIBRATION LABORATORY LK – 030



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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



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.”

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

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 South-East Europe region, Ukraine and Switzerland. “We are also open to new partnerships in every country in which



Photo: Databab

our branches are based, as 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

Photo: Databab



“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

reason why the company has managed to catch the 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: Cetis

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

Cetis 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: Cetis



Photo: Litostroј 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 the document, ensuring protection against forgery and counterfeiting," say Cetis. 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

Litostroј 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." Litostroј 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 supply of spare parts. 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 developed, manufactured, tested



Photo: Sibogroup

and installed a fire safety window for a well-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

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.”

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.

G
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List of 100 Largest Exporters

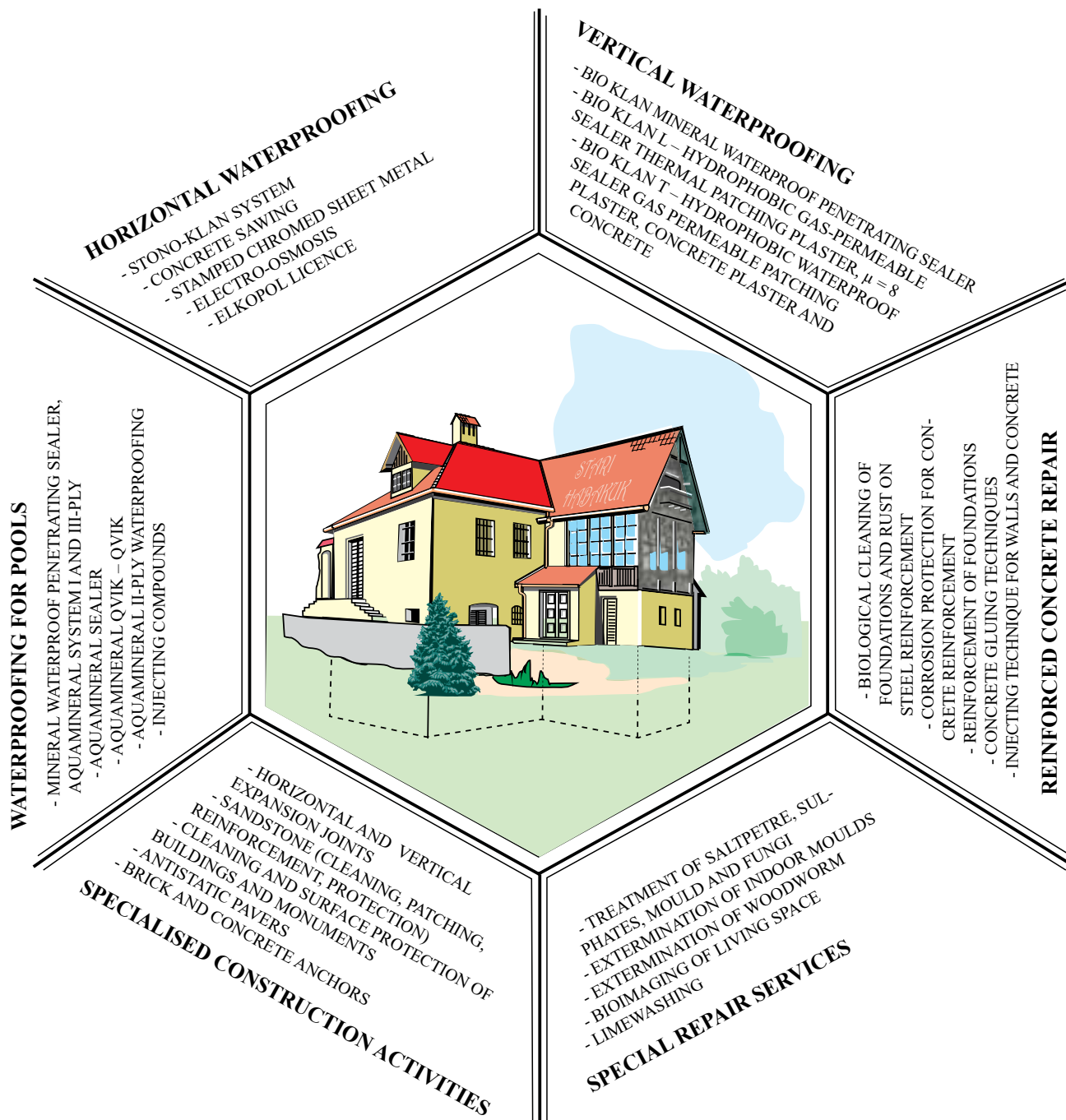
Source: Bisnode Gvin, Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES)

* The list includes companies that present their financial statements, and have submitted data for the previous year to AJPES by the end of March. Figures on exports, value added, and number of employees do not include data from the subsidiaries. The order of top exports is different at the group level (consolidated balance sheets).

Company/Group name	Net sales revenue on foreign markets, in million EUR	Index 18/17	Percentage of sales on foreign markets (%)	Number of employees	Value added, in million EUR
1 GEN-I, d.o.o.	1,899.6	97.50	80.2	308	27.4
2 REVOZ d.d.	1,754.9	111.40	99.1	2,701	197.5
3 PETROL d.d., Ljubljana	1,657.2	122.30	39.0	1,736	198.7
4 KRKA, d.d., Novo mesto	1,177.3	102.80	95.6	5,002	536.6
5 Lek d.d.	1,014.1	112.20	95.5	3,793	426.4
6 HSE d.o.o.	945.7	82.90	63.8	167	65.8
7 Gorenje, d.o.o.	758.4	106.60	92.3	4,391	72.1
8 BELEKTRON d.o.o.	724.5	242.80	98.5	5	29.2
9 IMPOL d.o.o.	662.7	107.10	83.7	40	31.9
10 Interenergo d.o.o.	601.4	78.30	90.2	33	1.7
11 ADRIA MOBIL, d.o.o. Novo mesto	383.5	111.40	98.5	1,021	79.5
12 HELLA SATURNUS SLOVENIJA d.o.o.	379.5	101.10	96.7	1,743	104.7
13 SIJ ACRONI d.o.o.	373.7	102.90	86.6	1,372	70.5
14 Sandoz d.d.	309.4	134.10	100.0	937	51.8
15 TALUM d.d. Kidričevo	302.6	108.40	81.4	952	39.8
16 LTH Castings d.o.o.	289.7	113.20	99.6	1,816	112.4
17 BSH HIŠNI APARATI d.o.o. Nazarje	286.7	89.60	91.8	1,127	59.2
18 RENAULT NISSAN SLOVENIJA, d.o.o.	261.4	121.10	48.9	110	15.6
19 TAB d.d.	258.1	104.60	92.1	652	55.2
20 AquafilSLO d.o.o.	245.3	108.30	99.5	856	40.9
21 GEOPLIN d.o.o. Ljubljana	235.2	123.30	59.4	43	5.9
22 MAHLE Electric Drives Slovenija d.o.o.	227.4	112.30	95.2	1,759	53.7
23 CIMOS d.d.	215.5	89.10	96.2	890	34.7
24 Odelo Slovenija d.o.o.	199.9	111.60	99.8	1,210	58.4
25 HIDRIA d.o.o.	197.5	132.10	89.7	1,587	69.4
26 PRESKOK d.o.o.	195.6	131.50	99.3	11	6.3
27 CARTHAGO d.o.o.	193.5	95.40	100.0	765	32.8
28 GOODYEAR DUNLOP SAVA TIRES d.o.o.	179.6	103.40	81.5	1,538	75.9
29 ADRIA AIRWAYS d.o.o.	176.3	112.80	99.2	436	14.0
30 Helios TBLUS d.o.o.	173.0	97.50	85.2	789	43.7
31 SŽ - Tovorni promet, d.o.o.	159.1	97.60	89.4	1,206	67.5
32 LUKA KOPER, d.d.	154.6	106.80	69.3	1,021	153.7
33 KOLIČEVO KARTON, d.o.o.	154.3	100.70	92.6	389	41.5
34 UNIOR d.d.	152.4	103.60	88.4	1,780	64.7
35 BOXMARK LEATHER d.o.o.	151.7	96.40	99.9	1,552	23.4
36 KOLEKTOR GROUP d.o.o.	150.2	105.40	87.3	245	15.5
37 CINKARNA Celje, d.d.	142.3	86.70	86.8	876	78.9
38 SIJ METAL RAVNE d.o.o.	138.1	107.70	71.0	1,060	51.1
39 VALIANT d.o.o.	135.9	125.90	99.6	8	2.0
40 DOMEL, d.o.o.	129.7	105.50	90.3	1,030	42.4
41 Kuwait Petroleum d.o.o.	128.9	129.60	87.8	0	3.7
42 ADK d.o.o.	126.2	114.40	98.7	632	29.9
43 NOVEM CAR INTERIOR DESIGN d.o.o.	123.2	123.60	99.9	753	21.6
44 ISKRAEMECO, d.d.	120.9	117.50	96.0	732	35.6
45 TELEKOM SLOVENIJE, d.d.	120.6	95.10	18.8	2,196	242.7
46 DANFOSS TRATA, d.o.o.	115.3	109.70	94.1	476	36.7
47 Akrapovič d.d.	110.2	104.80	98.8	1,074	56.5

35 YEARS – 500 BUILDINGS

UNIQUE RANGE OF SERVICES USING INVENTIONS AND PATENTS ON
MINERAL-BASED MATERIALS FROM MOTHER EARTH FOR HEALTHY
AND SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION



Company/Group name	Net sales revenue on foreign markets, in million EUR	Index 18/17	Percentage of sales on foreign markets (%)	Number of employees	Value added, in million EUR
48 Droga Kolinska d.d.	109.4	93.20	64.6	443	39.3
49 PAPIRNICA VEVČE d.o.o.	103.2	109.10	95.6	143	8.8
50 PALFINGER d.o.o.	103.0	112.30	94.6	646	29.4
51 Trelleborg Slovenija, d.o.o.	101.4	102.40	89.2	822	43.3
52 Adient Slovenj Gradec d.o.o.	100.2	105.80	98.2	677	20.4
53 KNAUF INSULATION, d.o.o., Škofja Loka	99.9	107.70	78.2	395	38.6
54 GKN Driveline Slovenija, d.o.o.	99.6	132.40	92.7	426	21.6
55 ŠTORE STEEL d.o.o.	93.9	111.60	67.7	548	32.9
56 RASTODER, d.o.o.	91.4	88.50	78.9	55	13.6
57 ELRAD INTERNATIONAL d.o.o.	89.3	119.10	91.1	537	26.4
58 TRIMO d.o.o.	88.7	101.20	80.9	363	19.9
59 DINOS d.o.o.	87.4	113.30	57.2	311	13.0
60 KOLEKTOR ETRA d.o.o.	87.2	103.20	86.1	382	23.1
61 VIPAP VIDEM KRŠKO d.d.	86.8	108.30	89.6	338	16.3
62 STARKOM d.o.o.	86.6	103.50	97.7	328	19.3
63 ETI, d.o.o.	85.7	101.20	87.1	781	27.1
64 BAYER d.o.o.	84.9	104.70	66.5	128	16.4
65 FILC d.o.o.	80.1	105.80	93.9	341	32.7
66 GLOVIS EUROPE GmbH, Koper Branch	79.8	112.30	90.8	15	8.1
67 ISKRA MEHANIZMI, d.o.o.	78.8	105.30	89.7	491	16.8
68 NEK d.o.o.	77.9	99.20	49.5	619	71.0
69 ContiTech Slovenija, d.o.o.	77.3	92.70	97.7	353	24.6
70 ebm-papst Slovenija d.o.o.	76.2	98.20	98.4	412	14.0
71 DIVA TRADING d.o.o.	76.1	250.80	100.0	0	-12.1
72 WEILER Abrasives d.o.o.	75.9	98.70	93.6	786	28.5
73 PERUTNINA PTUJ d.d.	75.7	109.70	45.9	1,401	48.8
74 AVTO TRIGLAV d.o.o., Ljubljana	75.4	150.90	47.4	93	6.7
75 TOYOTA ADRIA d.o.o.	75.0	-	56.2	44	3.9
76 TPV d.o.o.	73.5	103.70	85.7	934	36.4
77 SILKEM d.o.o.	71.0	117.20	94.2	205	15.3
78 ARCONT d.d. Gornja Radgona	69.9	106.90	99.1	674	20.8
79 Titus d.o.o. Dekani	69.2	101.70	78.4	420	25.2
80 Paloma d.d.	68.3	96.10	83.4	549	11.3
81 KOVINTRADE d.d. Celje	68.2	112.40	40.8	189	10.0
82 Calcit d.o.o.	67.9	106.60	86.4	155	21.6
83 GORIČANE, d.d. Medvode	65.5	110.10	89.0	212	8.7
84 BRAVOPHONE d.o.o.	64.2	106.00	100.0	1	0.3
85 ELAN, d.o.o.	63.5	102.40	93.7	665	22.9
86 ITW Appliance Components d.o.o.	63.1	93.60	85.1	311	22.4
87 VOLNIK d.o.o.	63.0	249.30	97.4	1	1.2
88 TBP d.d.	61.6	101.70	99.7	865	24.6
89 LJUBLJANSKE MLEKARNE d.o.o.	61.1	100.40	36.2	606	30.5
90 RIKO, d.o.o.	60.5	140.30	62.2	121	7.8
91 ISKRA, d.o.o.	58.5	110.40	64.0	1,056	37.6
92 Continental Adria d.o.o.	57.5	99.10	63.5	32	4.5
93 TKK d.o.o.	57.0	106.10	88.5	214	14.7
94 STEKLARNA HRASTNIK d.o.o.	56.9	102.90	95.8	525	28.3
95 MEDIS, d.o.o.	56.8	129.40	57.7	140	16.5
96 Frutarom Etol d.o.o.	56.2	105.70	85.7	227	25.1
97 INTERBLOCK d.d.	56.1	79.10	97.7	202	28.5
98 INOTHERM d.o.o.	55.6	112.80	93.6	243	24.5
99 ODPAD d.o.o. Pivka	55.2	109.20	64.9	27	3.3
100 AYEN ENERGIJA d.o.o.	53.5	238.10	91.0	1	0.7

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