

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Second Voluntary National Review

SLOVENIA 2020



MESSAGE BY THE PRIME MINISTER



The commitment of world leaders to end poverty and combat climate change and inequalities at the historic UN summit in New York in September 2015 summarised the aspirations of the greater part of humanity.

The 2030 Agenda is universal and indivisible. It calls for action by all countries, the developed and developing, as well as all people to end poverty, prevent the adverse impact of climate change and combat inequalities by 2030. Hence, the 2030 Agenda offers a better future for billions of people around the world and for our planet as a whole.

We live in a rapidly changing world. Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic has made us realise that everything we have is not forever given – what we have is not ours and we are only co-travellers on Earth that we will leave behind for our future generations. We don't know when or how. What we do know is that a world based on fear, injustice, scarcity, and oppression is not a world we want to leave for generations to come. We know that each and every individual, family, community and country should, first and foremost, be free, sovereign and responsible for themselves, their health and their position in society and the world, accepting equal responsibility for the well-being of others. Freedom and solidarity can achieve a good goal only if placed side by side and acting hand in hand.

Slovenia was one of the first countries to adopt its national development strategy by 2030. It incorporated sustainable development goals in the frame of its national priorities and targets. Slovenia is presenting its Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals already for the second time in five years since the adoption of this global commitment, which clearly indicates its commitment to transparent and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Time flies relentlessly. 2030 is almost here. I am under no illusion that the changes we have to make to our mindset and action in order to achieve the set 2030 Agenda goals can happen overnight. What I do know is that being an optimist is certainly a good starting point for everything we do in life. The way we respond to everyday challenges determines whether we will be able to see beyond the problems.

Janez Janša

Prime Minister of Slovenia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janez Janša".

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GNP	Gross National Product
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
IMAD	Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
ITF	ITF Enhancing Human Security
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IVeH	International Virtual e-Hospital Foundation
JRC	Joint Research Centre
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
NECP	National Energy and Climate Plan 2030.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training Generation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SDSS	Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation



1. INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has transformed the hitherto prevalent development paradigm. Indeed, in addition to the three components of sustainable development, namely the environmental, economic, and social components, which should form a mutually balanced whole, the 2030 Agenda includes developed countries among the entities that should strive to achieve sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda thus firmly outlines the importance of every country putting every effort into their own development, which will enable their citizens to live in dignity and peace, in a clean environment, and in economic prosperity.

Creativity, heritage, knowledge and diversity are the key building bricks of development, with the culture as their common denominator. Culture as form of knowledge capital and sector of economic activities helps foster sustainability, promotes an inclusive and balanced economic development and environmental sustainability, and builds peace and security. Cultural sources, like tangible and intangible heritage, art and cultural expressions are the essential element allowing the people and communities to develop and grow. Culture is the driver of many development processes, spurring entrepreneurship and new technologies and boosting growth while bringing creativity and innovation in the economy. Culture is closely linked with the social dimension: it offers a set of tools to help us combat poverty, it builds capacities and creates opportunities for vulnerable groups, improves resilience, durability and connections between the community and the planet, fosters citizen participation, strengthens the role of community and encourages intercultural dialogue, promotes conflict solutions and equal rights. Furthermore, culture involves the environmental dimension, as cultural and natural diversity are inextricably connected. Cultural activities, products, services and heritage have a cultural value in themselves, as they give identity, meaning and value to our life thus being an indispensable dimension thereof.

We have never been so globally connected and communication with web-based tools and social networks has become part of our everyday lives. Never before has our planet been so inhabited and the Earth has never been as polluted as today. Most of the challenges that are addressed by the 2030 Agenda through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can no longer be solved individually, meaning that countries should stand together in addressing them. The international community and multilateralism have been put to the test several times now (namely with the economic and financial crisis, the refugee crisis, regional tensions and wars, and the COVID-19 pandemic), and every time we can see the real power of cooperation. Each such challenge changes the face of international cooperation and is an opportunity to build a more resilient and sustainable system.

2020 has proven to be a turning point for the 2030 Agenda for several reasons. Five years have passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and we can conclude that there is no room for excuses for not achieving the SGGs; indeed, the time has come to act, move forward and demonstrate results at national levels. Upon entering a decade of concrete actions to achieve the SDGs, the European Commission adopted the European Green Agreement, which aims to make Europe the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050. All of the abovementioned forms a platform for reflecting on the methods applied thus far in terms of implementing the SDGs, as well for outlining the new, short- and medium-term limit values that we, as an international community, will strive to respect.

Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 is the country's umbrella development framework outlining a high quality of life for all. Slovenia incorporated the SDGs into its Development Strategy 2030. The Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs by the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter also referred to as the Review) presents the state-of-play and progress made in achieving the SDGs. We took an inclusive approach to the design of the Review by basing the document on the active participation of the relevant stakeholders and vulnerable groups, as well as on consultation with various stakeholders (local, regional and national bodies, civil society, businesses).

By bearing in mind that each and every citizen acts as the key building blocks of our own future and by truly and actively implementing the principle of *leaving no one behind*, we believe that through the process of designing the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs we have managed to build a solid community of diverse stakeholders.



2. THE PROCESS OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW PREPARATION

The design of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs was coordinated by the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GODC). The preparation process was highly inclusive. Indeed, in addition to the ministries, Slovenian public institutes and centres, non-governmental organisations, interest associations, research and scientific institutions, private sector stakeholders, youth organisations, local stakeholders and other relevant individuals were actively involved in the preparation process.

Slovenia upgraded the inclusive manner of developing the Second Voluntary National Review by also raising awareness and informing the relevant stakeholders of the state-of-play regarding the implementation of individual SDGs. By doing so, the GODC took each meeting as an opportunity to present the SDG paradigm and the concrete actions and changes that guided the development of trends in the 2017-2020 period.

Pursuing the principle of transparency, inclusive preparation and with the aim of further monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the individual SDGs, a specific website was established in 2020 (www.slovenia2030.si). The website provides information about all the indicators for Slovenia from 2015 onwards (monitoring of certain indicators dates back to the period before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), as well information regarding the process of inclusive preparation, reports from individual consultations and a tab with topical content, examples of good practices and the challenges faced by individual segments of society or the economy in Slovenia.

Drafting the set of indicators

For the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs, the ministries and the GODC, in cooperation with SORS and IMAD, drafted a set of 54 indicators that best reflect the situation regarding sustainable development in Slovenia. The indicators are, to a large extent, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicators. Certain indicators are, however, specific and are monitored at the national level in the scope of Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. For the majority of the indicators the values are monitored on an annual basis. The values regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicators are available in the statistical annex.

Including different stakeholders in the preparation process

Before meeting with various stakeholders aiming to take an inclusive approach to designing the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs, the GODC invited all ministries and two key institutions for monitoring statistics at the national level, namely the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) and the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD) to appoint a contact person responsible for communicating matters in the competences of individual ministries and offices for the purposes of preparing the Second Voluntary National Review. These contact persons are also responsible for awareness-raising and spreading knowledge regarding SDGs (mainstreaming).

In early autumn 2019, the GODC held introductory meetings with three groups of stakeholders, namely the representatives of ministries, regional development agencies and other key national level stakeholders. This was the basis for taking an inclusive approach to the preparation process, which involved three levels:

- national level (cooperation among line ministries and other affiliated bodies),
- local level (regional development agencies and local stakeholders in 12 Slovenian development regions, including municipalities and cities),
- civil society (NGOs and other non-state actors operating at the national level).

In addition to the presentation of the contents and the joint creation of the process by the stakeholders, the introductory meetings were an opportunity to get to know individual stakeholders and their expectations, both those operating at the national level as well as all other key actors involved in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Building a trust-worthy environment

At the introductory meeting with key stakeholders at the level of civil society, an interactive workshop was held where the participants had the opportunity to form their opinions regarding the planned process and propose other methods of enhancing their level of participation in the preparation of the Second Voluntary National Review. Constructive criticisms and proposals were taken into account and the whole design of the inclusive preparation of the Review was in line with the given proposals. The GODC identified and invited stakeholders to participate and involve those individuals who believed that their expert opinions could contribute relevant information and assess the state-of-play regarding the achievement of individual SDGs in Slovenia.

The GODC also took an inclusive approach to involving local stakeholders. Regional development agencies were given the task of identifying relevant local stakeholders. Their role was primarily to promote networking and develop partnership networks between various stakeholders, whose activities co-shape the sustainable development of the regions. They not only have a quality overview of the state-of-play of development in the region, but also of the stakeholders who contribute to regional development.

With the above-presented method of cooperation, Slovenia ensured the active participation of all key stakeholders in the very design of the process of developing the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs.

Involvement of the central public administration

In the framework of drafting the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the ministries prepared thematic contributions that presented their position regarding the statistical trends of the relevant indicators. These comprised the legal basis and actions within each area. Cooperation with the ministries was organised through appointed contacts responsible for drafting the Review.

Involvement of civil society and public institutions

Slovenia realises that attainment of the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels (local, regional, national, institutional and individual) is key to implementing the mentioned Agenda. With the aim of obtaining impartial and credible information from civil society, the GODC decided to contact the representative civil society organisation, namely the network of non-governmental organisations called the SLOGA Platform. Its work pertains to the fields of global learning, development cooperation and humanitarian aid. In cooperation with SLOGA, the GODC organised 12 regional consultations, one in each development region. The purpose of the consultations was to obtain "knowledge of the other side of the story." Just as line ministries had to present their positions regarding individual statistical trends, at regional consultations we asked local stakeholders to do the same. We also invited them to present the state-of-play regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals in their environment, in order to encourage them to reflect on how they can monitor the implementation thereof in their local environment.

The SLOGA Platform, which is preparing a shadow report for the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs, also included the information obtained at the regional workshops it its report.

Despite the fact that every stakeholder involved is aware that cooperation plays a crucial role in achieving better results, we are still prone to work in silos. The peak of the activities relating to the inclusive approach to the design of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs were, indeed, the joint activities carried out by government and non-government stakeholders. Topical workshops were divided into conceptual sets of individual SDGs as the workshops were focused on an in-depth analysis thereof. By working in smaller groups, which consisted of the representatives of ministries as well as other key stakeholders, the participants discussed the main challenges of individual SDGs in Slovenia.

Youth initiatives

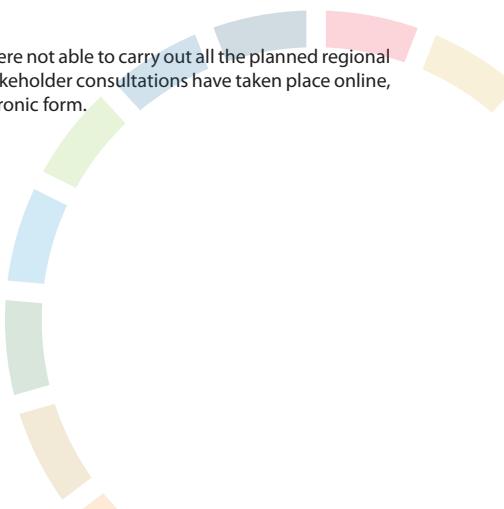
In cooperation with the Youth Council of Slovenia, we held a consultation with youth representatives to gain insight into what younger generations think of individual SDGs. The debates held within the consultations resulted in the formulation of recommendations for Slovenia's future actions in the field of sustainable development. The Review presents all the key challenges and good practices outlined by the youth. Before holding the consultations, we carried out an online survey with youth which showed that the following topics prove to be most relevant for youth in the field of sustainable development:

- locally grown food,
- closer cooperation between education institutions and the economy,
- fast and affordable public transport,
- nature protection and sustainable cities,
- and climate action.

When asked to evaluate how successful Slovenia is in addressing certain aspects of sustainable development on a scale from one to five in the six areas most relevant to youth, the evaluation ranged from 2.5 to 2.8. This is a clear demonstration that the inclusion of youth in sustainable development policy design is highly important.

The above method of designing the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs aimed at establishing a balance between taking into account the proposals of the state as the entity drafting the document, as well as the proposals of civil society in Slovenia. Cooperation with other stakeholders facilitates the flow and exchange of information. It is important for non-state actors to receive key guidelines from the state regarding how to more effectively implement SDGs in Slovenia. For state actors, it is crucial that non-state actors inform them of the situation and activities on the ground. Working together improves the integrated and efficient design and implementation of development policies as well as the achievement of goals. Relevant stakeholders contributed ideas and suggestions to the design of the Review and played an active role in its preparation.

Due to the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to carry out all the planned regional consultations and thematic workshops. As of March 2020, stakeholder consultations have taken place online, and the contributions are gathered and coordinated in electronic form.



3. THE STORY OF SUSTAINABLE SLOVENIA

The story of sustainable Slovenia is narrated by all the citizens of Slovenia. For the most part, the narrative is being created for the generations to come, which is why we strive for the story to be in line with its content, namely sustainable.

Narrating the story

Every story is narrated in the framework of specific circumstances. In the case of reporting on the implementation of the SDGs, the circumstances are formed at various levels and contexts. The preparation of the Review is a state-led process, which is why heads of state should be committed to SDGs and their implementation under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

a) Creating ownership

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia is firmly committed to implementing the SDGs. In 2020 Slovenia prepared the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs (the First Voluntary National Review was prepared in 2017). The GODC acts as the national coordinator for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and is responsible for raising awareness and the flow of information between key stakeholders. Therefore, all ministries have appointed a contact person for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia before its publication.

b) Integrating the three dimensions

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is designed along three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Policy-making should thus take into account all three levels. In the Review Slovenia devotes equal emphasis to each dimension. Slovenia's efforts are reflected through two priorities inseparably related to these dimensions, namely the low-carbon circular economy and demographic change.

Like many other countries around the world, Slovenia is facing demographic changes that will have a major impact on the future development of society and the quality of life. The demographic changes are mainly marked by an aging population, resulting in an increase in the number of people over the age of 65, low birth rates, and a decrease in the number of people in the 20-64 age group. According to population projections, the aging process will accelerate in the future, and the share of the population over the age of 65 will increase from around 19% in 2017 to around 30% by 2060. **Such demographic change** will result in a relatively rapid decline in the capacity of the active population, which can significantly reduce the ability to enhance economic progress due to the lack of adequate labour, with the latter being a condition for further improvement in living standards. Such demographic change will also increase pressure on the financial sustainability of the social protection systems.

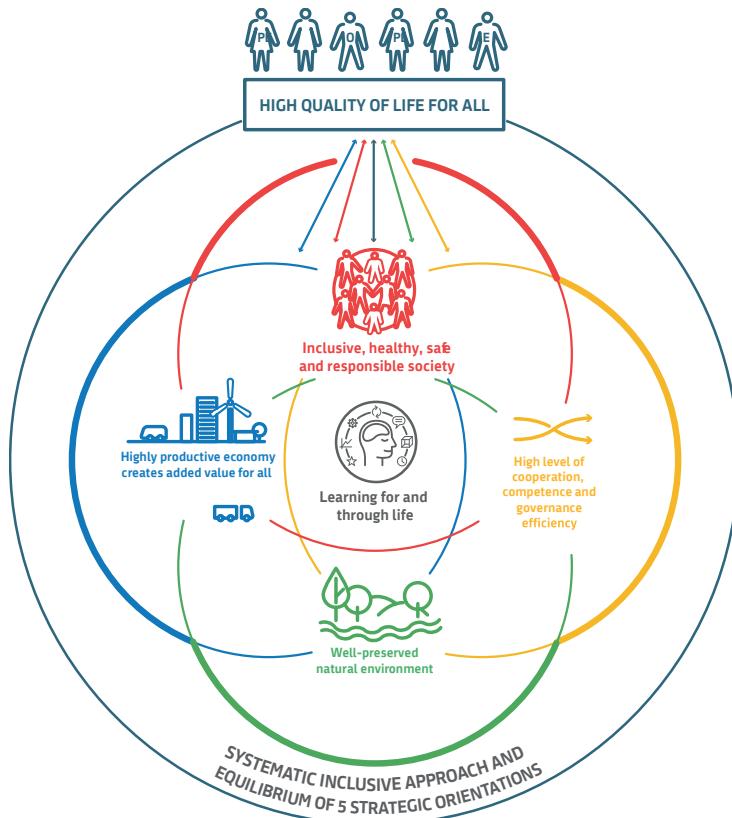
The declining capacity of the active working population, the constant increase in the use of energy resources and the burden on the environment due to rising consumption call for a restructuring of production processes. Slovenia's second key challenge is the **transition to a low-carbon circular economy**. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia recognised the importance of the transition to a low-carbon circular economy by adopting Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 in 2017. In the document, Slovenia decided to break the link between economic growth and growth in raw materials and energy use and the related burdens on the environment. Slovenia is aware of the complexity of such a transition, which is a systemic challenge. At the invitation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), Slovenia is participating in designing a comprehensive strategic project to decarbonise Slovenia through its transition to a circular economy. By doing so, Slovenia aims to improve its material, energy and emission productivity.

Integrating the story of sustainable Slovenia

a) Incorporating the SDGs into national frameworks

In 2017 Slovenia adopted its Development Strategy 2030. The main objective of the strategy is a high quality of life for all. This can be achieved through balanced economic, social, and environmental development that takes into account the limits and capacities of our planet and creates the conditions and opportunities for current and future generations. At the level of the individual, a high quality of life is reflected in good opportunities for work, education, and creativity; a decent, safe, and active life; a healthy and clean environment, and inclusion in the democratic decision-making and co-management of society.

Slovenian development planning model



Slovenian Development Strategy lists 5 strategic orientations and 12 development goals. The implementation of the strategy is monitored annually by IMAD in its development reports. SDGs that relate to the strategic orientations and development goals were also incorporated into the strategy.

b) Coordination mechanism

The GODC acts as the national coordinator for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs by raising awareness and connecting stakeholders in various areas and levels. Line ministries as well as SORS and IMAD appointed their contact persons for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In 2019 the GODC began setting up a mechanism for a transparent review and coordination of the indicators. In cooperation with all the line ministries and organisations, the GODC prepared a list of all the indicators and contact persons for the monitoring and reporting thereof. The list was sent to all entities responsible for the indicators, which will facilitate faster and more direct cooperation amongst experts from various ministries.

Including all different stakeholders

Special attention should be given to vulnerable groups, indeed, there is no real development if development is not enjoyed by everyone. Each individual should be included in such a manner that, *inter alia*, reflects respect for human rights and dignity. The involvement of vulnerable and marginalised groups is the basis for analysing their current status and thus for the efficient design of measures, strategies and policies facilitating progress and an equal status with the majority of the population.

In order to ensure an inclusive approach to the design of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs, Slovenia invited representative organisations of the wider vulnerable and marginalised population to participate (representatives of language minorities, people with disabilities, Roma, the LGBTQI+ community, and representatives of the older population and youth). Organisations fighting for the rights of women and children were also represented in the preparation process. In addition to in-depth insight into the challenges vulnerable groups face, we gathered numerous concrete recommendations.

The design of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs also called for active cooperation with national institutions responsible for promoting and protecting respect for and protection of human rights. The Human Rights Ombudsman, who falls into category A under the Paris Principles, and the Advocate for the Principle of Equality, acting as the national equality body, actively participated in the preparation of the Review and contributed to the inclusion of concrete content.

At the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in March 2020, Slovenia – bearing in mind the importance of the leaving no one behind principle – underlined the problem of limitations regarding or inability to collect disaggregated data. Such a shortcoming in data collection makes it impossible to adopt adequate measures for facilitating progress for those who are at a disadvantage due to structural reasons.



		HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL		Inclusive, healthy, safe and responsible society		Highly productive economy that creates added value for all
GOALS	1 HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFE	2 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL	3 DECENT LIFE FOR ALL	4 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AS MAIN FACTORS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY	5 ECONOMIC STABILITY	6 COMPETITIVE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND RESEARCH SECTOR
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	Healthy Life Years	Adult Participation in Learning 25-64 years	People at Risk of Social Exclusion	Visits to Cultural Events	GDP per Capita in Purchasing Power Parities	Labour Productivity
	Gender Equality Index	Population aged 25-64 with Tertiary Educational Attainment	S80/S20 Income Quintile Share Ratio	Share of Cultural Events Performed Abroad in Total Number of Cultural Events	General Government Gross Debt	European Innovation Index
		PISA - Mean Score in Mathematics, Reading and Science	Personal Experience of Discrimination	Open Source Language Resources and Tools in National Repository	The Digital Economy and Society Index - DESI	
STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS						
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS						



Learning
for and
through life



Well-preserved
natural
environment



High level of
cooperation,
competence and
governance efficiency

7

8

9

10

11

12

**INCLUSIVE
LABOUR MARKET
AND HIGH-QUALITY
JOBS**

**LOW-CARBON
CIRCULAR
ECONOMY**

**SUSTAINABLE
NATURAL
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

**TRUSTWORTHY
LEGAL SYSTEM**

**SAFE AND
GLOBALLY
RESPONSIBLE
SLOVENIA**

**EFFECTIVE
GOVERNANCE AND
HIGH QUALITY
PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Employment Rate
(age 20 to 64)**

Material
Productivity

Utilised Agricultural
Area

Rule of Law Index

Share of Population
That Reported
Occurrences of
Crime, Violation or
Vandalism in Their
Area

Trust in Public
Institutions

In Work at-Risk-
of-Poverty Rate
(age 18 and over)

**Share of Renewable
Energy in Gross
Final Energy
Consumption**

Biochemical
Oxygen Demand
in Rivers

Time Needed to
Resolve Civil and
Commercial
Court Cases

Global Peace
Index

Executive Capacity

GDP per
Total Greenhouse
Gas Emissions

Ecological Footprint





4. SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Akamasoa ("Good Friends" in the Malagasy language) is a town of hope in Madagascar which Slovenian missionary Father Pedro Opeka and local people built on a landfill

With its international development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the Republic of Slovenia contributes to more balanced and just global development and thus assumes a responsible role in eradicating poverty and other inequalities and implementing the SDGs. It places great emphasis on building peaceful and inclusive communities that are resilient to natural disasters and which boast strong public institutions and sustainable management of natural and energy resources. It also promotes mitigation of the consequences of humanitarian crises, strengthening resilience to and the prevention of crises, and contributes, inter alia, to tackling the main reasons for migration.

Slovenia's activities in the field of international development cooperation and humanitarian aid are based on its foreign policy goals outlined in the Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia, the values and development orientations outlined in the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030 (hereinafter: the Strategy) as well as the development goals set at the international community level and, inter alia, outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New European Consensus on Development.

The Strategy outlines in more detail the goals and strategic orientations, operationalises the provisions of the Resolution on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia, and foresees concrete measures for coordinated and efficient action. It also forms a framework for the expansion and development of the field in line with Slovenia's international commitment to increase the share of gross national income allocated to official development aid to 0.33% by 2030.

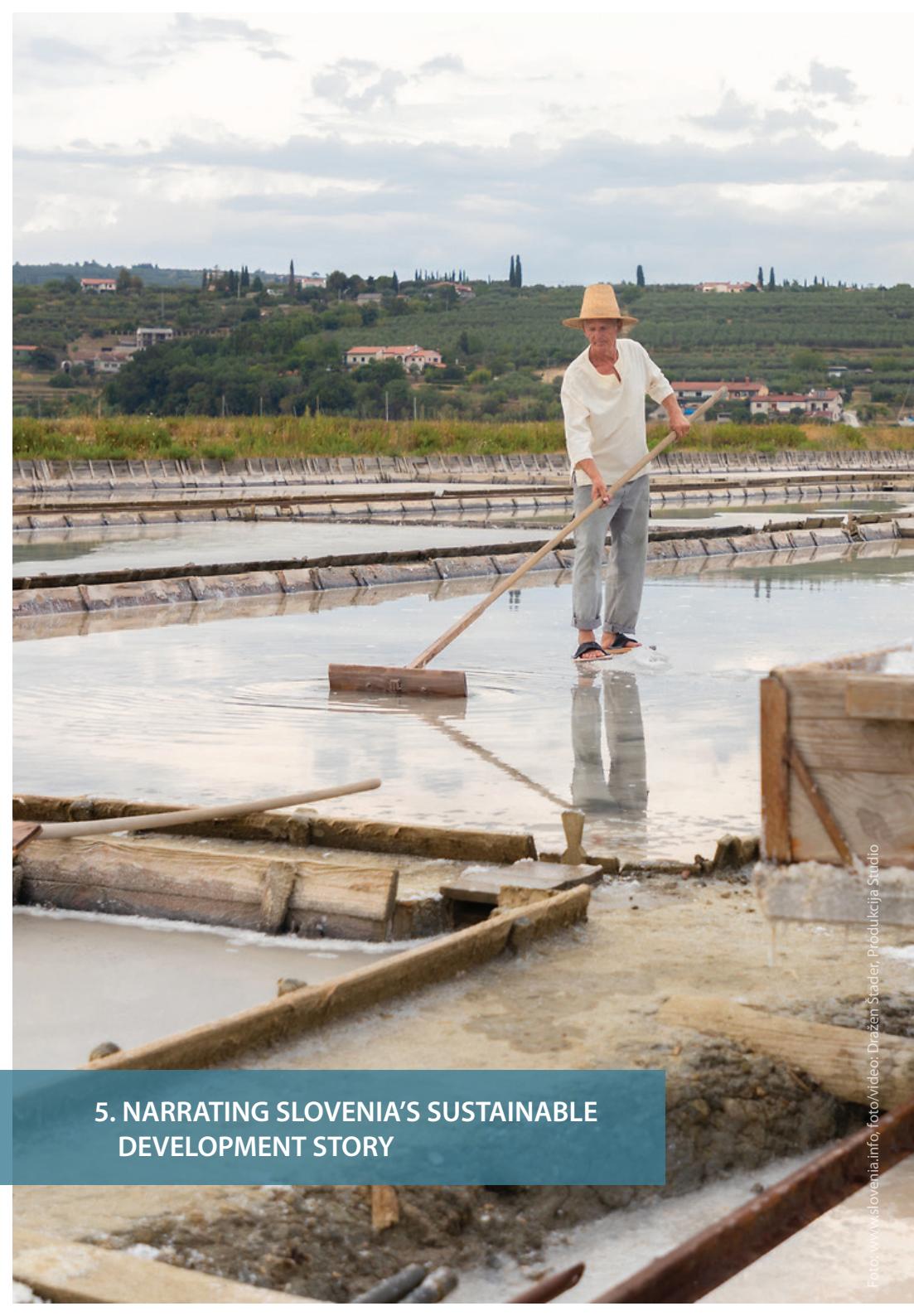
The Strategy outlines development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The Slovenian development cooperation system is focused on two cross-cutting issues: environmental protection and gender equality. Contributions to the implementation thereof are at the core and should be taken into account in all Slovenian development cooperation activities. To this end, in 2017 civil society organisations prepared recommendations on gender equality in development focusing on four areas (women's economic independence; women in decision-making processes; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and violence against women and girls), which were defined as key to achieving the empowerment of women and gender equality.

The Strategy envisages four main topics of development cooperation. Slovenia will strive for:

- decent work and sustainable and inclusive economic development;
- promoting employment possibilities for women and youth and the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- promoting the development of good governance and the rule of law by also supporting effective, responsible and transparent institutions;
- promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and their effective use, particularly by supporting the transition to a circular economy;
- promoting activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.

The Strategy establishes links between its specific thematic sections and the 2030 Agenda SDGs. By doing so, the Strategy lays down the foundations for measuring the results and defines the indicators for monitoring the progress made and for establishing the efficiency of its implementation.

Slovenia has also drafted an Action Plan for the gradual growth of Slovenia's official development aid (ODA) by 2030. In line with international commitments, Slovenia should continue to gradually increase the share of GNI allocated to ODA in order to reach 0.33% of GNI by 2030. In 2017 the share of GNI for ODA fell to 0.16% and stayed at this level in 2018, which means that Slovenia did not reach its goals and should devote every effort to improving the situation. However, Slovenia still remains one of the three countries joining the EU after 2002 (apart from Malta and Estonia) with the highest share of GNI allocated to ODA in 2018. This means that in 2018 Slovenia allocated EUR 70,758,241 to ODA, of which 35% was used for bilateral development aid and 65% for multilateral development aid.



5. NARRATING SLOVENIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STORY

This section presents sustainable development trends that have been monitored in Slovenia since the presentation of the First Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs in 2017, and Slovenia's efforts to positively strengthen the latter.

At the national level, the indicators selected within the framework of individual SDGs are systematically monitored either by SORS or IMAD. The Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs also includes all the indicators monitored in the framework of Slovenian Development Strategy 2030.

Under each indicator, concrete measures that support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are also presented. These indicators have been identified by individual relevant ministries as well as civil society stakeholders.

Several findings in the below-given text were taken from the Development Report issued annually by IMAD. IMAD is responsible for monitoring and interpreting indicators and trends in key areas of development.





Example of good practice:

ENERGY-SAVING RENOVATION OF HOMES - REDUCING HEATING COSTS

In Slovenia the poorest population is spending more and more on energy in housing, which worsens the issue of energy poverty, with the latter being directly related to social exclusion and poor health.

To address the above-mentioned, the Slovenian Environmental Public Fund (Eco Fund) provides subsidies and advice to social assistance recipients. The Fund offers a 100% subsidy to socially disadvantaged citizens to replace old solid fuel combustion installations with new wood biomass boilers in apartment buildings in municipalities with the highest concentration of PM10 particulate matter. The Fund also provides a 100% subsidy for covering the condominium ownership part of the purchase of a new wood biomass boiler, heat pump, gas boiler or heat station in apartment buildings. Owners or co-owners of apartments who are social assistance recipients are eligible for subsidies. They can also receive a subsidy for apartment building renovation, for example, the replacement of a façade or roof. As part of the Zero Project, the Fund also offers free energy consultation to social assistance recipients and those receiving supplementary benefits. In the framework of the consultation, they receive a free set of devices to reduce energy and water consumption, which can reduce the bill by up to EUR 10 per month.

To improve access to social assistance recipients (70,000 in Slovenia), the Fund cooperates with social work centres and other actors, such as Caritas and the Red Cross, as well as managers of apartment buildings.



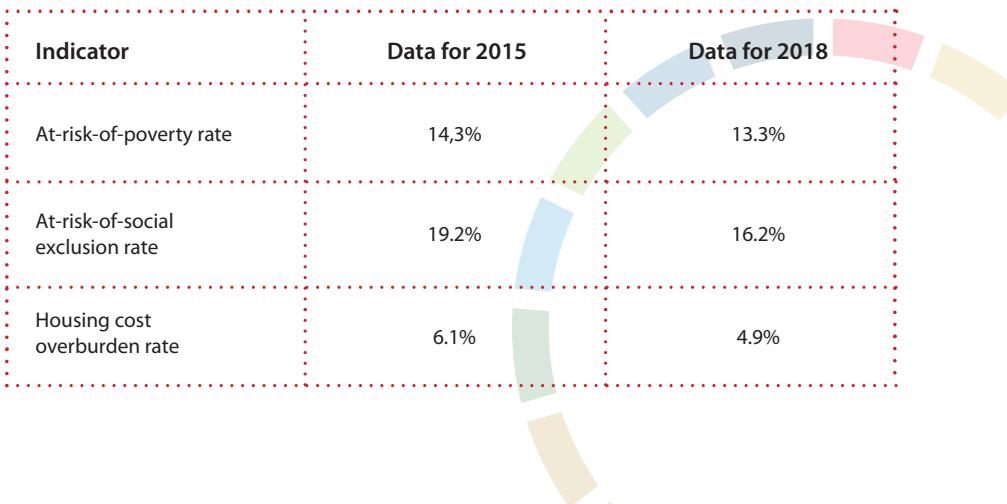
SDG 1: END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE



In its Development Strategy 2030, Slovenia is committed to ensuring a decent life for all generations. High economic growth over the past years has facilitated an increase in employment and income, with social exclusion and income inequality indicators mostly returning to the relatively favourable levels from before 2008, when they deteriorated during the economic and financial crisis. Slovenia is a country with low income inequality and a relatively low at-risk-of-poverty rate.

Slovenia's social protection system provides social security to individuals and families who cannot provide for themselves, and helps them with social integration. In addition to social transfers, there are over 170 social protection programmes in place, covering specific areas for individual target groups. These programmes strive for the social inclusion of all vulnerable social groups by ensuring a dignified life and the opportunity to actively participate in various social roles. Employment policies with such an aim can contribute to social inclusion and to reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate. The Active Employment Policy programme covers a set of labour market measures which are aimed at enhancing employment and reducing unemployment, improving the employability of persons and increasing the competitiveness and flexibility of employers.

In light of the trend of low birth rates, on the one hand, and longevity, on the other, one of the main challenges Slovenia has to tackle is the increasing number of people over 65 years of age. This calls for amending the social protection and healthcare systems in Slovenia. The greatest challenge pertains to establishing a single system for long-term care and the source of funding. Thus far, Slovenia has managed to keep such expenditure below the EU average. However, long-term projections indicate that if Slovenia keeps the established policies in place, its public finances will not sustain the situation and the period of employment will have to be prolonged.





The at-risk-of-poverty rate is 1.4% higher for women, with the number being even higher within the population aged 65 and above (12.9% for men, 22.3% for women). Retired women, tenants and the unemployed are at the highest risk of poverty. Slovenia is applying various policies and actions to reduce the at-risk-of-poverty rate. Namely, in 2019, several austerity measures in the field of family benefits were lifted, and the threshold for obtaining a state scholarship was lowered (thus granting a scholarship to an additional 8,500 secondary school and university students). In 2020, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia raised the minimum wage, giving it a new definition by excluding all benefits.

People over 65 years of age are at the highest risk of poverty, with the risk being 10% higher for women in this age group. Slovenia has applied different methods to lower the at-risk-of-social exclusion rate, including the re-introduction of compensation in the amount of the total salary during maternity, parental or paternity leave; higher financial assistance upon the birth of a child, a higher parental allowance and a higher amount of the lowest payment of maternity, paternity and parental compensation. Greater inclusion of the older population is also the result of a wide range of lifelong learning and training options. Slovenia also endeavours to improve the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Men are more exposed to a housing cost overburden than women. The trend is, however, different when it comes to people over the age of 65 as women (3% more than men) are more exposed to such risks. This is to a large extent the result of the high share of owner-occupied housing. In Slovenia over three quarters of housing is owner-occupied which makes Slovenia one of the EU countries with the highest share of owner-occupied housing.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

The issue of housing available to youth in Slovenia should be adequately addressed. Young people in Slovenia face increasing market rents, on the one hand, and increasingly limited opportunities to obtain a loan, on the other. In addressing the issue, both aspects should be taken into account, namely the possibilities of renting (regulation of the housing market) as well as the possibilities to purchase (cooperation with banks in acknowledging atypical forms of employment).



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

In addition to giving donations and humanitarian aid for ending poverty, Slovenia also takes a systematic approach to tackling poverty. Slovenia defines poverty as a structural issue and supports projects that indirectly strive to end poverty and thus acts in a comprehensive and integrated manner. In Rwanda, for example, there is a project that aims to improve access to natural resources and increase the efficiency of their use, which also contributes to increasing the chances of survival and improving the quality of life of the poorest population. With such projects, Slovenia demonstrates by its international cooperation activities that it has a holistic understanding of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it strives to end poverty in such a way that addresses several aspects of sustainable development in the long run.

In the framework of protection against natural and other disasters, in 2016 Slovenia adopted the National Programme of Protection against Natural and Other Disasters for the Period 2016-2022. In addition to national interests, the programme also takes into account Slovenia's obligations arising from adopted international and regional treaties, conventions and agreements and the concluded bilateral agreements in the field of disaster protection; Slovenia also follows the guidelines of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In terms of joint EU education and training and providing international rescue assistance, Slovenia's active role within the EU mechanism in the field of civil protection places Slovenia among the most active EU members in this field. In the period 2017-2020, Slovenia, together with neighbouring countries, provided international assistance during major disasters in the Western Balkans (including floods in North Macedonia in 2016 and Albania in 2017, an earthquake in Albania in 2019, an earthquake in Croatia in 2020, and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia). With its experts, Slovenia has also contributed to the response to disasters in other parts of the world (during the floods in Nigeria in 2018 and the floods in Mozambique in 2019).





**Example of good practice:
GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

Public procurement is an important part of public finances. In terms of value, public procurement represent a significant part of government expenditure. Green public procurement is a tool with which public spending takes into account not only the economic aspect but also the environmental aspect of public spending. Thus green public procurement is a public spending tool which enables the fulfilment of environmental policy goals.

In 2018 Slovenia amended the Decree on Green Public Procurement, which was adopted to promote short supply chains, locally grown food and the consumption of organic food. One of the main objectives of green public procurement is energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources and other low- or zero-carbon alternative energy sources. The Decree stipulates that when public contracting authorities order food, at least 15% of the ordered food should represent organic food and 15% should represent food of other food grade qualities (e.g. high-quality food, seasonal food from integrated crop production, and food grown and processed sustainably). Over the past year the interest of food producers being listed under the "selected quality" scheme has grown tremendously, resulting in a higher number of certified producers and certified products. All this has meant that the share of food that the contracting authorities should procure and that meets the certified quality scheme requirements has increased.

The Slovenian Chamber of Agricultural and Food Entities has prepared, in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry and the Medical Chamber of Slovenia, a catalogue of food appropriate for public procurement and a web application. The catalogue provides an extensive list of food provided by Slovene suppliers available to public contracting authorities. Each year public food service facilities spend over EUR 120 million on food products. Over 740 public institutions order food, of which around 40% is estimated to come from Slovenia.



SDG 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Like other developed countries, Slovenia is facing obesity and inadequate nutrition rather than hunger. Over-nutrition and obesity can have negative effects on an individual's health and well-being. They also have a negative impact on health and social systems, on state budgets, and on productivity and economic growth. In 2017, 878,000 people in Slovenia aged 18 or over were diagnosed with over-nutrition or obesity (accounting for 52% of the population in that age group). In addition to unhealthy eating habits and the related obesity, the developed world is also struggling with significant amounts of discarded food. In 2018, each inhabitant of Slovenia discarded an average of 68 kilos of food, adding up to a total of 139,900 tons of food waste, of which 38% was edible food which could have been reduced or prevented by awareness-raising. Since 2013, the Donated Food project has been in place in Slovenia. The project is implemented by the Association of Lions Clubs Slovenia and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food by co-financing the purchase of technical equipment. Under this project, over 1,471 tons of food, which is donated by the largest trading companies, is distributed annually.

Slovenia promotes sustainable farming within the EU Common Agricultural Policy with the aim of ensuring economically efficient, socially responsible and environmentally friendly agriculture. In 2018, the gross value added of agriculture accounted for 1.4% of total gross value added, which is slightly more than in previous years. In terms of Slovenia's natural conditions, pastures and meadows predominate, with relatively few fields and plantations. A relatively large share of arable land is intended for growing livestock feed and not food for direct human consumption, as livestock represents a large share of Slovenia's agricultural activity. Some 80% of all agricultural holdings' activity is livestock farming. In 2018, Slovenia allocated the most funds thus far for research and development (R&D) for agriculture: EUR 22.617 million or 11.6% of total R&D funding.



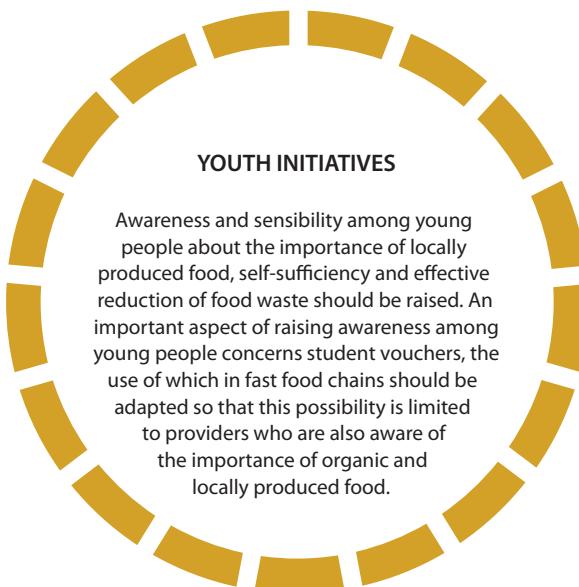
Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Share of utilised agricultural areas	23.5%	24.2%
Share of utilised agricultural areas with organic farming or in conversion	8.85%	10.02%

Slovenia addresses the issue of land overgrowth by carrying out agro-melioration works, such as clearing of bushes and trees, levelling land, and removing stone outliers. In addition to eliminating overgrowth, Slovenia intends to identify measures to prevent overgrowing in the future, such as landslide prevention, groundwater drainage, construction of terraces and terrain levelling, construction of field and forest paths, maintenance of drainage systems, and land consolidation by increasing areas of agricultural land.

Slovenia strives for a positive trend in the field of organic farming by implementing various measures and financial incentives. The **Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2020 (RDP)** is the basis for drawing on the financial resources available under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Financial support can be obtained under the RDP for the implementation of organic farming. The aim of the measure Organic Farming is to encourage agricultural holdings to implement organic farming. Farmers whose activities on their agricultural areas contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and landscape, protection of water resources, and adaptation to climate change are eligible to the funds available under the **Fund for Agri-Environment-Climate Payments**. In January 2018, the **Decree on Green Public Procurement** came into force in Slovenia; this promotes short supply chains and local food and the consumption of organic food in public institutions.

In January 2020, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the **Resolution on the National Programme on Strategic Orientations for the Development of the Slovenian Agriculture and Food Industry** called “**Our Food, Rural and Natural Resources after 2021**”. With this Resolution, Slovenia aims to preserve the sustainability of agricultural practices, the diversity of farms, the taste of Slovenian food, the sustainable use of forests and the cultivation of the landscape.

Slovenia also addresses sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture through the project **LIFE Climate Path 2050**. The project aims to monitor progress and plan climate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in many areas, including agriculture. It builds on the development of the existing system for preparing projections and monitoring the implementation of measures in the field of combating climate change. Annual reviews **Podnebno ogledalo** (Climate Mirror) are prepared; these monitor the situation in agriculture, including the situation regarding emissions, and provide a review of indicators for monitoring the implementation of measures, along with the main recommendations for improving the implementation of existing measures.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Between 2017 and 2020, Slovenia responded on a regular basis to the worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen by providing financial aid and thus contributing to ending hunger in these countries. Slovenia also supported the project to increase food and drinking water security among refugees and the local population near the Ugandan capital between 2017 and 2019. Uganda is facing a large influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. According to FAO (2017), at least 4 million Ugandans do not have food security and 70–80% of children suffer from nutritional imbalances. The risk is higher for single women and for refugee women. The project has increased the resilience of both refugees and local people, especially women, near the Ugandan capital, who are chronically suffering from a lack of fulfilment of basic food needs during increasingly prolonged droughts. With the purchase of land, training for growing vegetables and fruits (in methods of growing crops in changed climatic conditions), the establishment of chicken breeding, and providing access to clean drinking water, more than 500 people or 70 families, of whom 80% are refugees (more than 70% are women) in the settlement of Ndejje near Kampala are in a better situation in terms of food security and clean drinking water, which in turn improves their crisis resilience.

Slovenia, together with other EU Member States, supports efforts to establish a global governance system that will ensure sustainable development in agriculture, increase agricultural income and consequently reduce poverty and hunger and ensure food security. Slovenia's indirect contribution to attaining this goal is the initiative to declare World Bee Day (20 May) at the UN level with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators for food production, biodiversity conservation and other ecosystem services.



Example of good practice:

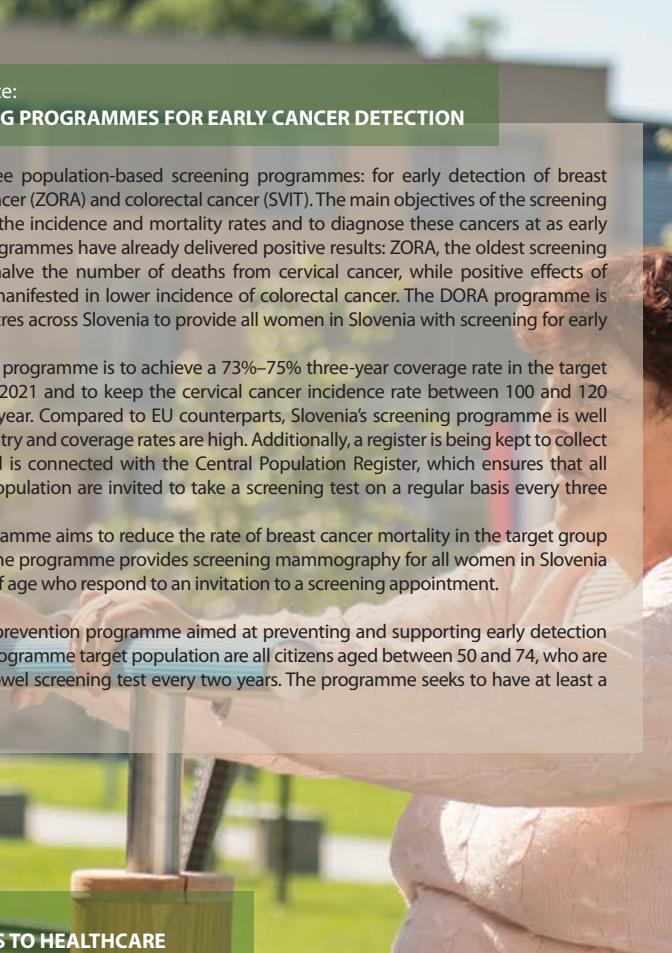
ORGANISED SCREENING PROGRAMMES FOR EARLY CANCER DETECTION

In Slovenia, there are three population-based screening programmes: for early detection of breast cancer (DORA), cervical cancer (ZORA) and colorectal cancer (SVIT). The main objectives of the screening programmes are to lower the incidence and mortality rates and to diagnose these cancers at as early stages as possible. The programmes have already delivered positive results: ZORA, the oldest screening programme, has helped halve the number of deaths from cervical cancer, while positive effects of the SVIT programme are manifested in lower incidence of colorectal cancer. The DORA programme is delivered in screening centres across Slovenia to provide all women in Slovenia with screening for early detection of breast cancer.

The objective of the ZORA programme is to achieve a 73%–75% three-year coverage rate in the target population by the end of 2021 and to keep the cervical cancer incidence rate between 100 and 120 newly detected cases per year. Compared to EU counterparts, Slovenia's screening programme is well recognised across the country and coverage rates are high. Additionally, a register is being kept to collect data at the state level and is connected with the Central Population Register, which ensures that all women from the target population are invited to take a screening test on a regular basis every three years.

The DORA screening programme aims to reduce the rate of breast cancer mortality in the target group of women by 25%–30%. The programme provides screening mammography for all women in Slovenia between 50 and 69 years of age who respond to an invitation to a screening appointment.

The SVIT programme is a prevention programme aimed at preventing and supporting early detection of colorectal cancer. The programme target population are all citizens aged between 50 and 74, who are invited to take part in a bowel screening test every two years. The programme seeks to have at least a 70% participation rate.



Example of good practice:

SOPOTNIKI – BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE AND OTHER SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The Sopotniki Institute is a non-governmental voluntary organisation. By offering free transport, it provides access to public and private services for the elderly: doctors, stores, pharmacies, garden centres and hospitals. It also takes customers on private visits and to cultural events in the local area.

By providing mobility opportunities, it aims to prevent or break the isolation and loneliness of elderly people from mainly smaller, more remote villages, who almost never leave their homes due to the remote location, lack of vehicles or poor transport connections. Safe mobility for the elderly should be ensured as one of their basic rights to access everything they require.

The heart of the service is the relationship between the volunteers (drivers) and the elderly. The entire operating model is built so as to ensure everything needed for a safe and enjoyable trip. The central value of the operation of the Institute is solidarity among people and generations. It promotes the social inclusion of the elderly and social contacts; the elderly should enjoy an active social life, remain independent and live in a home environment for as long as possible, to which the possibility of mobility contributes. The programme also facilitates access to healthcare services for older citizens.



SDG 3: ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



Since its independence in 1991, Slovenia has reformed its healthcare system based on the values of solidarity, equality and justice and has provided accessible and quality healthcare to its citizens. Health security has been ensured on the basis of the social model of compulsory health insurance, which includes practically all citizens (around 99% in 2019). The principle of the Council of Europe to provide insured persons preventive and/or curative healthcare has been upgraded in Slovenia by providing emergency treatment also to persons without health insurance (around 1% in 2019). Almost 30 years on, Slovenia's healthcare system in international comparisons achieves good results in terms of the key indicators for health and well-being. However, Slovenia still has to tackle several challenges posed by the changing health needs of the ageing population, the growing burden of chronic non-communicable diseases, perceived health inequalities, costly health technologies, and public health threats posed by climate change, environmental pollution and other natural and health stressors caused by people.

Slovenia will continue to improve the health of its citizens, paying special attention to raising awareness and educating the population about behavioural and nutritional health risk factors. Slovenia will thus contribute to the improvement of health outcomes associated with alcohol, unhealthy eating and infectious diseases. At present, the standardised mortality rate due to alcohol and intentional self-harm is among the highest in the EU. With the ageing of the population, the number of people suffering from various forms of dementia is on the rise, which places mental healthcare among the main priorities for Slovenia. Thus the SOPA project "Establishing an interdisciplinary integrated approach to the detection and support of abstinence from harmful and risky alcohol consumption among adults" aims to reduce excessive alcohol consumption and its negative effects on health and establish a responsible attitude towards alcohol.

Slovenia implements compulsory vaccination programmes for children and adolescents. Vaccination of preschool children against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and haemophilus influenzae type b infections (94.2%) and against measles, mumps and rubella (93.2%) was relatively high in 2017, but it has been declining over recent years. The low vaccination coverage against seasonal flu, especially among those over 65 years of age, is a particular cause for concern. Slovenia is one of the countries with the highest incidence of tick-borne meningoencephalitis in Europe, so it is mandatory to vaccinate people who are exposed to the virus and it is recommended for anyone over one year of age. In 2017, 28,764 people started getting vaccinated against tick-borne meningoencephalitis (13.9/1,000 people vaccinated with the first dose). In 2019, Slovenia introduced a vaccination programme against tick-borne meningoencephalitis as part of the compulsory health insurance, which includes one generation of adults aged 49 and one generation of children aged three. After vaccinating the two age groups, the programme will also cover vaccination of new generations of children and adults, which will increase vaccination coverage in Slovenia.

In addition to a well-established and accessible basic healthcare infrastructure, an important factor for the health and well-being of an individual is a rich and accessible cultural infrastructure. Creativity is one of the fundamental experiences, and indeed we take part in the creative process by simply walking around our cities – visiting cultural heritage, concert halls, galleries, museums, theatres and libraries. Both the act of creativity itself and its active perception and processing provide a valuable individual experience that can have positive effects on our physical and mental health and well-being.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Standardised mortality rate due to suicide	16.46 per 100,000	13.82 per 100,000
Healthy life expectancy at birth	Men: 58.8 Women: 57.7	Men: 56.3 Women: 54.6

In 2018, healthy life expectancy at birth in Slovenia stood at 56.3 years for men and 54.6 years for women. In the coming years, Slovenia will pay special attention to improving the health of the population in all regions, especially among the elderly, the socially disadvantaged and the less educated.

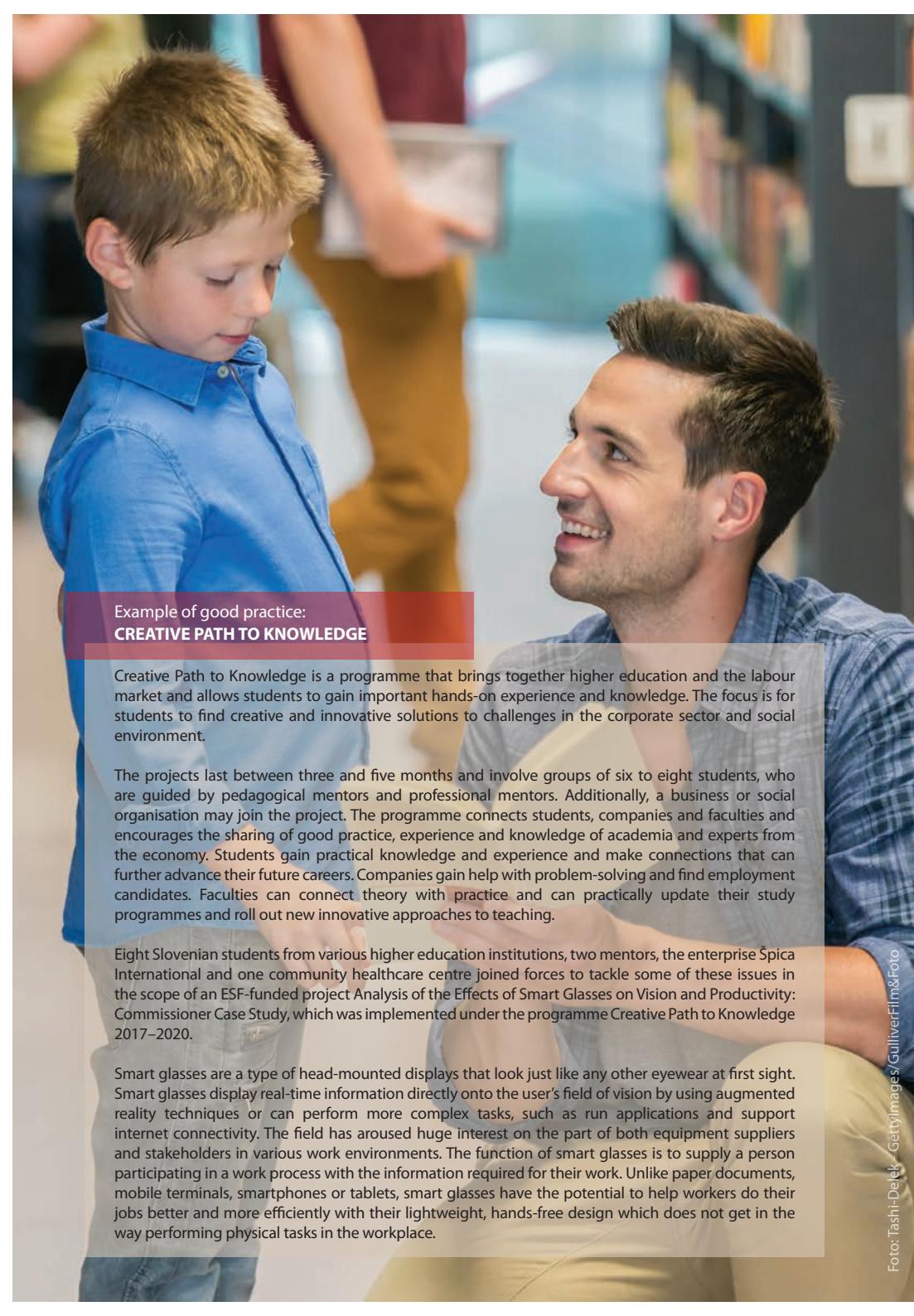
Slovenia adopted the **Resolution on the National Programme on Healthcare 2016–2025 “Together for a Health Society”**, which addresses key health problems and issues regarding the healthcare system in Slovenia, laying the foundations for health in all policies. The Resolution acts as the basis for healthcare development in Slovenia over a period of ten years and as the basis for the preparation and adoption of relevant legislative acts in the field of health insurance and healthcare activities, with the vision of providing quality and accessible public healthcare. It puts the user and the provider at the forefront and strives to identify specific needs and healthcare options for vulnerable groups.

Despite the fact that in the last ten years the suicide mortality rate has been declining for both men and women (in 2018 suicide mortality stood at 13.82 per 100,000 population; men: 22.25; women: 5.96), it remains unchanged for the over 65 years of age population, amounting to 32.35 deaths per 100,000 population in 2018 (men: 60.93; women: 12.13). To address these issues, Slovenia adopted the **Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028**, which covers the entire field from mental health promotion from early treatment to psychosocial rehabilitation, monitoring, evaluation and quality control of the implementation of the set activities and programmes. In addition, a **network of mental health services** has been established with **25 new mental health centres for children and adolescents** and **25 mental health centres for adults**, including community psychiatric treatment at the primary level.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Slovenia contributes to health and well-being in the international community in several ways. Every year Slovenian doctors and other health professionals exchange examples of good practice and experiences with developing countries. Slovenia also puts great emphasis on mental health, focusing its development aid programmes on providing comprehensive psychosocial assistance to victims of conflict. Slovenia provided assistance to victims of the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. Slovenia also strives to improve the health-related situation of Belarusian children suffering from the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. For several years now, Slovenia has also supported the operation of the Kabul Polyclinic, with the aim of providing free healthcare services to Kabul residents in the fields of gynaecology, dentistry, physiotherapy and psychosocial care. With the support of Slovenia, healthcare services are provided by five women (a gynaecology specialist, a dentist, a psychosocial therapist and two physiotherapists), which in particular brings medical services closer to the female population and children. In addition, in the period between 2011 and 2018, Slovenia supported the project "Integrated Telemedicine and eHealth Programme in Cape Verde", which is implemented by ITF Enhancing Human Security in cooperation with IVeH (International Virtual e-Hospital Foundation).



**Example of good practice:
CREATIVE PATH TO KNOWLEDGE**

Creative Path to Knowledge is a programme that brings together higher education and the labour market and allows students to gain important hands-on experience and knowledge. The focus is for students to find creative and innovative solutions to challenges in the corporate sector and social environment.

The projects last between three and five months and involve groups of six to eight students, who are guided by pedagogical mentors and professional mentors. Additionally, a business or social organisation may join the project. The programme connects students, companies and faculties and encourages the sharing of good practice, experience and knowledge of academia and experts from the economy. Students gain practical knowledge and experience and make connections that can further advance their future careers. Companies gain help with problem-solving and find employment candidates. Faculties can connect theory with practice and can practically update their study programmes and roll out new innovative approaches to teaching.

Eight Slovenian students from various higher education institutions, two mentors, the enterprise Špica International and one community healthcare centre joined forces to tackle some of these issues in the scope of an ESF-funded project Analysis of the Effects of Smart Glasses on Vision and Productivity: Commissioner Case Study, which was implemented under the programme Creative Path to Knowledge 2017–2020.

Smart glasses are a type of head-mounted displays that look just like any other eyewear at first sight. Smart glasses display real-time information directly onto the user's field of vision by using augmented reality techniques or can perform more complex tasks, such as run applications and support internet connectivity. The field has aroused huge interest on the part of both equipment suppliers and stakeholders in various work environments. The function of smart glasses is to supply a person participating in a work process with the information required for their work. Unlike paper documents, mobile terminals, smartphones or tablets, smart glasses have the potential to help workers do their jobs better and more efficiently with their lightweight, hands-free design which does not get in the way performing physical tasks in the workplace.



SDG 4: ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



A society that promotes accessible, quality and effective lifelong learning is on the right track. Acquiring new knowledge and developing skills throughout life is crucial in creating conditions for quality life and work and for a healthy and active lifestyle. In Slovenia, participation of young people in education is at a high level – compared to the EU average Slovenia has about the same share of adults (25–64 years) with tertiary education and an above-average share of young people with tertiary education, this increasing rapidly. For several years now the structure of enrolment in secondary and tertiary education has been changing to meet labour market needs, although in a period of high demand for labour Slovenia faced a shortage of labour with the required skills. The quality of youth education, measured under the international PISA survey, has improved in recent years, with Slovenian 15-year-olds achieving good results above the OECD average and ranking in the top quarter of EU countries in mathematical and science literacy. Despite Slovenia's favourable position in several areas, challenges in certain areas of education and lifelong learning still need to be addressed. According to the international PIAAC survey, the quality indicators of adult education show poor textual, mathematical and digital skills among adults, especially the low-educated and the elderly, who are also less likely to take part in lifelong learning. In today's society knowledge quickly becomes obsolete due to technological advances, which, in turn, hinders successfully coping with the changes in the workplace, especially automation, lower incomes and more difficult integration into society. In order to make it easier for adults to meet the challenges of sustainable development, while maintaining high accessibility to education for young people, efforts should be made to strengthen adult participation in learning, paying special attention to measures for low-educated and other vulnerable adult groups.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is becoming an important part of education for active citizenship. In 2017–2020, analyses were prepared regarding the state of inclusion of ESD in educational work in kindergartens and schools (implemented by the National Education Institute Slovenia) and regarding student achievement in terms of ESD in the framework of international research ICCS, PISA and TIMSS (implemented by National Education Institute). Slovenia also plans to update the existing national ESD Guidelines and to appoint cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination groups in this area. Furthermore, cross-sectoral cooperation has already been established for ESD, especially in the field of learning for the transition to a low-carbon circular economy and society, this by launching two new development projects called Climate Change in Education and Circular Schools. The Circular Schools project is part of a comprehensive strategic project for decarbonising Slovenia through the transition to a circular economy, prepared by EIT Climate – KIC and EIT Raw Materials.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Adult participation in learning (persons aged 25 to 64)	11.9%	11.4%
Share of tertiary educational attainment (persons aged 30 to 34)	43.4%	42.7%
Early leavers from education and training	5%	4.2%
Share of children enrolled in (pre-school) education aged between four and the starting age of compulsory education	90.5%	93.5%
PISA – average results in maths, reading and science	Ranked in the upper quarter of EU Member States	Ranked in the upper quarter of EU Member States

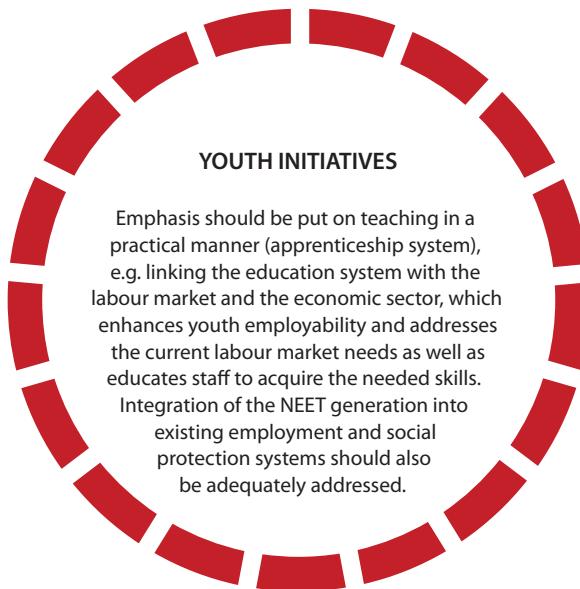
To prevent early school leaving, Slovenia adopted numerous preventive measures for identifying pupils at risk of leaving education and training, for providing professional and learning assistance, and for inclusion in schools' counselling processes. Slovenia also puts great emphasis on measures for ensuring a safe and stimulating learning environment, including the improvement of social skills, tolerance, respect for diversity and enabling development and achieving maximum creativity.

Slovenia promotes enrolment in pre-school education by covering the expenditure related to **reduced kindergarten fees** according to a family's income bracket. New measures have also been adopted to increase the share of children enrolled in pre-school education: the introduction of **free short-term programmes in the year before entering school for children not enrolled in kindergarten**; enhancing flexibility in terms of the provision of a public network of kindergartens or pre-school education programmes; and priority inclusion of children with special needs in kindergartens. Through various programmes Slovenia also endeavours to include (and maintain the inclusion of) vulnerable groups in pre-school education (e.g. in departments where Roma children are also enrolled more favourable norms apply, i.e. a smaller number of children per employed professional worker).

To achieve even better results regarding all three levels of literacy measured by the PISA survey, Slovenia has taken the following measures: (1) the adoption of the **National Framework for Determining and Ensuring the Quality of Education**, (2) the establishment of a **Professional Coordination Centre for International Research and Studies**, (3) the preparation of a new **White Paper on Education by 2030**, (4) the promotion of flexible and innovative forms of learning by developing language resources and technologies, with the **Franček portal** being developed for school use, (5) the **inclusion and empowerment of immigrant children**, (6) **measures to improve digital (computer) literacy**, and (7) **measures to promote civic education and civic literacy**.



In 2018, with the aim of improving adult participation in learning, Slovenia adopted a new **Adult Education Act**, which establishes a public service and a network of public service providers also in the field of adult education. Each year, Slovenia adopts an annual adult education programme based on the **Resolution on the National Adult Education Programme in the Republic of Slovenia**. By participating in the policy development project GOAL, Slovenia also plays an active role at the international level, which puts Slovenia on the European map of good practices in terms of counselling in the field of adult education.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Slovenia's efforts for attaining sustainable development of the wider international community focus on educating and empowering children about human rights. Slovenia funded projects in the Western Balkan countries (Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) by also supporting similar activities in North Africa which mainly addressed children and other vulnerable groups. Such projects provide training on children's rights, non-violence and conflict prevention and thus reduce the risk of exposure to violence and abuse. By implementing parental awareness-raising activities, domestic and community violence is expected to decline. The local community is strengthened by participating in project-related construction works: the contractors are locals who are paid for their work. Such projects have a long-term impact on the target group, namely compulsory school-age children, who have access to education and knowledge on the respect of human rights and thus a better and safer future.

In post-conflict areas, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia also finances school and peer mediation for promoting pupils' moral development and tolerant and constructive conflict resolution. Mediation, constructive dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes have an additional positive impact on strengthening interethnic and intercultural dialogue. Alternative thinking and activating pupils has a direct positive impact on education-related issues and the school climate. Scholarships for foreign students to study in Slovenia and exemption from tuition fees (especially for students from the Western Balkan countries) is a large part of Slovenia's international development cooperation.



Example of good practice: **THE ODKLIKNI WEB APPLICATION**

The Odklikni web application is part of the ODKLIKNI (CyberVAW) project to stop cyberbullying and harassment of women and girls, co-financed by the EU under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. The Odklikni project is an upgrade of Slovenia's activities in the field of preventing cyberbullying by integrating the aspect of gender into teaching and other materials, trainings, and recommendations and measures.

The Odklikni web application was launched in September 2018 and runs on Android mobile phones. It is primarily aimed at young people (who are especially interested in quizzes that have a more interactive nature). The application also targets parents, teachers and youth workers, who can use the application to access a well-organised collection of topical professional articles, recordings and quizzes on internet (un)safety regarding young people, as well as the general user population. Through topical articles, videos and quizzes, the application raises awareness about online violence and harassment, online ethics and etiquette, measures to increase online security and privacy, and steps to deal with online violence and abuse.

The main goal of the application is to raise awareness and enhance sensitivity regarding gender stereotypes and sexism on the internet and to change the attitude of users towards the prevention of cyberbullying. The application is aimed at identifying the basic types of cyberbullying and harassment and providing users with general instructions for prevention and action in the event of cyberbullying and harassment. Its primary function is to inform, raise awareness and foster cooperation, as the (multimedia) content and motivational messages can also be shared on social networks.



Example of good practice: **BUSINESS INCUBATOR AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The network business incubator Mrežni podjetniški inkubator Vrelec d.o.o., from Rogaška Slatina, was established in 2009 by the Municipality of Rogaška Slatina along with its partner, the Municipality of Šentjur; their vision was to spread business ideas and innovation and to provide a stimulating entrepreneurial environment in the Obsotelje and Kozjansko regions. The target groups of the incubator are young businesses, potential young entrepreneurs, young people considering their own entrepreneurial careers, and especially women with business ideas who are considering taking up entrepreneurship and young female entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship in Slovenia is still dominated by men (only 30% of entrepreneurs in the entire sector are women), and the share of women in the Vrelec d.o.o. incubator was even smaller. Thus the latter began to make efforts to increase the number of female entrepreneurs included in the incubator. It established connections with businesswomen from the Western Balkans and has hosted, for three years in a row, an autumn "B2B – Wellness Meeting", where women from different environments meet and exchange business experiences, forge new ties, set goals for joint actions and, last but not least, take care of their own well-being and health.

Since 2018, Vrelec d.o.o. has also organised the "Challenges of Female Entrepreneurship" international congress, where participants can hear the stories of colleagues from Slovenia and abroad, learn about topical issues, and enrich their knowledge and experience in distance learning, blockchain technology, sustainable tourism, the activities of entrepreneurial business angels and investment opportunities. There is always an emphasis on health and physical and mental fitness in the context of and in connection with entrepreneurship.



SDG 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



According to the Human Development Index, Slovenia ranks 9th in the EU for women and 13th in the EU for men. According to the Gender Equality Index, monitored by the European Institute for Gender Equality, Slovenia ranks 11th in the EU. The results are based on the gap between women and men in six key areas: work, money, knowledge, time, strength and health. In Slovenia a lot potential is being lost in men as well. That is to say that Slovenia (like other countries) is a country where men also face gender stereotypes, this being pronounced mainly through the stigma of using parental leave (in Slovenia less than 5% of men use it) and the share of men in care professions (in Slovenia 1% of men are employed as kindergarten teachers).

In 2019, Slovenia scored 68.4 points on the Gender Equality Index, which is above the EU average (66.2 points). In 2005–2017, Slovenia's score improved by 7.5 points. Slovenia's 2030 Agenda target is set at above 78 points. According to the latest data from 2019, Slovenia was above the EU average in the Gender Equality Index in all domains, except the knowledge domain, where gender inequalities are most pronounced when enrolling in tertiary education programmes. In Slovenia, women predominate in tertiary education, which results in the high gender gap in terms of the share of tertiary-educated people. In the age group 30–34, 55.3% of women and 33.9% of men acquired tertiary education in 2019, the gender gap being one of the largest among EU Member States. Despite the above, tertiary-educated women are at a disadvantage in the labour market compared to men, especially young women with tertiary education. Slovenia achieves its highest score in the domain of health and money and made the most progress over the last decade in the domain of women's participation in political decision-making, which is the result of the amendments made to the electoral legislation. Namely, Slovenia introduced electoral quotas (35% gender quota on candidate lists for national parliamentary elections and 40% gender quota and zipper system for candidate lists for local elections).

Slovenia ensures protection from discrimination regardless of gender, nationality, race, religion, ethnic origin, language, disability, sexual orientation, beliefs, age, gender identity, education, financial or social status. The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 also set the goal to reduce discrimination, especially by eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, by ensuring access to basic goods and by combating hate speech and racially motivated violence.

Inequality in public life is demonstrated in the fact that despite having higher education women are less likely to hold economic and political decision-making positions and are more often in precarious employment, receive lower pay for their work, are more often exposed to sexual harassment and are significantly less represented in the so-called professions of the future, for example in the field of information and communication technologies and artificial intelligence. The Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (adopted in 2002 and amended in 2019) stipulates that all ministries should appoint a coordinator who is responsible for making sure that the gender perspective is incorporated in measures and policies. In addition to the government and ministries, self-governing local communities are also committed to promoting and creating equal opportunities. Other relevant acts and resolutions for achieving gender equality are the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2008), the Protection against Discrimination Act (2016), and the Act Ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.



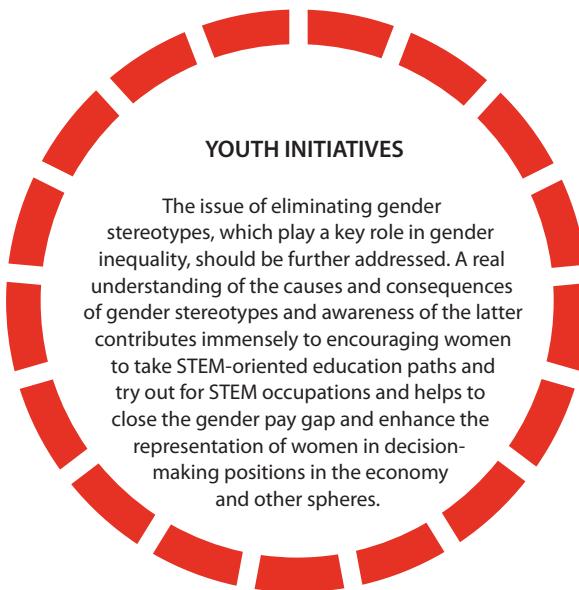
In 2020, Slovenia started drafting a new national programme which will identify Slovenia's key goals and measures for ensuring gender equality for the period 2021–2030. Like the present programme, the new programme will introduce measure for ensuring economic independence, eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, promoting and ensuring gender balance, eliminating gender stereotypes and combating sexism, eliminating inequalities in the health of women and men, and measures for integrating gender equality and strengthening the role of women in foreign policy and international development cooperation. In 2020, Slovenia will also design a new National Programme on Preventing Domestic Violence and Violence against Women for the period 2020–2025.

Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Share of women in senior management positions	22.9%	24.7%
Gender pay gap	8.1%	8.7%
Gender employment gap	8.6%	7.3%

In 2018, the gender pay gap in Slovenia stood at a relatively low level, i.e. 8.7% (against the EU average of 16%). The nationwide project **My Work. My Pension**, which started in 2019, started to raise awareness of the gender pay gap. Its aim is to improve knowledge and provide people with information about the factors that bring about the gender pension gap. The number of women in Slovenia pursuing so-called STEM careers is considerably low, which may be attributed to their choice of studies. For example, female students in healthcare and social care studies account for as many as 76% of all students and represent 66% of all students in social sciences studies. By contrast, only 15% of students in ICT studies were women. In addition, two other projects, **Day for Girls** and **Engineer of the Year** aim to build awareness among women and young girls of pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and to address the problem of the "invisibility" of female engineers.

Slovenia records high enrolment rates in early childhood education and care services, which, in turn, manifests in one of the highest labour force participation rates of women with children in the EU. One of the main barriers to equal participation of women and men in the labour market is the unequal distribution of unpaid work between men and women beyond the labour market sphere: most of the burden of caring for children, elderly and other family members who need help falls on the shoulders of women. While any kind or form of gender discrimination is prohibited, data on the ground suggest that women are more often still treated unequally in the labour market both when being hired and when it comes to allocation of work assignments. Most discriminatory practices are associated with potential motherhood. Slovenia is working on improving the indicator by delivering training programmes that support and encourage women to embark on an entrepreneurial and business career. Awareness-raising campaigns are being carried out to make people aware of gender stereotyping and that it is important to combat them.

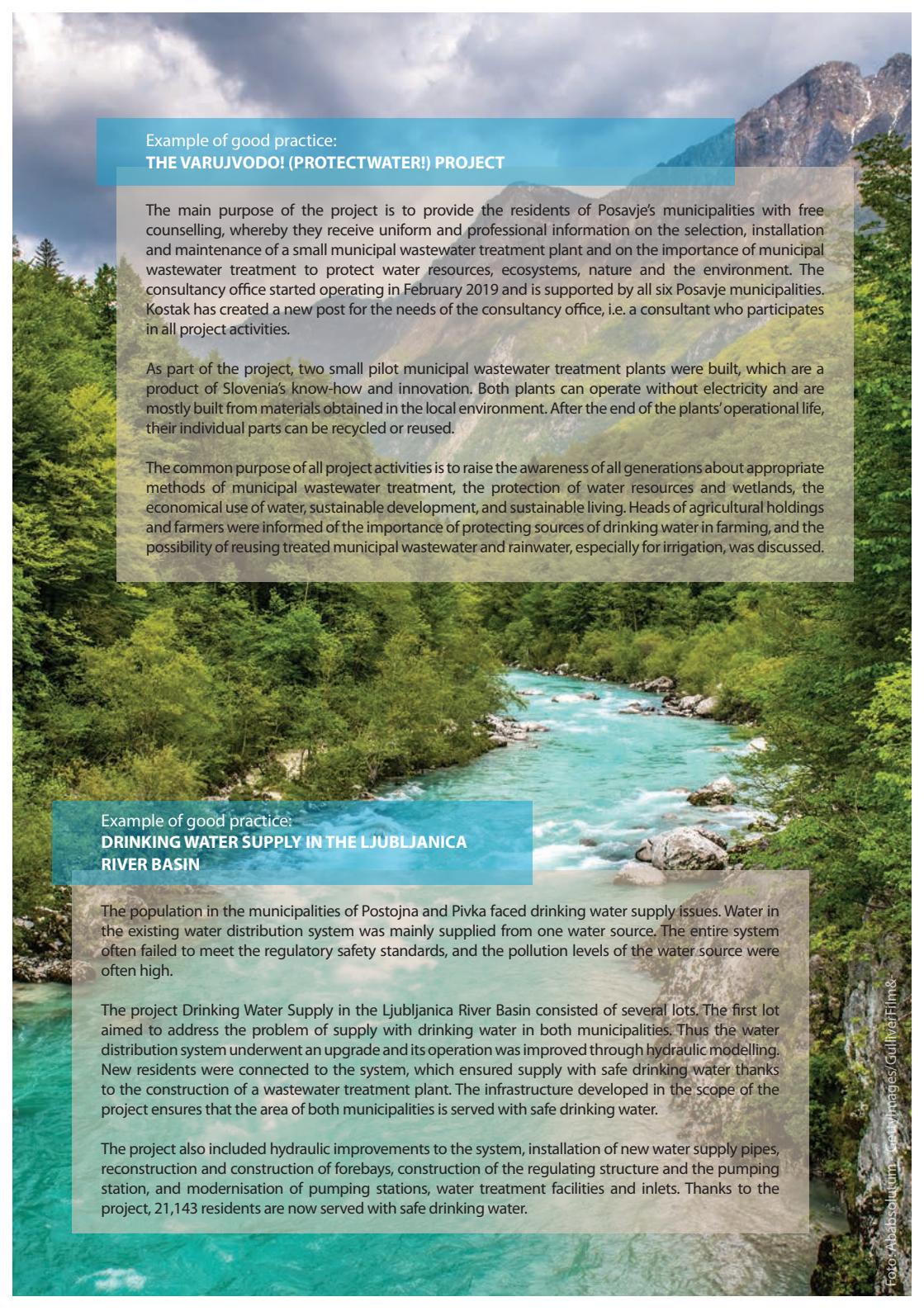
The share of women in leadership positions has been gradually increasing since 2012. Today, women take up 26.6% of leadership positions in Slovenia, which is considerably more than the EU average of 18.6%. In 2019, the Managers Association of Slovenia (the largest association of managers in Slovenia) started a campaign to make the gender quota in management and supervisory boards of Slovenian companies mandatory.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

In the field of gender equality, Slovenia's activities in partner countries in the framework of international development cooperation extend to the field of policies, namely advocacy for gender equality in international forums, as well as implementation, where Slovenia strives to introduce changes both at the systemic level and individually. In 2017–2020, Slovenia financed projects in Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The projects focused on women's economic empowerment and independence.

In North Macedonia, the unequal representation of women and men in senior management positions, in Bosnia and Herzegovina economic inequality by supporting social entrepreneurship, in Serbia, where more than half of the unemployed come from rural areas, several trainings on rights, practical vocational training were carried out.



Example of good practice:

THE VARUJVODO! (PROTECTWATER!) PROJECT

The main purpose of the project is to provide the residents of Posavje's municipalities with free counselling, whereby they receive uniform and professional information on the selection, installation and maintenance of a small municipal wastewater treatment plant and on the importance of municipal wastewater treatment to protect water resources, ecosystems, nature and the environment. The consultancy office started operating in February 2019 and is supported by all six Posavje municipalities. Kostak has created a new post for the needs of the consultancy office, i.e. a consultant who participates in all project activities.

As part of the project, two small pilot municipal wastewater treatment plants were built, which are a product of Slovenia's know-how and innovation. Both plants can operate without electricity and are mostly built from materials obtained in the local environment. After the end of the plants' operational life, their individual parts can be recycled or reused.

The common purpose of all project activities is to raise the awareness of all generations about appropriate methods of municipal wastewater treatment, the protection of water resources and wetlands, the economical use of water, sustainable development, and sustainable living. Heads of agricultural holdings and farmers were informed of the importance of protecting sources of drinking water in farming, and the possibility of reusing treated municipal wastewater and rainwater, especially for irrigation, was discussed.

Example of good practice:

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY IN THE LJUBLJANICA RIVER BASIN

The population in the municipalities of Postojna and Pivka faced drinking water supply issues. Water in the existing water distribution system was mainly supplied from one water source. The entire system often failed to meet the regulatory safety standards, and the pollution levels of the water source were often high.

The project Drinking Water Supply in the Ljubljanica River Basin consisted of several lots. The first lot aimed to address the problem of supply with drinking water in both municipalities. Thus the water distribution system underwent an upgrade and its operation was improved through hydraulic modelling. New residents were connected to the system, which ensured supply with safe drinking water thanks to the construction of a wastewater treatment plant. The infrastructure developed in the scope of the project ensures that the area of both municipalities is served with safe drinking water.

The project also included hydraulic improvements to the system, installation of new water supply pipes, reconstruction and construction of forebays, construction of the regulating structure and the pumping station, and modernisation of pumping stations, water treatment facilities and inlets. Thanks to the project, 21,143 residents are now served with safe drinking water.



SDG 6: ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



In 2016, the Slovenian parliament voted for a constitutional amendment to declare access to drinking water a basic human right. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia also sets out that water is a public good and that water resources are primarily and durably used to supply citizens with drinking water and households with water and, in this sense, should not be considered a market commodity. Thus supply with drinking water and water for households is not commercialised.

Appropriate quality of freshwater in lakes, rivers and aquifers and adequate infrastructure are the pre-conditions for ensuring access to quality drinking water. That is why designing and implementing measures that prevent pollution of water resources from point or dispersed sources is key to ensuring supply of quality drinking water in the long run.

Most Slovenian water bodies (96%) have good chemical status. Over half of water bodies (59%) are in good ecological status and their share has been steadily increasing. General hydromorphological degradation of watercourses and anthropogenic changes particularly result in poor ecological status of waters. In 2018, groundwater was the major source of drinking water in Slovenia, providing the vast majority of the Slovenian population (99.2%). Efficient monitoring of groundwater recharge is another key factor that helps ensure quality drinking water. Over the past decade, Slovenian groundwater sources/aquifers have exhibited high regional and seasonal variation, and lately there has been a tendency of more frequent and more pronounced droughts. Mean annual groundwater recharge rates in the 1981–2010 period fluctuated immensely, showing that annual regeneration of groundwater resources varies through the years and that groundwater in shallow aquifers is extremely susceptible to level variation. Water retention measures (retention basins, water reservoirs) have been put in place to help alleviate the effects of variations in groundwater levels coupled with increasing temporal variability. This in turn helps maintain the decreasing periodical trend of surface runoff from the country's land.





Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Population connected to wastewater treatment	59.8%	67.4%
Share of population living in a household without basic sanitary facilities (a shower or a bath, indoor flushing toilet)	0.3%	0.1%
Water exploitation index	2.8%	3%

Organic chemicals and hazardous substances contained in wastewater generated by households and industry put significant pressure on the water environment. Urban wastewater is the main source of pollution of rivers with organic substances. A sharp decrease in organic pollution of rivers, which is usually caused by the discharge of treated urban and industrial wastewater and the leaching of nitrogen compounds from fertilized agricultural land, is the result of significant improvement in the process of wastewater treatment and abandonment of economic activities that particularly polluted watercourses with wastewater discharge.

The overall water consumption levels have been falling, which can be attributed to a more rational and prudent use of water and reduced water losses in the water distribution network. Occasional water shortages are particularly a result of disproportionate distribution of precipitation and increased evaporation. Water productivity, which indicates how much economic output is produced per cubic metre of freshwater abstracted, has been steadily picking up, though it still falls behind international figures on water use efficiency.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Water diplomacy is one of the areas of Slovenia's foreign policy. At the international level, Slovenia implements development projects, shares knowledge and examples of good practice, fosters sustainable and comprehensive water management and transboundary water cooperation, advocates the human right to safe drinking water and access to sanitation, raises awareness of the interlinkage between water and climate change, and strives to underline the importance of water for international peace and security.

Slovenia's action in the sphere of promoting access to safe drinking water and sanitation almost entirely focuses on helping the Western Balkan countries.

Slovenia has played a prominent role in the scope of the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin, with which it has confirmed its commitment to promoting efficient transboundary water cooperation. Furthermore, Slovenia is an active member of the Geneva-based Group of Friends on Water and Peace and has been holding its chairmanship since January 2020.

Slovenia supports global efforts to advance the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, particularly through engagement on human rights and the environment within the UN Human Rights Council and in the scope of the Blue Group and the Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action.



Example of good practice: **FIRST ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY IN SLOVENIA**

The small Slovenian town of Luče, which has a relatively weak local power grid, frequently faces power outages, particularly during extreme weather events like heavy storms. The project's main goal is to establish an energy community in the town in order to promote power generation while increasing the level of energy self-supply and security of supply of the local energy system, which already boasts a relatively high share of renewable energy. To this end, additional PV panels (around 110 kW), home batteries (around 65 kWh), a community battery, and an electric vehicle community charging station will be installed and connected to the power distribution grid operated by Elektro Celje in Luče to help achieve the project's goals. Thanks to the excess energy generated and to improved flexibility, two options will be explored – either the excess energy will be further sold on the power supply market or redirected to meet the operator's system service needs. This holistic approach will bring positive benefits to all energy community stakeholders – end users, distribution system operator and transmission system operator. The system will make Luče the first energy community in Slovenia to become fully self-sufficient on renewable energy.

The establishment of the first energy community in Slovenia is supported by the demonstration project COMPILE, which is funded from the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. Slovenian largest energy company Petrol is one of the project partners. The consortium of project partners is coordinated by the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University of Ljubljana, whereas Petrol manages the project of energy community establishment at the Luče pilot site location and oversees the establishment of the same energy islands at four other locations (Crevillent, Spain; Križevci, Croatia; Rafina, Greece and Lisbon, Portugal).



SDG 7: ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL



The recently adopted National Energy and Climate Plan 2030 (NECP 2030) paves the way for Slovenia to become a carbon neutral society by 2050. Slovenia is tackling an array of energy- and climate-related issues and is particularly focused on gradually reducing energy consumption while increasing energy and material efficiency in all sectors. The document outlines a set of measures that will help strike a balance between the three intertwined pillars of energy policy: sustainability, security of supply, and competitiveness. The NECP measures seek to reduce energy dependence thus not only contributing to the achievement of environmental and climate targets but also helping increase the security of energy supply, which will have a number of positive spill-over effects at home. Additionally, the measures aim to significantly improve air quality. Much must still be done so that distributed energy resources (DER) become widely accepted and their potential is fully harnessed, with grids appropriately designed, developed and adjusted to become resilient to any kind of disruption and to boost the integration of various renewable energy sources for providing flexibility to the power system, while still reducing the load on the transmission network. One of the main obstacles to be tackled to reach SDG 7 in Slovenia will be to boost the deployment of renewable energy sources for all relevant actors and at all levels to ensure that we make steady progress towards the goal of climate neutrality by 2030 in an efficient and comprehensive manner.

NECP puts particular emphasis on the area of alleviation and reduction of energy poverty/dependence, and also focuses on how to increase the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption. While the issue of energy poverty is not so pronounced in Slovenia, the country must nonetheless ensure that the measures planned under future energy and climate policy agenda do not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable population groups. In order to reduce or prevent the spread of energy poverty, the country has envisaged how energy poverty will be measured and has defined a target indicator measuring the concept. That indicator should help explain to what extent the existing general social policy measures, general housing policy measures and the existing target measures on energy poverty allow for the end target to be reached. NECP further envisages a sharp increase in the use of all renewable energy sources in a way that ensures a stable and self-sufficient energy policy.

Green public procurement is an important factor driving the transition to climate neutrality. The decree on green public procurement identifies energy efficiency and use of renewables or other low- or zero-carbon alternative energy sources as the main objective to be pursued. To achieve this objective, the decree specifies that the contracting authorities procuring energy from energy suppliers are to award a contract so that the share of energy generated from RES or the share of energy from high-efficiency co-generation accounts for at least 50% and the share of road vehicles powered by renewable or alternative energy sources, except for police vehicles used only for assigned operational duties in accordance with the legislation, accounts for at least 15%.

Slovenia promotes the use of affordable and sustainable energy sources, notably by harnessing the potential of hydropower (hydro power plants).



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption	21.96%	21.14%
Share of households that cannot afford to keep their dwelling adequately warm	7%	4%
Final energy consumption in households per capita	6.262 kWh/capita	5.986 kWh/capita

Energy consumption in households has been in decline, which accords with the trend observed across Europe. In Slovenia, households accounted for 20% of the total final energy consumption, and a little under 50% of the total final energy consumption together with processing activities and the construction industry. Households mostly use energy for heating premises, heating sanitary water and for other purposes, including lighting, electric devices etc. Among the fuel source options most used, Slovenians mostly opted to use wood fuel, followed by electric energy, natural gas, extra light heating oil and district heating. A noticeable downward trend in the number of households that cannot afford to keep their dwelling appropriately warm has been noticed over the past few years.

Increasing the uptake of renewable energy will be a huge challenge for Slovenia. The country has accordingly set itself somewhat less ambitious goals than those recommended to Slovenia by the Commission. The progress in the uptake of renewable energy is to a certain extent hampered by the extensive NATURA 2000 network surface area. As the relevant EU directive was not correctly transposed into the national law, the option of using water and solar power has been compromised or unjustly prevented. Harnessing wind energy is additionally hampered by Slovenia's typical dispersed settlement pattern. Another challenge to be tackled is the lengthy and complex power plant siting procedures, particularly because of inappropriate environmental procedures and the fact that nearly two-thirds of final industrial energy is consumed by four energy-intensive industries. The technological solutions available on the market in these industries at present do not support greater use of renewable energy.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

In terms of its international development cooperation action, Slovenia has contributed to the SDG in question by investing, for example, in new LED street lighting system in a Macedonian municipality. In addition to being energy efficient and using up to 10-times less energy, LED lights also have a long lifespan. The new street lighting system will help reduce energy use, cut costs on maintenance and decrease GHG emissions.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia helped draw up a methodology for assessing photovoltaic solar technologies to ensure quality at the country level (standardization, metrology, accreditation). The methodology promotes the uptake of renewable energy in industry, supports the use of renewable energy in mini grids, fosters sustainable development and supports policy design.

Slovenia invested in the construction of a solar power plant in Ukraine, which helps reduce hazardous emissions and the frequency of power outage events caused by the current instabilities in the power grid. In addition, solar power is significantly cheaper and better than use of fossil fuels for power generation. The aim of the project was to develop an efficient energy system, support energy self-sufficiency and promote energy sustainability. Green energy also has a number of overall positive impacts helping preserve the nature and the environment as well as human health.



Example of good practice: **ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY**

The journey from unemployment to getting a job is sometimes difficult and can last long; our education and training programmes as well as employment programmes are provided to help unemployed individuals find a fitting and fulfilling job. Active labour market policy (ALMP) consists of a set of measures delivered on the labour market to increase employment, reduce unemployment, improve employment outcomes of individuals and enhance the competitiveness and flexibility of employers. ALMP goals reflect the goals of strategic documents and government measures, but are easily adjusted and tailored to match the situation on the ground and meet the conditions and demands of a rapidly changing labour market. ALMP programmes on employment target both unemployed individuals and those who already have a job.

Education programmes are either formal or informal. Informal education programmes increase individuals' employment opportunities by equipping them with new knowledge and skills for labour market integration and successful career development. Formal education programmes, on the other hand, aim to increase job prospects of individuals by allowing them to attain a higher level of education. Training programmes are designed to help individuals gain practical work experience, which helps them get a job.

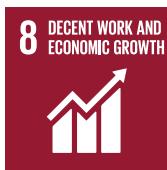
Having a job is crucial to ensured social security. Employment incentives programmes or subsidized employment programmes provide financial assistance to employers who hire unemployed individuals from vulnerable groups considered hard-to-place. The measure is implemented in the form of employment subsidies paid to employers for hiring the hard-to-employ and in the form of reimbursement of contributions in high-unemployment areas.

The job creation programme promotes social and labour market integration and improves the qualifications, skills and competences of most vulnerable unemployed groups. It is carried out in the form of subsidized temporary employment and can involve training, usually through non-profit employers or in the public sector.

As many as 8,820 unemployed individuals participated in ALMP programmes as at 30 April 2020, of which 3,412 individuals followed education and training programmes, 3,507 individuals worked under the subsidized employment programmes, and 1,901 participants participated in the job creation programme.



SDG 8: PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



Economic stability is a key precondition for achieving higher standards of living and increasing the quality of life for all which is the flagship goal of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. The crisis in the period 2009-2014 revealed the structural weaknesses that the Slovenian economy was facing at the time, in particular the issues of competitiveness, economic governance, lack of dispersed sources of funding for the business sector, as well as the challenges associated with pro-cyclical economic policy. The population's economic stability and material situation have only recently started trending upward. The economic recovery was followed by growth in disposable income and employment rates. The indicators of income inequalities and the risk of social exclusion, which worsened somewhat during the period 2009-2013, have returned to their pre-crisis levels in 2018 with faster income growth in lower quintiles and are favourable by international comparison, thus nearing the level of the targets set out in Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 according to the latest data.

The efficiency of labour market systems can significantly dictate how stable economic growth will be, and how people's quality of life will be as well. Obviously, the labour market will have to be adjusted to demographic change as changed population age structure across the world and in Slovenia has already manifested in a shortage of workforce supply in this period of high economic cycle. The decline in the size of the working-age population, which is an important factor jeopardizing economic growth, could in turn lower the general standard of living in Slovenia; thus, it is key that labour force participation rates grow in all age groups, in particular in older workers. Helping young people find good jobs early and adopting strategic migration policies is similarly essential in this context. In order to ensure that labour market is inclusive, Slovenia needs to improve its flexicurity systems, which can boost employment levels, reduce labour market segmentation and optimize workforce allocation. Amid the rise of technological solutions and digitalization some traditional occupations have found themselves on the brink of disappearing; yet, technological development can open up countless job opportunities and support the rise of new professions. It is extremely important that catching up with most developed economies be steady, sustainable and harmonious, which is the only way that allows citizens to enjoy the benefits derived from economic growth.

The European Green Deal, adopted by the Commission in December 2019, will contribute to this goal. This set of policy initiatives seeks to support the shift to a low-carbon economy across the EU with the overarching aim of making Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050. According to the Commission, investment in green technologies, sustainable solutions, innovations for the business sector could generate up to 600,000 jobs.

In 2019, SID Bank, a development and export bank 100% owned by the Republic of Slovenia, issued the first green bond to finance green projects with the help of international capital markets. With this instrument, the money raised will be earmarked for environment-friendly products, technologies and processes, pollution prevention and control projects, sustainable resource management projects, sustainable water management projects, renewable energy projects, energy efficiency projects and clean transport projects. The green bond seeks to support investors raising funding for new or ongoing eco-sustainability projects.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Index of real GDP per capita growth	102.1	103.8
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)	9.5%	6.6%
At-risk-of-poverty rate of the active population	6.7%	6%

After growth in the period 2013–2018, GDP exceeded its pre-crisis level in 2017; in 2018 its growth started to slow particularly as a consequence of a more moderate export growth due to the slowing of economic growth in trading partners. GDP growth has been increasingly driven by domestic consumption and rising investment in all segments.

The 2018 share of NEETs in Slovenia which stood at 6.6% was lower than the EU average share at 10.1%, which could be attributed to the fact that a great majority of young people in this age group participate in secondary and tertiary education. This share has been steadily decreasing and has fallen to the pre-crisis levels in the past three years.

Active labour market policy measures helped improve labour force participation trends and increase employment opportunities for target groups; for example, education and training programmes delivered by the Employment Service of Slovenia, and programmes promoting longer working lives delivered by the Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia.

Long-term unemployment rates have been on the decrease compared to the EU average, and stood below the EU average in 2015. The main factor driving the fall in the long-term unemployment rate was the active labour market policy measures in place since 2014, in particular the training and employment promotion programmes for the unemployed.

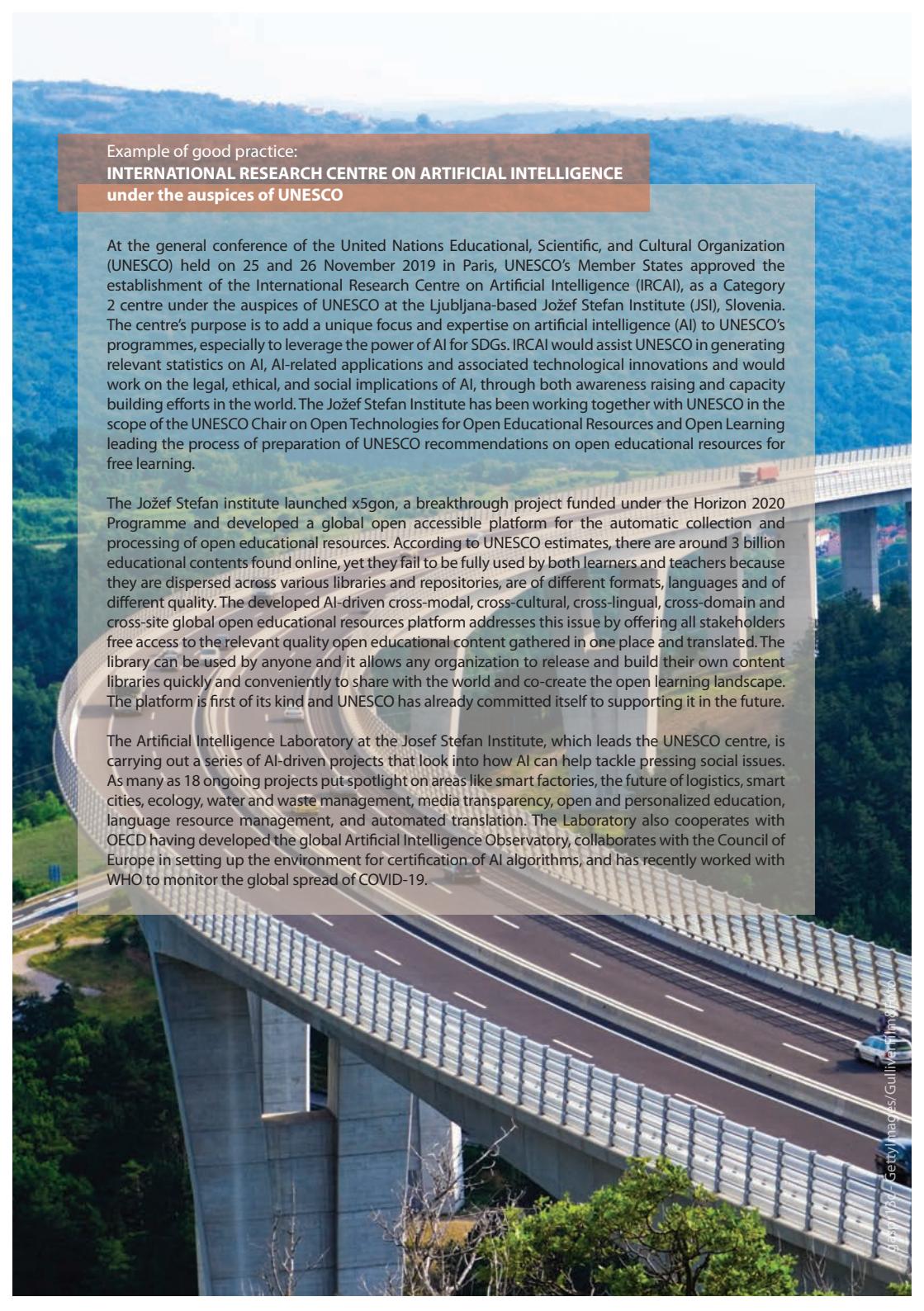
The share of involuntary temporary employment was never lower in the past 15 years than in 2018. Thus, Slovenia managed to break the negative trend achieving a lower share of involuntary temporary employment than the EU average, which stood at 9.4% of active working population in 2018.

A wide gender gap can be observed in the at-risk-of-poverty rates for active population; it stood fairly low for women and decreased at a faster pace. Slovenia thus boasts one of the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rates for employed women. On the contrary, the rate was much higher for employed men and has somewhat decreased compared to the previous year.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Slovenia supports international decent work projects promoting entrepreneurship among young people in the Western Balkans and Africa, and makes concerted efforts to advance economic empowerment of women. Thus, Slovenia is implementing a series of projects, for example, to help strengthen the role of women in Albanian society and promote equal opportunities, to support the empowerment of female migrants in Uganda, and the empowerment of (single) mothers and children for a better future for Syrian families in Jordan. Slovenia also implements projects in the Western Balkan countries to help ensure a safe and healthy work environment. One of its development projects implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina supported the purchase of a modern air quality monitoring system for the Kakanj mine and helped raise awareness among the mine's employees about the new system, thus making them well prepared to monitor and interpret the data collected from the monitoring system and building their preparedness and preventive action in the event of accidents.



Example of good practice:

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE under the auspices of UNESCO

At the general conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held on 25 and 26 November 2019 in Paris, UNESCO's Member States approved the establishment of the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI), as a Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO at the Ljubljana-based Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI), Slovenia. The centre's purpose is to add a unique focus and expertise on artificial intelligence (AI) to UNESCO's programmes, especially to leverage the power of AI for SDGs. IRCAI would assist UNESCO in generating relevant statistics on AI, AI-related applications and associated technological innovations and would work on the legal, ethical, and social implications of AI, through both awareness raising and capacity building efforts in the world. The Jožef Stefan Institute has been working together with UNESCO in the scope of the UNESCO Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning leading the process of preparation of UNESCO recommendations on open educational resources for free learning.

The Jožef Stefan institute launched x5gon, a breakthrough project funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme and developed a global open accessible platform for the automatic collection and processing of open educational resources. According to UNESCO estimates, there are around 3 billion educational contents found online, yet they fail to be fully used by both learners and teachers because they are dispersed across various libraries and repositories, are of different formats, languages and of different quality. The developed AI-driven cross-modal, cross-cultural, cross-lingual, cross-domain and cross-site global open educational resources platform addresses this issue by offering all stakeholders free access to the relevant quality open educational content gathered in one place and translated. The library can be used by anyone and it allows any organization to release and build their own content libraries quickly and conveniently to share with the world and co-create the open learning landscape. The platform is first of its kind and UNESCO has already committed itself to supporting it in the future.

The Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Josef Stefan Institute, which leads the UNESCO centre, is carrying out a series of AI-driven projects that look into how AI can help tackle pressing social issues. As many as 18 ongoing projects put spotlight on areas like smart factories, the future of logistics, smart cities, ecology, water and waste management, media transparency, open and personalized education, language resource management, and automated translation. The Laboratory also cooperates with OECD having developed the global Artificial Intelligence Observatory, collaborates with the Council of Europe in setting up the environment for certification of AI algorithms, and has recently worked with WHO to monitor the global spread of COVID-19.



SDG 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION



Investment in research, development and innovation (RDI) is investment in our future as it helps unleash new opportunities in industry, infrastructure, mobility and other sectors. Investments in RDI also make a country more competitive, enabling it to at least keep pace or even overtake competitors and help the country keep its established social model. Moreover, investments in RDI make our everyday lives better and easier and help tackle societal problems. Slovenia fosters research and innovation activities in a number of ways, including by encouraging various stakeholders, e.g. research organizations and businesses, to come and work together. A number of calls for proposals launched in accordance with the national smart specialization strategy help Slovenia foster industrial innovation and investment in key technologies, which paves the way towards technological breakthroughs capable of capturing market share. This sector also plays an unmistakable role in addressing most pressing societal challenges, including climate change, sustainable mobility and renewable energy. Working on these fronts is inextricably intertwined with our ambition to shift to a low-carbon circular economy, which is one of the 12 goals of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. Digitalization plays a special role in enabling this transition. At the same time, the country needs to focus on other spheres – creativity, innovation and enterprise-oriented culture – allowing them to fully flourish.

The adoption of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (2015, 2020) helps foster RDI both on the national level and EU-wide and opens a number of funding opportunities for institutions and individuals. Digitalization solutions and cutting-edge technologies importantly facilitate the shift to a circular economy by enabling the integration of content in unprecedented ways. Digitalization has particular benefits in the areas of technology development, market structure, policy development, and knowledge and skill development. As for mobility, it goes without saying that it has caused particular environmental burden in the past decades. The shift to a circular economy thus calls for an overall shift in travel patterns encouraging people to rethink how, when and where they make journeys.

Investment in circular economy solutions can also help create high-quality jobs, according to the Commission's estimates up to nearly 600,000 jobs could be generated in various areas. In 2018, Slovenia registered a growing share of employees in high and medium-high technology manufacturing production (10.2%) and a slight decrease in the share of active working population in knowledge-based sectors (35.2%).



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
R&D expenditure as share of GDP	2.21%	1.95%
Number of FTE researchers	7,900	10,068
Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	19th place	15th place

Overall expenditure on R&D has fallen persistently since 2013, with the public sector discontinuing the negative trend in 2017. Similarly, the expenditure on R&D in the business enterprise sector, which traditionally invests most in R&D, has declined since 2014. These developments are due to several reasons, most notably the impact of the spending of EU funds on the volume and growth of private-sector R&D investments, which slowed in the 2014–2020 multiannual financial framework. Low R&D expenditure hampers access to cutting-edge equipment for researchers in Slovenia. The proposal of the **Act on scientific research and innovation activity** foresees an increase in the budget resources allocated to scientific research activities by at least 1% of GDP (with an annual growth at 0.1% of GDP) and strengthening of investment in scientific research and innovation activities. In the period 2008–2016 the number of researchers in the private sector increased significantly, while dropping in the public sector.

The latest 2018 European Innovation scoreboard ranked Slovenia as a moderate innovator, meaning that the country slipped from the group of strong innovators in which it was ranked for several years in a row prior to 2018. With an European Innovation Index value rising more slowly in Slovenia than the EU average, Slovenia widened its gap with the best performing countries during the period 2011–2018. Poorer performance was the result of several factors, including insufficient volume of funding in R&D, low level of innovation activity in business sector and low impact of innovation activities on employment and sales. In 2019, it made progress mainly in the field of connectivity and the digital dimension of public services.

Slovenia fosters sustainable mobility in cities by **developing the park and ride system**, car parks, bus lines, cycling infrastructure and bike rental services, which aim to reduce the volume of traffic in city centres. Also, the **Sustainable Mobility project**, which is managed by the Ministry of Infrastructure, supports the delivery of a number of sustainable mobility activities encouraging schoolchildren or pre-school children to walk, cycle or come to kindergarten or school in any other environment-friendly way.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Slovenia is firmly committed to realizing the global SDGs and contributes its share by supporting innovation and creative thinking. It provides support to young entrepreneurs and startups in the Western Balkans and encourages young people to work together. Indeed, young people can bring positive change on local and even national levels, which can provide a window of opportunity for young people with good ideas and knowledge to unleash their potentials. Entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mindset makes a strong foundation for a healthy economic growth, which in turn ensures prosperity and appropriate level of development for all. Thus, several projects made it possible for young people from the Western Balkans to annually participate in the largest regional start-up conference bringing together like minded people, investors and big corporations, and to hear the experience of most seasoned start-up teams. The conference is the perfect opportunity for young people to present themselves, find investors and realize their promising ideas. In 2019, Slovenia and an EU delegation co-financed a project CreathON 2019 under which young students from Macedonia and their mentors prepared creative business solutions for five Macedonian businesses that seek to promote the cultural heritage of Northern Macedonia through their products. Furthermore, Slovenia co-financed a number of development projects aiming at strengthening the infrastructure of developing countries. For example, in Montenegrin town of Žabljak, Slovenia co-financed several public infrastructure projects that included the development of environmental, sports and tourism infrastructure.



Example of good practice:
CHILD WELL-BEING INDEX

Cooperating with UNICEF, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in 2017 launched a project that aimed to answer two specific questions: how to best measure complex social phenomena such as children's well-being and quality of life, and how to best transform the findings into positive impacts through public policies. Thus, a children's well-being index was created.

The Child Well-Being Index comprises 31 indicators for 27 European countries and simplifies international comparisons. The index complements the existent child well-being monitoring system in Slovenia, which is one of the missions of the Social Protection Institute and of the Child Observatory established within the Institute, and ensures the more efficient identification of possible issues in certain domains of well-being and, consequently, more appropriate policy responses at the international level. As the index shows average values for Slovenia, the project further focused on developing a regional child well-being index, which was financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The regional variant helps interpret and understand the regional disparities observed in well-being in Slovenia, and facilitates the design of policies that successfully tackle the disparities while boosting and balancing regional development.

Both tools are user-friendly and highly analytical, which has been confirmed by positive user feedback (researchers, decision-makers, policy-makers, NGOs, general public) at home and abroad. The findings of the index have been applied in an array of analyses, and used for the purposes of planning the spending of EU funding and designing a tailored response to the needs of children and families in local environments. Academia has acknowledged the relevance of the index by citing and interpreting its findings and confirming its usefulness at national and international conferences and by publishing a number of articles and papers on the matter.



SDG 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



Slovenia has an efficient and effective legislative framework that fosters equal opportunities and prevents discrimination. The framework includes Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act adopted in 2002, Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act adopted in 2010 and Protection Against Discrimination Act adopted in 2016, which sets out that every individual shall be protected against discrimination regardless of their sex, national origin, race or ethnicity, language, faith or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, social status, material standing, education or any other personal circumstance.

According to the data on personal experience with discrimination, fewer and fewer people are being discriminated against. In 2015, the share of those having experienced discrimination stood at 13%, and dropped to 10% in 2017. Monitoring and registering personal experience with discrimination is particularly important in the scope of SDG 10, as it helps interpret the situation regarding inequalities in Slovenia. Among the people who experienced discrimination in 2017 nearly half reported being discriminated against in the workplace (48%) while 18% experienced discrimination in healthcare. Interesting enough, despite the overall data indicating that the number of people with discrimination experience is decreasing, as many as 36% of people believe that the situation regarding discrimination and inequalities has somewhat worsened over the past few years and that Slovenia has not put in place appropriate mechanisms to address and prevent the issue. Only 5% of the respondents think that discrimination is not a problem in Slovenia.

Slovenia records one of the lowest levels of income inequality in the EU. Slovenia's low income inequality is strongly affected by the highly progressive taxation of household incomes and contributes to the disposable income of households being relatively evenly distributed, which is additionally sustained by social transfers. Nevertheless, Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 recognizes that reduction of economic inequalities significantly contributes to creating a decent life for all, in which the income or the wealth of individuals and households plays an indispensable role. Slovenia needs to make concerted efforts to keep income inequality at low levels amid increasing and concern raising demographic and climate change and technological development.

The share of income of one-fifth of the wealthiest households in 2017 in Slovenia was 3.4 times higher than the share of income of one-fifth of the income-poorest households. The decrease in the level of income inequality in the past three years has been driven by economic growth. The level of equivalized disposable income of the households in the lowest quintile grew most, as there employment increased the most and the relaxation of austerity measures had the biggest effect. Households from the highest quintile, on the other hand, are highly taxed. The system of progressive income taxation contributes the most to the relatively even distribution of disposable income of households - this is additionally influenced by social transfers.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap	20.3%	17.5%
GINI index	24.5	23.4

The Gini coefficient (measuring income concentration or income level of an individual household against the income level of all other households) ranked Slovenia (23.4) the 2nd in the EU. This is the result of numerous measures that are being implemented at national level. In 2018, the minimum wage was adjusted by just under 5% (EUR 842.75 gross), and as of 1 January 2020 by a good 10% amounting to EUR 940.58 gross, with all the allowances being exempted from the minimum wage (for length of employment, work and business performance, and for more difficult working conditions).

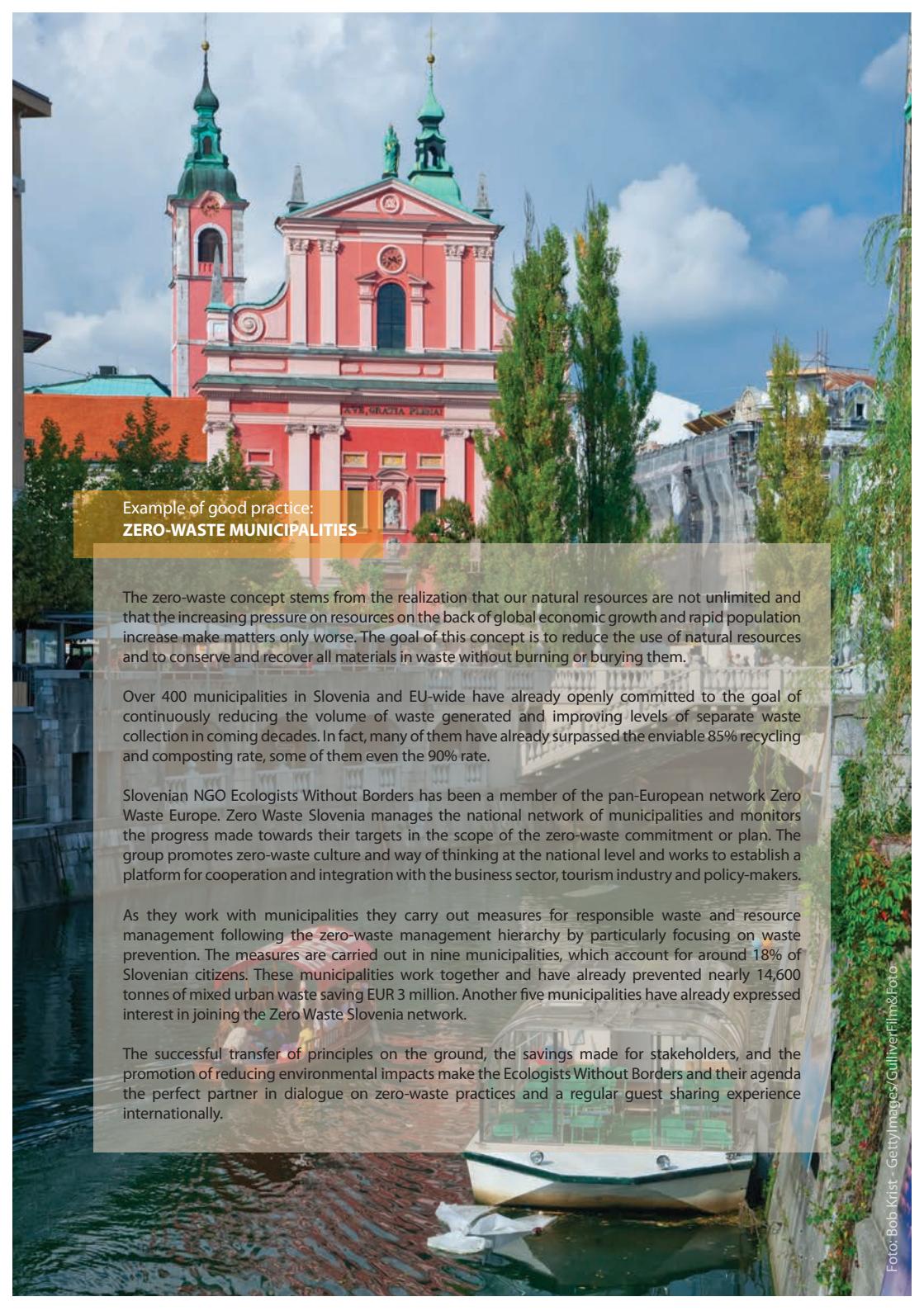
Another relevant indicator that shows whether inequalities are decreasing is the relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap, which is calculated as the difference between the median equivalized disposable income of people below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, expressed as a percentage of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Over the past five years, the gap has seen a pronounced decline, standing at 22% in 2014 and decreasing to 17.5% in 2018 (18.5% for men and 17.2 for women). The relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap levels are lowest among children and young people up to 17 years (13.3%) and highest for the age group 18-64 with 19.2%.

By being aware of the importance of equal access and high-quality of education for all, Slovenia provides subsidies for food in educational institutions for children from socially disadvantaged families. The full subsidy for (morning) lunch or free lunch belongs to students from families where the average monthly income per person does not exceed 53% of the net average salary. The lunch subsidy belongs entirely to students whose average monthly income per person does not exceed 36% of the net monthly salary (first, second and third income bracket).



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

Through numerous development projects in partner countries, Slovenia also addresses structural income inequalities and inequalities based on the personal circumstances of individuals. Many projects, taking into account the approach of sexual sensitivity, are designed so that in addressing women they recognise intersectional forms of discrimination and thus directly address for example poor women, women from rural areas and refugee women.



Example of good practice: **ZERO-WASTE MUNICIPALITIES**

The zero-waste concept stems from the realization that our natural resources are not unlimited and that the increasing pressure on resources on the back of global economic growth and rapid population increase make matters only worse. The goal of this concept is to reduce the use of natural resources and to conserve and recover all materials in waste without burning or burying them.

Over 400 municipalities in Slovenia and EU-wide have already openly committed to the goal of continuously reducing the volume of waste generated and improving levels of separate waste collection in coming decades. In fact, many of them have already surpassed the enviable 85% recycling and composting rate, some of them even the 90% rate.

Slovenian NGO Ecologists Without Borders has been a member of the pan-European network Zero Waste Europe. Zero Waste Slovenia manages the national network of municipalities and monitors the progress made towards their targets in the scope of the zero-waste commitment or plan. The group promotes zero-waste culture and way of thinking at the national level and works to establish a platform for cooperation and integration with the business sector, tourism industry and policy-makers.

As they work with municipalities they carry out measures for responsible waste and resource management following the zero-waste management hierarchy by particularly focusing on waste prevention. The measures are carried out in nine municipalities, which account for around 18% of Slovenian citizens. These municipalities work together and have already prevented nearly 14,600 tonnes of mixed urban waste saving EUR 3 million. Another five municipalities have already expressed interest in joining the Zero Waste Slovenia network.

The successful transfer of principles on the ground, the savings made for stakeholders, and the promotion of reducing environmental impacts make the Ecologists Without Borders and their agenda the perfect partner in dialogue on zero-waste practices and a regular guest sharing experience internationally.



SDG 11: MAKE CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



Slovenia has a distinct dispersed settlement pattern with settlements counting less than 500 residents dominating in this structure, 67 towns or cities, and only two agglomerations with over 50,000 people. Compared to EU counterparts, Slovenian cities are relatively small in size and population, but play an indispensable role in securing the balanced development of our country. Some cities play an important international role and are integrated in cross-border urban agglomerations. Slovenian cities are principal employment centres accounting for 94% of the jobs in Slovenia and are home to 70% of tertiary-educated Slovenians. Yet, the future Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia until 2050 recognizes suburbanization, which is typical of functional areas of larger cities and a result of high prices of housing in cities coupled with a high degree of population mobility (number of vehicles per inhabitant) and extensive road infrastructure, as a negative trend. Thus, city centres have lost their value and role, the level of supply has worsened, while new traffic flows have been created with an increase in private motorized traffic, which causes traffic congestion, and particularly results in loss of valuable agricultural land on the outskirts of cities.

Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia until 2050 puts spotlight on the new role of cities and identifies strengthening of competitiveness of Slovenian cities as one of its primary goals. It outlines three priority intervention areas, including making cities more attractive. The development of high-quality public space, green city systems and sustainable mobility systems will help create conditions for healthy urban life.

Slovenian cities already have some experience with sustainable mobility planning, as 11 urban municipalities in 2016 adopted sustainable urban strategies based on guidelines of the Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning. The municipalities set out their development vision, identifying the goals, the measures and the methods of implementing the strategies. Drafting the strategy was inclusive, bringing together urban authorities and other relevant stakeholders (NGOs, residents etc.) and spurring cooperation between cities. At a later stage, municipalities annexed strategies with implementing plans to identify concrete measures that would contribute to realizing the strategy goals, the key projects and propose project funding. Thus, they met the condition to access EU funding for urban development, which has supported municipalities' efforts towards sustainable urban development through the integrated territorial investment mechanism ever since 2017.

Slovenia recognized cities and municipalities (and companies) as key partners in driving the transition to a circular economy. The two represent a key ecosystem rich in various resources (and waste) and are important service providers. Both cities and municipalities can be catalysts for circular models for resource, energy and waste management, as they act as one-stop shops for services provided to citizens and importantly influence consumption patterns and behaviour. In addition, cities and municipalities are the local environments in which the businesses grow and in which they can realize the principle of closing the material loop and are therefore an important discussion partner for the businesses. Also, the effects of different policies are most intensively felt on the ground particularly in the cities and by local communities. Slovenia supports the cities that have already prepared or implemented circular models or circular economic strategies, including Ljubljana, Maribor, Kranj and others.



The architectural policy agenda of 2017 includes several goals: improving the quality of life and the quality of the living environment, while fostering sustainable development, social cohesion and cultural identity. Emphasis has been put on the central role of culture in an environment shaped by people, including the architecture, heritage, public space and landscape, which was consistent with the Davos Declaration promoting the concept of a high-quality Baukultur in Europe adopted by the EU ministers of culture. Quality architecture is seen through the prism of its contribution to sustainable development of urban and rural areas, which goes beyond its conventional interpretation based on aesthetic aspects and usefulness dimension.

Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready campaign was launched in 2010 under the auspices of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The campaign brings together local governments and local communities to share experience and best practice in disaster risk reduction and enables them to self-assess their progress to improve disaster resilience at the local level. Five Slovenian cities and local communities have joined the campaign so far.

Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Urban population exposure to air pollution by particulate matter	PM ₁₀ : 27.7 µg/m ³ PM _{2,5} : 21.6 µg/m ³	PM ₁₀ : 25.1 µg/m ³ PM _{2,5} : 16.7 µg/m ³
Overcrowding rate by degree of urbanization	densely populated (16.7%) moderately populated (14.9%) sparsely populated (11.6%)	densely populated (16.2%) moderately populated (12.7%) sparsely populated (10.8%)
Recycling rate of municipal waste	54.1 %	58.8 %

The overcrowding rate is the percentage of persons living in dwellings with not enough rooms in regard with the number, gender and age of household members. The rate varies accordingly with the degree of urbanization. A noticeable upward trend in the overcrowding rate in densely populated areas has been recorded, while it has been declining in moderately populated areas, and remaining the same for sparsely populated areas in the period 2016-2018.

Wood biomass burning for residential purposes coupled with road transport, most notably diesel-powered vehicles, industrial activity and agriculture importantly contribute to high PM10 concentration figures. Exposure of urban populations to ambient particulate matter has seen a downfall, yet in winter months it is still found at significantly high levels, surpassing the EU average. Overall, Slovenian population is more exposed to pollution with smallest particulate matter than its counterparts across the EU with Slovenian average levels standing at 19.7% against the EU average of 14.1%.



In the developed world, the number of people exposed to noise has been increasing mainly due to the increase in road, rail and air transport. In Slovenia, investments are being made to reduce noise pollution along motorways, highways and railways. Despite urbanisation and the construction of new housing units, noise pollution in urban municipalities is slightly decreasing along the existing roads and railways.

In municipal waste management, Slovenia has recently made great progress in terms of separate collection, as well as increasing the level of recycling. In 2018 the share of landfilled municipal waste stood at just around 6%. Additional effort will have to be put into preventing waste generation, which will be achieved through greater economic attractiveness of reuse and recycling. The operation of extended producer responsibility systems should be improved and separate waste collection should be increased.



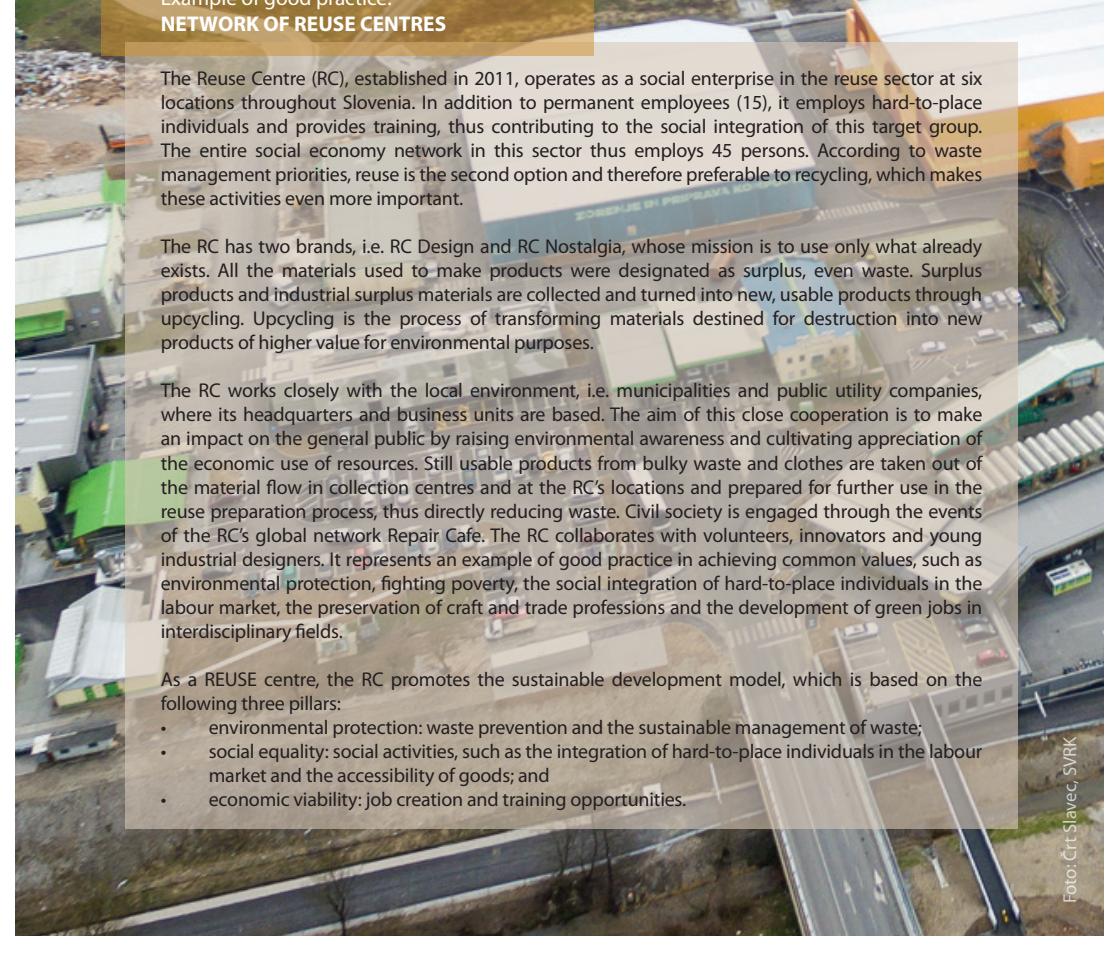
SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

In the period 2017-2020, Slovenia funded and implemented a series of training programmes for firefighters and civil protection personnel mostly from the Western Balkan countries in order to improve the response capacity in the event of a flood or fire and to help reduce the number of fatalities and the number of affected people in the cities. Also, Slovenia held stress management programmes for emergency service personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As part of its international development cooperation, Slovenia contributed to the development of a more sustainable infrastructure in the cities, most notably in terms of updating city and municipal lighting plans. Certain of Slovenia's international projects focus on capacity building targeting individuals from rural areas (most notably women), thus empowering rural populations and better connecting rural areas with cities in the long term.

Slovenia support global efforts for safe cities and communities across the globe in the scope of its cooperation with ITF. For example, in primary and secondary schools and in a refugee camp in Jordan, the country delivered awareness raising programmes, teaching young people about the risks and dangers associated with landmines, promoting safe behaviour among Syrian refugees in Jordan, and contributing to the minimization of fatalities from mine explosions upon the return of refugees to their home countries.



Example of good practice: **NETWORK OF REUSE CENTRES**



The Reuse Centre (RC), established in 2011, operates as a social enterprise in the reuse sector at six locations throughout Slovenia. In addition to permanent employees (15), it employs hard-to-place individuals and provides training, thus contributing to the social integration of this target group. The entire social economy network in this sector thus employs 45 persons. According to waste management priorities, reuse is the second option and therefore preferable to recycling, which makes these activities even more important.

The RC has two brands, i.e. RC Design and RC Nostalgia, whose mission is to use only what already exists. All the materials used to make products were designated as surplus, even waste. Surplus products and industrial surplus materials are collected and turned into new, usable products through upcycling. Upcycling is the process of transforming materials destined for destruction into new products of higher value for environmental purposes.

The RC works closely with the local environment, i.e. municipalities and public utility companies, where its headquarters and business units are based. The aim of this close cooperation is to make an impact on the general public by raising environmental awareness and cultivating appreciation of the economic use of resources. Still usable products from bulky waste and clothes are taken out of the material flow in collection centres and at the RC's locations and prepared for further use in the reuse preparation process, thus directly reducing waste. Civil society is engaged through the events of the RC's global network Repair Cafe. The RC collaborates with volunteers, innovators and young industrial designers. It represents an example of good practice in achieving common values, such as environmental protection, fighting poverty, the social integration of hard-to-place individuals in the labour market, the preservation of craft and trade professions and the development of green jobs in interdisciplinary fields.

As a REUSE centre, the RC promotes the sustainable development model, which is based on the following three pillars:

- environmental protection: waste prevention and the sustainable management of waste;
- social equality: social activities, such as the integration of hard-to-place individuals in the labour market and the accessibility of goods; and
- economic viability: job creation and training opportunities.



SDG 12: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



According to the International Resource Panel, the 10 wealthiest countries consume 10 times more raw materials than the poorest countries in the world and twice the global average, which points to considerable inequality in the distribution of raw materials to support the (current) lifestyle in these countries. At the same time, this means that countries from the low-income group will need large amounts of raw materials per capita to achieve the sustainable development goals. Introducing a different approach to production and consumption is therefore essential if future generations are to have a decent future. The answer to this challenge can be found in the transition to a circular economy, which, according to some estimates, can contribute 45% to reaching the climate targets with well-thought-out methods of production and consumption.

Slovenia recognised this challenge when drafting the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, which sets the transition to a low-carbon circular economy as one of its goals. Statistics place Slovenia below the EU-28 average when it comes to three types of productivity – material, energy and emissions productivity – as well as when it comes to monitoring circularity in the use of resources (EU-28: 11.7, Slovenia: 8.5 – in 2017). In the long run, this makes Slovenia vulnerable because of its dependency on imported raw materials and because the prices of primary raw materials, energy products and energy are expected to rise. Therefore, one of the four priority areas after the formulation of development policies is the transition to a low-carbon economy, bearing in mind that this is a systemic challenge requiring integration in sectoral policies and implementation solutions. In cooperation with the European Institutes of Innovation and Technology (EIT Climate-KIC and EIT Raw Materials) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), Slovenia has prepared a comprehensive programme for the transition to a carbon-free society, which represents a model example at the EU level. The connection between transitioning to a circular economy and achieving climate neutrality is partly included in the National Energy and Climate Plan of the Republic of Slovenia and will also play an important role in developing new strategies for industrial climate neutrality and amending the Smart Specialisation Strategy.

The percentage of built-up areas in Slovenia is increasing (by 0.8% in 2015), which also seems to be the trend in other EU countries. What is more problematic is the fact that, despite a slightly improving trend, the productivity of built-up areas in Slovenia is low.

In addition to the production system, it is important to address consumer habits, which are not very encouraging in Slovenia, with both household electricity consumption and the share of households with goods that run on electricity increasing. A higher number of such devices cancels out the benefits that can be gained by improving the energy efficiency of some of the devices and contributes to the growing amount of waste. With 541 cars per thousand inhabitants, Slovenia ranks 9th in the EU in terms of car ownership. Travel also poses a significant challenge for sustainable consumption; it is therefore encouraging that, in 2015, Slovenia established the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism, a national programme and certification scheme that currently covers a variety of tourist destinations, accommodation providers, natural parks, tourist agencies and natural sights under the umbrella brand SLOVENIA GREEN. Encouraging sustainable consumption in Slovenia is also supported through the implementation of the Decree on green public procurement, which determines 20 contract subject matters with mandatory green public procurement.

Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Material productivity	1.35 SKM/kg	1.86 SKM/kg
Food waste generation	65kg/inhabitant	68kg/inhabitant
Emissions productivity	2.9 SKM/million kg	3.2 SKM/million kg

In the 2001–2015 period, the average household spent most of its money on meat, bread and the food category consisting of milk, cheese and eggs, a little less on fruit and vegetables and the least amount on various sweet products (sugar, honey, chocolate, etc.). Implementation of the amended **Agriculture Act**, adopted in 2017, will contribute to a reduction in food waste quantities. Among other things, this Act provides for food donations to prevent the loss of large food quantities, thereby pursuing the goals of a circular economy, waste reduction and, above all, helping those in need. Another solution for this issue is a provision exempting food donors from value added tax under certain conditions, the details of which are specified in the **Rules on the implementation of the Value Added Tax Act**. More measures for tackling food waste are being prepared and financed under the Life Integrated Project **Care4Climate**. The **Strategy for Reducing Loss and Food Waste in the Food Supply Chain** is also being drafted. The Strategy will comprehensively address measures for preventing and reducing loss and waste food quantities across the food supply chain.

Although emissions productivity in Slovenia is improving, progress is too slow compared to other EU countries. During periods of economic growth, when GDP increased faster than emissions, emissions productivity increased, then in the first years of the economic crisis it remained at approximately the same level. Most emissions are produced in the sectors of transport and energy, which together contribute approximately six tenths of total emissions, followed by agriculture, industry and household fuel use at one tenth each. Slightly less emissions are produced in industrial processes, while the percentage of other activities is relatively modest.

SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

As Slovenia appreciates the importance of responsible production and consumption, it has set up a variety of international cooperation projects on the subject. In 2018 it implemented a project supporting the development of policies on the efficient use of resources in Montenegro. The purpose of the project was to help recognise the potential brought by economic development solutions that respect natural features, e.g. the new development paradigm of the circular economy offering solutions to stop negative trends such as the exploitation of non-renewable resources and excessive pollution while at the same time kick-starting the economy. The public sector was set as an example for the Montenegrin market in terms of improving and expanding the portfolio of products and services that are less harmful to the environment. The project also included a presentation of the role played by green public procurement, which can be a powerful tool in transitioning to a circular, low-carbon economy.

A comprehensive approach to realising the environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was also demonstrated by Slovenia with the establishment and implementation of a decentralised composting scheme in Kosovo. The project involved the development of a model for composting organic waste that enabled a reduction in the quantities of deposited organic waste and the burden on the environment, as well as improved health safety.



Example of good practice:

TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

The aim of the comprehensive strategic presentation project A Deep Demonstration of a Circular, Regenerative and Low-Carbon Economy is to strengthen and systematically integrate the efforts and initiatives already underway for the transition to a low-carbon circular economy in Slovenia, while introducing new innovative approaches and solutions that will help transform the challenges of this transition into opportunities, and establishing a development model that is consistent with the ambitious 2050 climate targets.

The proposed strategic project carried out in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Institutes of Innovation and Technology (EIT KIC Climate in EIT KIC Raw materials) illustrates the horizontal nature of the transition to a low-carbon circular economy, which requires orchestrated action from the entire Slovenian Government as well as numerous stakeholders from all sectors and levels. The project proposal brings together different areas that go beyond the silo mentality of individual sectors, which, as a rule, is the key weakness of policy-making in Slovenia. Among other things, this is reflected in lower results/targets and consequently in suboptimal utilisation of available public funding. In response to this neuralgic problem, the strategic project also envisages the creation of a policy laboratory that will strive to introduce informed and responsible policy-making.

The implementation of this comprehensive strategic presentation project will allow Slovenia to move from a promotional role in transitioning to a low-carbon circular economy to systemic measures designed to have a long-lasting impact. It will allow the country to truly position itself as a European leader taking advantage of the circular economy to decarbonise the economy and society, while strengthening the economy's competitiveness and fostering the development of circular and smart local communities. The key added value of the proposed project is its systemic approach as each of the proposed programmes is designed to be connected with at least one other programme based on continuous feedback.

The proposed solutions of this comprehensive strategic presentation project are structured in three interconnected pillars, namely smart and circular communities, circular development, and circular policy-making and science. All pillars are linked by three horizontal programmes, i.e. the operation of the Slovenian Centre for the Transition to a Smart and Circular Society, transformation capital and circular pilots.

Example of good practice:

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND URBAN SETTLEMENT OF THE MEŽIŠKA DOLINA VALLEY

The project aims to raise awareness and inform the wider population about the positive impacts of regular physical activity and the relevance of a healthy lifestyle. The project has improved the conditions for establishing energy efficient-traffic and sustainable mobility in the Mežiška dolina valley. By setting up bicycle renting stops the inhabitants have started to cycle and engage in other forms of physical activity to improve their health and well-being; they have also become more aware of the relevance of environment and nature conservation.

The project was implemented by the Mežiška dolina valley Local Action Group which designed numerous activities in the municipalities of the Koroška region, namely setting up new stops for renting bicycles in the area of Ravne na Koroškem and upgrading the already set up stops, setting up self-service bicycle repair stations, purchasing an electric vehicle for Ravne na Koroškem, setting up an automated system for renting electric bicycles in the centre of Prevalje, setting up four overarching roofs and purchasing city bicycles for rent in Črna na Koroškem and Žerjav, establishing a footpath in the settlement of Črna na Koroškem and Žerjav, promoting the use of the existing electric vehicle charging stations and developing programmes, organising workshops and activities that promote healthy lifestyle of the local population.



SDG 13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS



Since 2017, Slovenia has been running the LIFE Climate Path 2050 project, which includes a detailed overview – the Climate Mirror – as part of the segment for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This means that in 2019 Slovenia was still on its way to achieving the national goal of reducing emissions in the non-ETS sector by 2020. Transport is still the key sector for Slovenia to achieve its national emissions reduction goals, as emissions in this sector increased in the 2005–2017 period by 25.5%. Even though the attainment of goals and emissions reductions in 2017 were encouraging, emissions in the transport sector continued to grow and could potentially jeopardise the attainment of annual goals in the future. It should be noted, therefore, that emissions will need to be reduced significantly by 2030 and 2050, which means that measures will have to be implemented more vigorously in the future. Significant attention will also have to be devoted to the elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies, which in 2017 exceeded the amount of grants earmarked for measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 by nearly three times.

Part of the answer to the challenges of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the recently adopted National Energy and Climate Plan, which shows that total GHG emissions by 2030 will be reduced by up to 36% compared to 2005. At the same time, the National Energy and Climate Plan provides for the preparation of a national strategy for the abandonment of coal based on the principles of fair transition by the end of 2020 and the Act Regulating the Gradual Closure of the Velenje Mine and the Restructuring of the Salek Coal Region in 2021. Slovenia is also preparing a long-term climate strategy that will lay down guidelines for achieving climate neutrality by 2050, for which public consultation has already been carried out. Measures for transitioning to a low-carbon society are supported through funds collected in the Climate Change Fund.

The Climate Path 2050 project included the Local Climate Action Scoreboard, an online application that enables Slovenian municipalities to comprehensively compare their performance in preventing climate change for the first time. The Local Scoreboard encourages the exchange of good practices between municipalities and gives insight into the actions of individual municipalities in several areas, such as buildings, transport, agriculture, etc. The total of 56 action indicators include the goals of CO₂ emissions targets that the municipalities undertook to achieve, the value of investments in the energy-saving renovation of buildings owned by the municipalities, the number of electrical vehicle charging stations and the percentage of separately collected waste fractions. Slovenia has seven local energy agencies, which support municipalities in the implementation of their energy concepts. Thirty-seven of the municipalities are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. This initiative brings together thousands of local governments that have made a voluntary commitment to achieving the EU climate targets.

In addition to Climate Path 2050, Slovenia is also running the LIFE IP Care4Climate project, which is based on a broad partnership of various stakeholders and focuses on reducing gaps in the implementation of measures for reducing GHG emissions in sectors with the highest potential for the reduction of emissions (e.g. energy use in buildings) and in sectors where emissions are still not being reduced (e.g. road transport). The project will help carry out complementary activities and will enable the mobilisation of complementary sources of funding for the implementation of measures.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Greenhouse gas emissions (index 1986=100)	82.39	85.5 (2017)
Emmissions in energy consumption (indeks 2000=100)	87.9	87.3 (2017)
Financing projects and carrying out activities aimed at mitigating and/or adapting to climate change in developing partner countries*	2,354,155 EUR	4,336,959 EUR

* The indicator covers the voluntary financial and technical assistance of the developed countries to the developing countries for climate change mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adapting to climate change.

An overview of emissions by sector shows that, in the non-ETS sector, transport is the key sector in achieving the national goals of emissions reduction in Slovenia. In 2017, the emissions percentage thereof was 50.9% and it remains the only sector recording an increase in GHG emissions in the 2005–2017 period, namely a 25.5% increase. In the industry sector, emissions decreased in the 2005–2017 period by 26.6%; nevertheless, they have been on the rise for the past four years, moving away from the indicative OP GHG sector target. In the buildings sector, the majority of emissions are generated by space heating and, as a result, emissions also depend on climate conditions. In the 2005–2017 period, emissions in this sector decreased by a good 45%. In order to achieve the goal in this sector, emissions in the following two years will have to be reduced by a further 7.7%. Emissions in agriculture were 6.2% below the target value. The principal measures for reducing emissions are efficient animal production and an efficient nitrogen cycle in agriculture. Incentives for improving the quality of feed and feed rations, which would significantly increase the effectiveness of production and thus reduce methane emissions from the animals' digestive system, must be ensured as part of the future **Rural Development Programme**.

The ecological footprint, which is one of the most comprehensive indicators of environmental development, increased relatively rapidly in the period of economic growth and declined to around pre-existing levels during the recession, but in recent years this indicator has increased again. Such growth shows that economic development was not achieved without increased use of resources and pollution. Slovenia's ecological footprint exceeds the biocapacity level, i.e. nature's biological capacity, by 129%. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is also planning on developing a methodology and preliminary calculation of the ecological footprint for the 12 statistical regions in Slovenia.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Through international development cooperation, Slovenia strives to finance and carry out comprehensive projects that cover various environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help mitigate climate change in the long run. It has helped develop a modern and economical system of remote heating at a heating plant in Serbia through an increase in heating from renewable energy sources and a permanent reduction in heat losses in the network. In addition to energy projects, Slovenia is also striving to mitigate climate change with development projects related to waste collection and separation, sustainable community management and water source management and projects improving the biocapacity and biodiversity of developing countries.

Slovenia complies with the EU commitments under the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework. Climate change is also a priority area according to the Declaration on Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia. Slovenia has already ratified the Paris Agreement and will join the EU on the international level in advocating the importance of implementing the Paris Agreement commitments. Slovenia is part of the informal EU Green Diplomacy Network, which hosts a Climate Diplomacy Day each year in cooperation with EU Member States.

In September 2019, Slovenia reactivated the Green Group, which was formed in 2009 on its initiative and includes Iceland, Costa Rica, Singapore, the UAE and Cape Verde. It was established with the aim of promoting the issues of water, climate change and sustainable development in international relations. Under the system of protection against natural and other disasters, Slovenia complies with all four priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

Example of good practice:
MARINE BIOLOGY STATION PIRAN

For more than 50 years, the Marine Biology Station of the National Institute of Biology has been the country's central unit conducting essential and useful multi-disciplinary marine research. The Station studies various biodiversity levels, biogeochemical cycles, the characteristics and circulation of water masses using operational oceanography and modelling, the diversity of marine microorganisms and their interactions with the environment, the mass occurrence of gelatinous zooplankton and solutions for easing the negative effects of this phenomenon on the ecosystem and the effects on organisms and the environment caused by climate change and other human activities at sea.

With its knowledge base, the Station provides effective support for environmental policies and various stakeholders in the sustainable economic and social development of the coastal area and the sea. It also fosters the popularisation and promotion of knowledge about the sea to raise awareness amongst the expert and general public. Its teaching and promotional activities are mainly focused on the natural characteristics of the sea, and its ecology and protection, but have recently expanded to various related issues (non-indigenous and invasive organisms, ballast water and plastics). The Station's contribution to societal development lies in sharing knowledge about the sea with all age groups, from preschool children and the students of all Slovenian universities, to people taking classes at the Third Age University.

In 2006, the Marine Biology Station started organising regular promotional activities among the younger generation. Its main promotional activity is its annual Open House Day, marking World Oceans Day on 8 June. The Open House Day is extremely popular, particularly among primary school pupils, who participate in marine workshops and lectures every year. In the last five years alone, the Open House Day has been attended by more than 1,600 pupils and other citizens.





SDG 14: CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Slovenia is carrying out the 2017–2021 Marine Environmental Management Plan, which is aimed at assessing the environmental state of marine waters, establishing pressures on marine waters, providing a programme for monitoring the state of marine waters and determining a set of measures for maintaining the good condition of marine waters for every six-year period. The Adriatic is a typical bay-type sea and, as a result, the negative effects of individual factors on its quality are more pronounced than in deeper and more open seas. Its ecological instability is due to its geographical position and geological and hydrological conditions. Activities related to the marine environment contribute 2% of the total added value in Slovenia and provide jobs to 2% of employed persons and bring many important social benefits. These activities have an effect on the balance of the marine environment, and data shows that this natural resource is being used beyond the ecosystems' natural restoration ability. This leads to a loss of species and habitats as well as a decrease in the economic efficiency of activities related to the marine environment.

The coastal area is the meeting point of marine and inland waters, which can be problematic when certain events coincide (high tides and extreme precipitation) and due to a faster rise in the sea level along the Slovenian coast compared to European and global trends. It is therefore essential that the water infrastructure protecting important coastal facilities, such as saltpans and the wider urban hinterland of the coastal area, is in good condition. The Slovenian end of the Adriatic is only a small part of the entire system, which is under the influence of the significantly more substantial pollution of other countries. Sea and coastal management therefore represents a special challenge.

The 2050 Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia (SDSS) being drafted recognises Slovenia as a maritime country that treats the sea and coast as a spatial and development advantage. The coastal area in Slovenia is highly urbanised, densely populated, and multi-functional, with a highlighted transport function, but it also boasts important protected areas of natural and cultural heritage, while the hinterland is distinctly rural, although open to urbanisation.

Achieving SDG 14 will require the implementation of national commitments in the recently adopted Resolution of the General Assembly on the National Environmental Action Programme (ReNPVO20-30). The ReNPVO20-30 provides that, despite the marine environment being relatively large, its biodiversity is already declining, particularly due to the deterioration of habitats and species as a result of human activity. The Slovenian sea has yet to show signs of an excessive occurrence of invasive, non-indigenous species, but this has happened in the Adriatic Sea sub-region and the Mediterranean Sea region, which may also bring about changes in the Slovenian sea in the future. The situation regarding economically significant marine species is bad due to overfishing, which is mostly a consequence of intensive fishing in the entire Mediterranean and wider area. Due to substantially improved wastewater treatment, the rate of eutrophication in the Slovenian sea is no longer alarming, but is still occurring in places. However, our marine environment is still polluted, particularly due to tributyltin compounds, mercury and waste. The environmental impact of underwater noise on the marine environment at a level that can already have a direct bearing on the ethology of marine organisms is also worrying.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
The percentage of excellent-quality bathing water in Slovenia	Bathing seawater: 100 %	Bathing seawater: 100 %
Surface area of maritime areas defined under Natura 2000	11 km ²	10 km ²

The quality of bathing water in the coastal sea is excellent, which ranks Slovenia among the top countries in the European Union. Since 2010, the monitoring of 21 bathing areas has been ensured by the Slovenian Environment Agency and carried out by Regional Institutes of Public Health or the National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food. During the bathing season, the quality of bathing water is monitored every 14 days through the examination of microbiological, physical and chemical parameters.

The relevant indicator measures the surface area covered by marine SCIs (km²). The surface area amounted to 3 km² in 2011 and 2012, increased to 11 km² in 2013 and remained the same up to and including 2017, then decreased to 10 km² in 2018 due to a change in the maritime boundary. The Natura 2000 sea network is also sufficient.



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Slovenia is actively involved in the process of drafting a legally binding implementing agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which is to be concluded under UNCLOS. As Slovenia places a priority on preserving the biodiversity of land, marine and inland aquatic ecosystems in situ, it strives for appropriate recognition of the contribution of the European network Natura 2000 to achieving SDG 14 of the Agenda. Under international treaties, e.g. the Convention on Biodiversity, CITES and the Barcelona Convention, Slovenia strives to enhance cooperation on policies concerning biodiversity, maritime activities and fishing and welcomes increased international and cross-border cooperation. At a recent meeting of the States Parties to Barcelona Convention, the Strunjan Nature Park was added to the list of Marine Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance.

Slovenia has been hosting meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) since 2014. In 2018, it even assumed the two-year presidency of the Commission. The Florianopolis Declaration was adopted that same year, changing the purpose of the Commission. With a declaration on whaling, it has expanded to include the conservation of the marine environment important to the survival of dolphins and whales. It also provides the basis for the sustainable use of the natural resources of the sea in the future. Furthermore, Slovenia encourages international scientific cooperation to limit the consequences of sea acidification.

As regards fishing, Slovenia is a member of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), an international regional organisation responsible for adopting binding fisheries management measures for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The GFCM provides the basis for joint action for sustainable stock management in the Mediterranean, including the Adriatic Sea. Slovenia is also a member of the regional project for the cooperation of fisheries experts for the Adriatic, FAO Adriamed.





Example of good practice: **LIFE TO GRASSLANDS PROJECT**

Since 2015, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and its partners the Haloze Rural Development Centre, the Ptuj Agriculture and Forestry Institute, the Dobovec Local Community and the Gorjanske Košenice Society are actively seeking to preserve the biodiversity of the agricultural landscape with the LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project. Extensive dry grasslands are among the most endangered habitats. The project aims to improve the currently unfavourable status of species-rich grasslands, to ensure long-term sustainable management and encourage the production and processing of products with added value. They are aware that species-rich grasslands may only be conserved by supporting economically profitable farming.

Through invitations and farm visits, a total of 360 owners and co-owners/managers of land joined the project; they made a commitment to manage 688 ha of grasslands in total in a sustainable way until 2025. Excessive overgrowth was removed and grasslands were restored on a total of 136 ha of agricultural land. Pasturing equipment (with 144 km of overall length of fence), hill mowers, mulchers and livestock trailers were made available free of charge for use by the grassland managers to support the sustainable management of grasslands.

The project also focused on the preservation and restoration of traditional orchards. A total of 3,530 seedlings of old tall fruit tree varieties were planted, while 43 ha of traditional orchards were restored and 41 ha were newly planted.

Special attention was directed at establishing economically profitable sustainable farming on species-rich grasslands. A total of 49 farm plans and an Economic Study for the Area of Haloze were developed aimed at encouraging the production and processing of products with added value arising from the grasslands. Project partners also drafted basic documentation for a collective brand called "S Haloških bregov" (From the Hills of Haloze) and performed a test product evaluation. A result-oriented agricultural measure for preserving species-rich grasslands was developed, tested and submitted to the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.



SDG 15: PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



Boasting remarkably rich biological diversity, Slovenia is classified as an area of the greatest biodiversity in Europe. This is primarily a natural condition but also a result of the systematic protection of plant and animal species and sound ecosystem management. Protected areas of high biodiversity and landscape diversity value are of particular importance. Measured by the share of protected area, which is key to preserving the habitats of endangered species, Slovenia ranks at the top among EU countries with twice the average share of such area (38% compared to the EU average of 18%). Yet despite numerous activities to protect it, biodiversity in Slovenia has also continued to decline over the long term. The main immediate pressures leading to the loss of biological diversity and impacting the well-being of the population in the EU and Slovenia include changes to and loss of habitats due to land-use changes (for example, the expansion of settled areas, the construction of industrial zones and roads, ecosystem fragmentation, altered and visually less appealing landscapes, the intensification of agriculture on flat land and the abandonment of land use in mountainous and remote areas), intensive forest management, changes arising from the exploitation of water resources, climate change, the introduction of invasive non-native species, excessive exploitation of resources (for instance, in fishery) and pollution.

With the aim of slowing down and reversing the trend of biodiversity loss in Slovenia, we incorporated into the recently-adopted Resolution on the National Environment Protection Programme for the period 2020-2030 the National Environment Protection Programme which outlines the extent of public interest for biodiversity preservation and protection of natural values, and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity Preservation in Slovenia. The latter is Slovenia's strategic document for meeting the global biodiversity preservation goals (Aichi Biodiversity Targets) in line with Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Slovenia has been implementing numerous measures for attaining Goal 15 of the 2030 Agenda. One of the most relevant challenges for Slovenia to address is how to better incorporate biodiversity in the policies of the key sectors. Spatial development should aim to coordinate economic, social and environment protection aspects in order to ensure biodiversity protection in urban and green infrastructure planning at national and regional level and the level of municipalities.

Slovenia has also adopted the Resolution on the National Forest Programme with the objective of ensuring the sustainable development of forests as ecosystems in terms of their biodiversity and near-natural and multipurpose management of all their ecological, production and social functions along with the sustainable contribution of forests to the economic development of society and rural areas in particular, the production and use of forest goods adapted to their renewability and the sustainable contribution of forests to a healthy living environment and the social development of society.

In the Resolution on the Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Slovenian Agriculture and Food Industry "Our food, rural areas and natural resources after 2021", special emphasis is placed on the protection of the environment and nature and on the conservation of agricultural areas and their soil fertility, which should become an asset rather than an obstacle to management. Environmental protection is a part of the approach to increasing the added value of products and encouraging the diversification of activities in rural areas.



Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Share of forestland in the total land area	58.3%	58.1%
Farmland bird index	Indicator species Farmland (71.6) Generalists (85.4) Grassland species (56.7)	Indicator species Farmland (78.3) Generalists (90.6) Grassland species (60.8)

In Slovenia, the surface area of forests is increasing in those places where forests are already plentiful from the point of view of landscape variety and landscape appearance, while suburban and intensive farming areas are heavily impacted by deforestation. By far the most important reason for deforestation in Slovenia is agriculture. Approximately 70% of the Slovenian Natura 2000 network is covered by forests, which indicates that they are generally well-preserved. Slovenia is characterised by a high share of forest with a species-rich natural composition. Species variety indicates the good conservation of Slovenian forests, which are characterised by great biodiversity. The Natura 2000 sites are managed on the basis of forest management plans that determine the implementation of measures for the adapted use of natural assets. These include detailed definitions and guidelines for the adapted use of forests (natural assets) and the implementation of measures in the Natura 2000 network arising from nature conservation guidelines.

Birds are an extremely reliable indicator of environment status, because their characteristics enable them to closely reflect the trends at all levels of biodiversity and nature. The grassland bird index increased by 0.3%. The analysis has indicated a moderate decrease, however, the trend in the past five years has been stable. The conclusions on the increase or decrease in the population must always be based on the long-term trend analysis, which has shown that in the past 10 years Slovenia has lost 40% of grassland species populations.

With the aim of slowing down the declining trend of biodiversity in Slovenia and improving the Natura 2000 sites management, Slovenia participated in the joint application of a large integrated LIFE project, which was launched in 2018 under the acronym **LIFE IP – NATURA.SI**. The project partners are all key stakeholders in the Natura 2000 sites management. The project contributes to improving the management of the entire Natura 2000 network. It is based on the cooperation of various sectors and stakeholders. Through various measures, the project will improve the conservation status of the selected Natura 2000 species and habitat types.

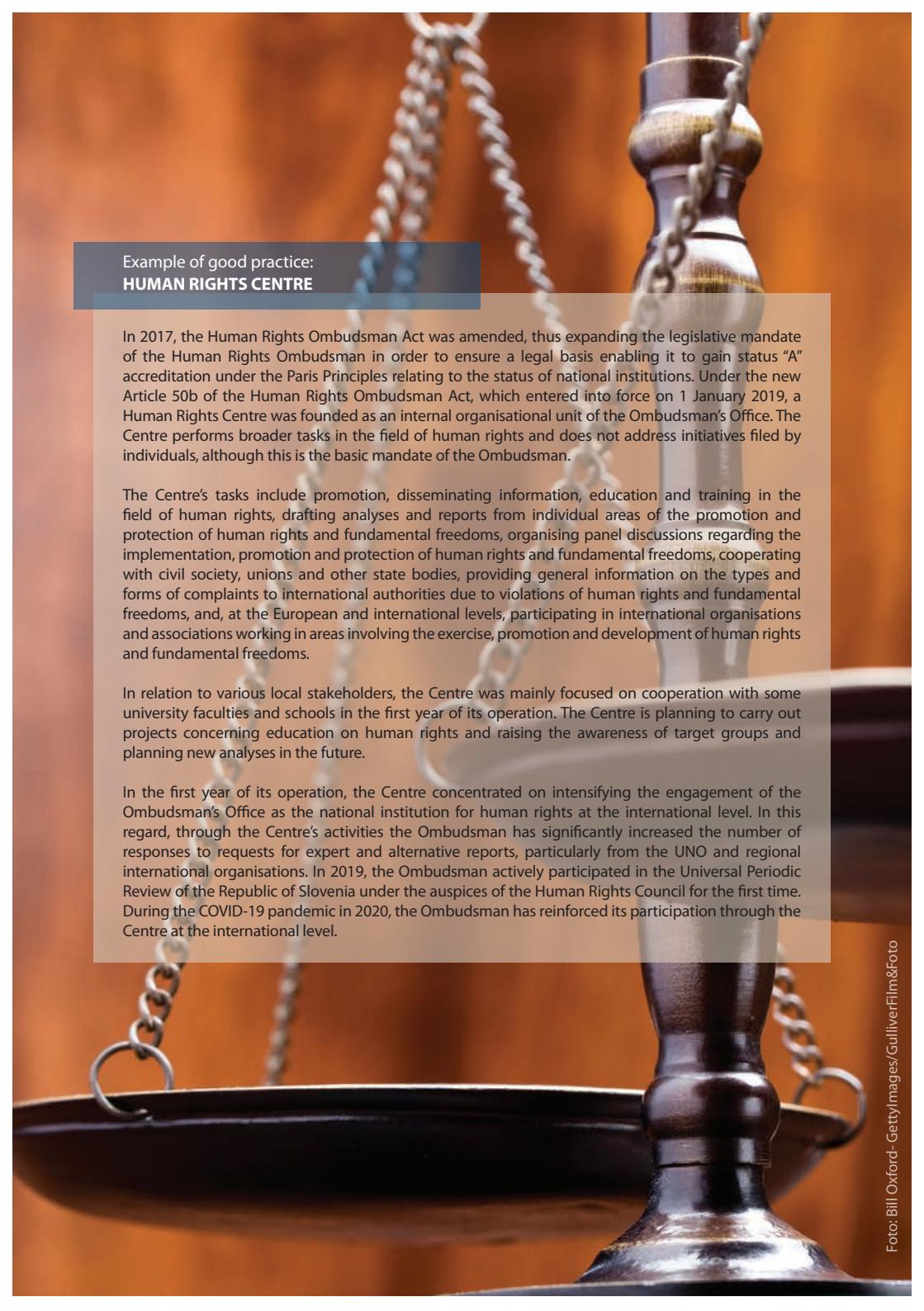


SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In the field of biodiversity conservation, Slovenia's decision-making bodies strive to simplify the implementation of international treaties and improve their cost-effectiveness and to reduce the burden placed on signatories. In the negotiations under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Slovenia is advocating transparency and responsibility as well as strengthening the legitimacy and integrity of decision-making processes, and it is committed to reasonably including the positions of other international organisations (e.g. IUCN, CITES, IPBES, FAO) in these processes. In particular, Slovenia is supporting processes that strengthen the interconnection of policies and instruments implemented for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement related to climate change and the those related to the restoration of ecosystems, sustainable food security and disaster risk reduction. Slovenia's membership fees and donations contribute to building the capacities of developing countries (e.g. under the auspices of GEF; CITES and IUCN) and it participates in many bi- and multilateral projects, particularly in Southeastern Europe.

Slovenia is committed to sharing its own examples of best practices through international partnership projects related to terrestrial fauna and flora. In this context, Slovenia is engaged in many projects with developing countries in the field of sustainable forest management and the decentralisation of forestry and beekeeping. For instance, a project involving knowledge transfer and technical assistance in beekeeping was carried out in Bangladesh. As the initiator of the International Day of Bees and the founding member of the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators, Slovenia is pointing out the unfavourable status of pollinators, particularly wild pollinators, which are crucial for biodiversity conservation and the maintenance of terrestrial ecosystems and, in turn, for the food security of humankind.





Example of good practice: **HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE**

In 2017, the Human Rights Ombudsman Act was amended, thus expanding the legislative mandate of the Human Rights Ombudsman in order to ensure a legal basis enabling it to gain status "A" accreditation under the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions. Under the new Article 50b of the Human Rights Ombudsman Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2019, a Human Rights Centre was founded as an internal organisational unit of the Ombudsman's Office. The Centre performs broader tasks in the field of human rights and does not address initiatives filed by individuals, although this is the basic mandate of the Ombudsman.

The Centre's tasks include promotion, disseminating information, education and training in the field of human rights, drafting analyses and reports from individual areas of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, organising panel discussions regarding the implementation, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, cooperating with civil society, unions and other state bodies, providing general information on the types and forms of complaints to international authorities due to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and, at the European and international levels, participating in international organisations and associations working in areas involving the exercise, promotion and development of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In relation to various local stakeholders, the Centre was mainly focused on cooperation with some university faculties and schools in the first year of its operation. The Centre is planning to carry out projects concerning education on human rights and raising the awareness of target groups and planning new analyses in the future.

In the first year of its operation, the Centre concentrated on intensifying the engagement of the Ombudsman's Office as the national institution for human rights at the international level. In this regard, through the Centre's activities the Ombudsman has significantly increased the number of responses to requests for expert and alternative reports, particularly from the UNO and regional international organisations. In 2019, the Ombudsman actively participated in the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Slovenia under the auspices of the Human Rights Council for the first time. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Ombudsman has reinforced its participation through the Centre at the international level.



SDG 16: PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia clearly provides that Slovenia is a democratic republic and a social state governed by the rule of law and that Slovenia is a state of all its citizens. Slovenia acknowledges the significance of the protection of citizens' rights for the quality of democracy and social and economic progress. The functioning of all other social systems and subsystems depends on the operation of the justice system. Therefore, Slovenia is committed to raising confidence in the legal system by maintaining the autonomy of courts, reinforcing integrity and delivering quality and timely judicial decisions. In addition to improving the justice system, Slovenia is striving to enhance the quality of work of judges and judicial staff and to ensure greater procedural justice.

Slovenia is one of the safest countries in the world, which has a positive effect on the quality of life of its inhabitants. Slovenia is a globally responsible country that demonstrates solidarity and cooperates in many international organisations and actively strives to maintain and reinforce peace, security, and respect for human rights and to collectively address global challenges.

Global challenges and trends impact the operation of the public and private sectors. Slovenia recognises the importance of the work methods of the public sector as regards increasing trust among citizens and ensuring the competitiveness of the economy. Through respect for the principle of "the same rules for all", zero tolerance of corruption, and the transparency of data and services, Slovenia is seeking to build trust in public institutions. It is committed to ensuring high-quality public services and a stimulating business environment and, *inter alia*, to seizing extremely important digitisation opportunities.





Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Mortality due to assault	0.75 (rate per 100,000 inhabitants)	0.69 (rate per 100,000 inhabitants) (2016)
Number of sexual assaults on persons under 15 years of age	131 (2016)	96
Trust in public institutions	– Parliament 11% – Government 16% – local authorities 27% (2015 fall orientation)	– Parliament 22% – Government 23% – local authorities 40% (2018 fall orientation)
Level of citizens' confidence in EU institutions	– European Parliament 30% – European Commission 30%	– European Parliament 38% – European Commission 36%
Global Peace Index	9 th among the EU member courties 15 th on a global scale	6 th among the EU member countries 11 th on a global scale

On a global scale, Slovenia is considered one of the safest countries. The number of sexual assaults on persons under 15 years of age has declined in Slovenia in the past few years. Slovenia has begun with the activities to establish a Barnhaus **Children's House**. In 2018, the Barnhaus was recognised by the Council of Europe as an example of good practice of child-friendly and comprehensive treatment of children who are victims of crime under the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Various projects for **the prevention of online violence** involving children and teachers have been running since 2017. The (Web Eye) **reporting point** enables Slovenian internet users to anonymously report hate speech and recordings of sexual child abuse. The partners in the project include the Office of the State Prosecutor General, the Police and representatives of the mass media and other organisations actively involved in the protection of children's rights. An independent state body for combating discrimination and promoting equality called **the Advocate of the Principle of Equality**, whose mission is to protect against discrimination and promote equality at systemic and individual levels, started to operate in Slovenia in 2017.

Many new elements were introduced to improve the legal system in Slovenia. Fifteen years ago, Slovenia established the **Commission for the Prevention of Corruption** as an autonomous and independent state body to strengthen the effectiveness of the rule of law and safeguard it from being threatened by corrupt practices, to enhance the integrity of the public sector and to monitor and investigate suspicion of corrupt practices. In 2017, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia implemented **The programme of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to enhance integrity and transparency 2017**, which specifies the measures to enhance the integrity of all public institutions and their employees. In 2018, Slovenia adopted the **Non-Governmental Organisations Act and the Ordinance** on the development strategy of non-governmental organisations and volunteering until 2023, which will contribute to the transparent operation and optimisation of the funding of non-governmental organisations. Slovenia provides access to public information in various ways, including the national open data portal, the OPSI. The OECD ranks Slovenia among the top ten countries in terms of open data (10th place in the world and 5th place in the EU according to the OURData Index for 2019).



SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In striving to preserve world peace, Slovenia regularly participates in international military and civil missions. Slovenian experts regularly attend several elections as observers in order to reinforce democracy in political systems. Based on its experience and best practices examples, Slovenia is regularly and actively engaged in cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans, particularly in relation to administrative law, public finance management, central banking and reform management. In the 2017–2020 period, Slovenia helped develop policies and mechanisms for monitoring money laundering and corruption in developing countries through various international development cooperation projects. Special attention was devoted to safeguarding confidential and personal information. Slovenia is committed to encouraging the activities of digital diplomacy in the Western Balkans and Eastern European countries. To a great extent, it is also actively engaged in the advocacy and promotion of human rights, which are highly regarded by Slovenia. In this context, between 2017 and 2019 Slovenia supported a project in Moldova that was developed to reinforce, through intergenerational cooperation, the capacities of non-governmental organisations for the autonomous performance of activities designed to empower the most vulnerable social groups, raise the awareness of the general public and decision-makers and influence their decisions.





Example of good practice:
MACROECONOMIC FISCAL MODELLING – ECOWAS

The project Macroeconomic Fiscal Framework for ECOWAS is implemented by ITF Enhancing Human Security. The project is financially supported by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the framework of international development cooperation programme. The project addresses SDGs and focuses on capacity building of the Macroeconomics Department at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

ECOWAS is a regional economic union of 15 member countries. Sustainable capacity building plays a key role in meeting the goals set under the ECOWAS 2020 Vision. The project aims to improve and enhance the skills of the ECOWAS Macroeconomics Department staff through training for making macroeconomic simulations and projections. The Macroeconomics Department is responsible for preparing analyses of economic policies, capacity building, counselling in private sector development, and establishing regional cooperation. The attained knowledge will enable the participants to calculate the potential GDP, cyclically adjusted budget and forecasting budget revenue.

In future, the project will facilitate the transfer of knowledge to the structures of all 15 member countries thus contributing to meeting SDG 17.9, namely enhancing international support to effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to implement SDGs.



SDG 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is built on a global partnership that unites all partners and assets and provides monitoring and review mechanisms. Slovenia is engaged in encouraging global progress and responsibility and is committed to building a future based on human dignity, stability, a just society and a successful economy. It strives to contribute towards paving a new way for the world economy that will lead to a better life for all, particularly for younger generations, who deserve their equal share. The current COVID-19 pandemic affecting all the countries of the world clearly signifies how important it is to collectively address global challenges while maintaining the long-term vision of sustainable development.

SDG 17 helps bring societies, individual countries and the remaining part of the world closer together. Slovenia is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by adopting suitable policies, providing sufficient funding for their implementation from all sources, also from the private sector, building capacities, supporting science, technology and innovation, and trade and ensuring the coherence of policies and forming partnerships to improve results. It is important to establish partnerships at the local, European and global levels. Through the 'Trade for All' strategy introduced by the European Union, Member States are obliged to ensure responsible trade and investment policy as an instrument for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while the strategy promotes job creation, sustainable growth and investments within and outside Europe.

Slovenia is aware that more measures will have to be designed in the future to improve the long-term sustainability of development and the quality of life. Therefore, state-level development policies will be directed at stimulating productivity growth, adapting to demographic changes, transitioning to a low-carbon circular economy and enhancing the role of the state and its institutions. In this context, it is crucially important to cooperate and co-create solutions with various stakeholders, which is also encouraged within the Partnership for Change. This innovative programme for the exchange of employees, experience and best practices between the public and private sectors has been constantly upgraded and has gradually turned into a national platform of cooperation.

Indicator	Data for 2015	Data for 2018
Official Development Aid	0.15% GNI	0.16% GNI
Imports from developing countries	5,471 (million) EUR	7,823 (million) EUR
The share of environmental taxes and labour taxes in total tax revenue	Environmental taxes: 10.62% Labour taxes: 49.66%	Environmental taxes: 10.21% Labour taxes: 50.28% (2017 latest available data)



Slovenia is an active participant in regional and international forums on development supporting peace and security, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and sustainable development. Its bilateral development and humanitarian aid focuses particularly on the Western Balkans, the European neighbourhood and Sub-Saharan Africa. In the Slovenian approach to sustainable development, special emphasis is placed on human rights, while the state also promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women, and it closely monitors the rights of children, the elderly and other vulnerable persons. In addressing climate change, Slovenia is focused on water and the sustainable management of natural resources.

In the past three years, the shares of environmental taxes and labour taxes in total tax revenue have been relatively stable. In 2017, the share of environmental taxes amounted to 10.21% of tax revenue, while the share of labour taxes was 50.28%. Similarly, as other EU Member States, Slovenia is striving to transition from taxes on labour to taxes on energy and the environment in order to stimulate sustainable economic development and create green workplaces.

SLOVENIA AS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In order to establish international development relations and achieve the sustainable development goals, Slovenia operates at internal and external levels. In international development cooperation projects, Slovenia connects many stakeholders: ministries and bodies within the ministries, implementing institutions, economic entities, non-governmental organisations and other civil society representatives, while at the internal level it strives to raise awareness of the SDGs and an inclusive approach to policy-making regarding international development cooperation. Slovenia is also engaged in strengthening support organisations for establishing future connections between organisations that are active in the field of international humanitarian aid and international volunteering. In 2018, Slovenia, *inter alia*, supported a project to raise the awareness of the Slovenian (and European) public as to the relationship between universal sustainable development and migration, its role in the EU and in developing countries, and the EU's contribution to development cooperation. Thereby, it strives to provide positive perspectives on migration and development and encourage the active participation of EU society in addressing development issues.

Slovenia is committed to facilitating balanced and just development by introducing many international activities and initiatives that respond to current global development issues (water diplomacy, Green Group activities, international engagement in the field of digitisation and the circular economy, active participation in World Bee Day, etc.).





6. NEXT STEPS

Slovenia's future in sustainable development will be largely shaped by the EU development strategy – the European Green Deal. It is a roadmap whose basic objectives are the elimination of net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, the decoupling of economic growth from resource use and the fair inclusion of all social groups. The EU will strive to turn climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas, making the transition to a low-carbon society just and inclusive for all. The European Green Deal measures, therefore, refer to more effective use of resources with the transition to a clean, circular economy, the restoration of biodiversity and the reduction of pollution. Achievement of the set goals will require action by all sectors of Slovenia's economy and investment in environmentally friendly technology, support for the innovation industry, the introduction of cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport, the decarbonisation of the energy sector, increased energy efficiency of buildings, and work with international partners with the aim of improving global environmental standards. In the light of the recent situation related to the outbreak of COVID-19, funds will have to be allocated in the initial phase of the implementation of the European Green Deal primarily to economic recovery and maintaining the level of social inclusion of all residents.

With the aim of maximising the utilisation of all potentials and capacities in sustainable development, Slovenia will continue its path towards sustainable development also in the field of policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). Namely, it is crucial that policies be coordinated, and thus work together to ensure balanced sustainable development that takes into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the latter in an equal manner. To this end, the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy will continue to coordinate the efforts of individual ministries through the already defined contact points for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Coordination between ministries will also continue with regard to the needs of Slovenia's participation in the meetings of the EU Council Working Group for the 2030 Agenda – this will, namely, ensure the current flow of information between ministries and developments in the international community in the field of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a basis for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Slovenia has undertaken multifaceted cooperation with various stakeholders, as it firmly believes that this is the only way to fully implement individual sustainable development goals that also respects the principle of leaving no one behind. To this end, several national and local stakeholders participated in the preparation of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the future, Slovenia will strive for further active integration of different relevant stakeholders. The established and regularly updated website on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Slovenia, which offers all interested parties a view of the situation concerning the value of individual indicators, will contribute importantly to this. Recommendations from stakeholders will be collected and disseminated to competent authorities of the Republic of Slovenia as well. The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy will make efforts towards monitoring their implementation.

Another key aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the continuous and systematic monitoring of the value of individual indicators. As the monitoring system in Slovenia is dispersed among several competent ministries and other bodies under their responsibility, the process of identifying competent authorities and persons responsible for individual indicators took place parallel with the preparation of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this way, in the future Slovenia will enable better flow of information between decision-makers and facilitate the connections between the national and international environments regarding the need to report or monitor the achievement of target values of indicators.



7. COVID-19 AND AGENDA 2030

Prime Minister Janez Janša with the selfless group that successfully steered Slovenia through the COVID-19 epidemic

The first infection with the COVID-19 virus in Slovenia was confirmed on 4 March 2020. On 12 March 2020 Slovenia declared an epidemic. The first major European outbreak was in Lombardy near the Slovenian border. COVID-19 epidemic broke out during a politically unstable period in Slovenia when the new government was taking over. Immediately after taking up its duties the new Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the first measures to mitigate the COVID-19 epidemic consequences:

- the closure or restriction of all non-emergency services. Only grocery stores remained open, along with the sale of agricultural products on farms, pharmacies, medical supply stores, petrol stations, banks, post offices, delivery services, newsagents and newsstands and other emergency services for ensuring public safety and health;
- stopping public transport and suspension of air traffic;
- the closure of kindergartens and schools;
- freezing the budget, thus providing EUR 400 million for the containment and remediation of COVID-19;
- the release of all stocks of personal protective equipment from the commodity reserves and the establishment of a mobile hospital with additional capacities;
- the institution of a price freeze on protective equipment;
- mandatory use of protective masks or other forms of mouth and nose protection, as well as protective gloves.

In March 2020 the Government prepared the first legislative anti-Corona-package (ACP1) to help the population and the economy to mitigate the COVID-19 epidemic consequences. The package is worth over 2 billion EUR or 5% GDP. In the next two legislative packages ACP2 and ACP3 the Government introduced measures for improving liquidity of companies and exiting from the crisis. Specific emphasis was put on tourism by introducing travel vouchers to be used when occupying tourist accommodations in Slovenia. These measures have an impact also on forecasting economic growth for 2021 – following this year's downturn by 7.8% we expect a rise of 6.7% GDP.

By the declaration of the end of the epidemic (14 May 2020) 67,701 test were carried out in Slovenia of which 1,465 were positive. By adopting swift and intensive measure Slovenia was successful in the fight against the coronavirus epidemic. By taking a coordinated approach to fighting the epidemic Slovenia was not only the first European country but the first country in the world to declare the end of the epidemic. The number of deaths per million inhabitants stood at 53 while in other countries the consequences were much more devastating (for example in Belgium 843 per million inhabitants, Great Britain 619 per million inhabitants, Spain 581 per million inhabitants, Italy 565 per million inhabitants).

In Slovenia, 2020 has been significantly marked by the COVID-19 epidemic. It not only threatens the economic aspect of Slovenia's sustainable development, but has also had a significant impact on all three aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its implications will lead to enormous challenges for Slovenia in the long run. With regard to COVID-19, the following trends in Slovenia within the framework of individual sustainable development goals can be identified:

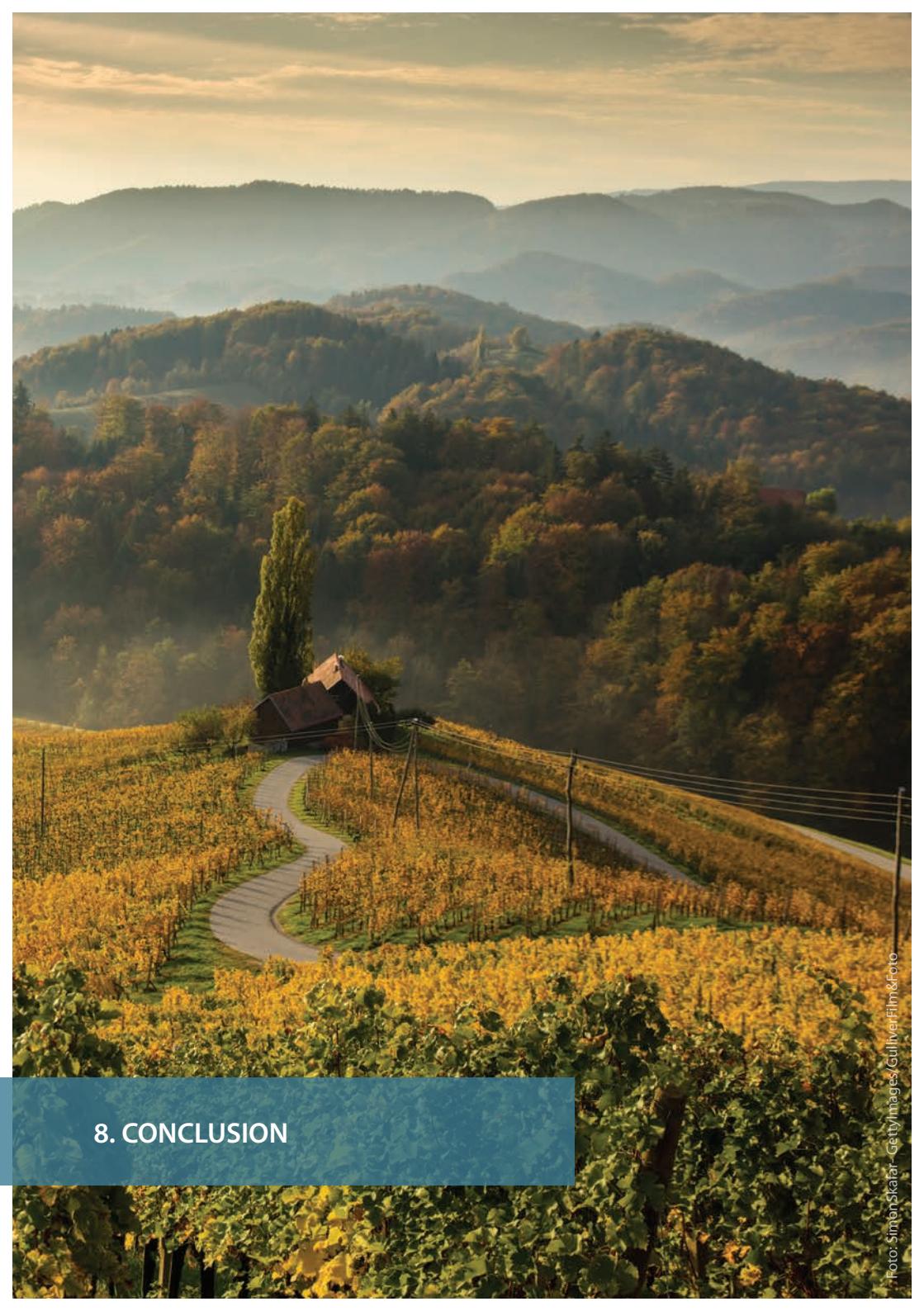
- **Sustainable development goal 1:** Due to the deteriorating economic situation, many people in Slovenia have lost their jobs, and even more have been temporarily laid off. A great many self-employed persons are facing a loss of income as well. To this end, Slovenia has adopted several packages of measures to prevent the deterioration of the economic situation of persons and vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19.
- **Sustainable development goal 2:** The situation during the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the importance of own food security and sovereignty, which is why one of Slovenia's measures was an increase in the volume of public procurement from local providers by public institutions.
- **Sustainable development goal 3:** The health and well-being of people were, of course, most directly exposed during the pandemic. The limited medical capacities in Slovenian hospitals led to the adoption of strict measures; the measures prevented the overcrowding of hospitals and inability to care for patients infected with COVID-19 due to a lack of medical equipment. Slovenia also tried to address the restriction of movement and poor economic situation through various measures aimed at alleviating the distress of its population.

- **Sustainable development goal 4:** All kindergartens, schools and higher education institutions were closed during the period of validity of the measures to mitigate the consequences of COVID-19. Classes were attended from home. It turned out that not all children in Slovenia have their own computers or internet access, which has contributed to unequal opportunities in education. In the future, teachers and parents will also need to be adequately equipped with digital competencies, e-textbooks and tablets or light computers, which will raise the quality of distance teaching (and last but not least, in the long run, the quality of teaching in the classroom).
- **Sustainable development goal 5:** In Slovenia, the share of women in occupations that proved to be crucial during the COVID-19 outbreak (health care and nursing, others forms of care, logistics, trade, housekeeping) is much higher than the share of men.
- **Sustainable development goal 7:** Due to the decrease in household income during the COVID-19 pandemic, Slovenia reduced electricity costs for all households.
- **Sustainable development goal 8:** The COVID-19 epidemic discontinued favourable unemployment trends. Growth in the number of newly registered unemployed increased rapidly in March 2020 due to the uncertainty of the situation, while employment slowed down. In March 2020, 77,855 unemployed persons were registered, which means 0.5% growth on a monthly basis and 1.7% on an annual basis. It also caused a large income loss for the self-employed. For this reason, the most vulnerable groups of the population (pensioners, farmers, self-employed, students etc.) received additional financial assistance.
- **Sustainable development goal 9:** During the COVID-19 epidemic, Slovenia earmarked research funds mainly for research related to the outbreak and efforts to mitigate it. The inability to move between municipalities had a significant impact on the digital transformation in terms of work and education from home.
- **Sustainable development goal 10:** Slovenia took appropriate measures to ensure that vulnerable groups in society were not disproportionately affected by COVID-19. To this end, the package of measures also provides financial incentives to help cover the monthly cost of living for the elderly, students, families and others.
- **Sustainable development goal 13:** Due to the suspension of public passenger transport, air transport and the ban on crossing municipal borders, traffic in Slovenia largely stopped between 30 March and 30 April. This certainly contributed to a reduction in CO₂ emissions. Although this is a rather accidental consequence of the measures introduced, it can contribute to reflection on the real needs regarding day-to-day transport and potential investment in sustainable mobility.
- **Sustainable development goal 16:** The declaration of the epidemic also limited the functioning of the judicial system. The purpose of this was primarily to secure the exercise of the rights of parties or other participants in court proceedings after the cessation of the situation – so that the COVID-19 outbreak did not preclude the rights of parties.

Nevertheless, COVID-19 has brought some positive trends. Among other things, the pandemic has greatly accelerated the digital transformation or use of digital tools in all areas of life and work. Long-term use of such can significantly contribute to improving the possibility of reconciling the private and professional lives of individuals. The pandemic has also had a beneficial effect on the environment.

Containment of the COVID-19 epidemic will certainly take some time, and probably also require the continuation of various measures to mitigate its economic and social consequences. Above all, it is essential that Slovenia continue its coordinated response to the outbreak of the epidemic, which has brought together both state and non-state stakeholders from various fields.





8. CONCLUSION

In the five years of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Slovenia has shown through various legal bases and adopted strategies that it is ready to enter a decade of concrete measures that will make a key contribution to more effective achievement of the sustainable development goals. Even though it has achieved some set goals (early), it still records a gap between the set indicator values until 2030 and the actual situation in several areas. Systematic and effective implementation of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 is crucial for the development of Slovenia.

The preparation of the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals identified some key challenges for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Slovenia. One of these challenges is the inability or limited extent of collecting statistical data disaggregated by personal circumstances and ethnicity. The collection of data on ethnicity is no longer a mandatory element of censuses and is no longer carried out in Slovenia, which is why there is a lack of a representative statistics enabling more comprehensive insight into deprived segments of society and the situation of individual vulnerable groups. The continuous collection of data disaggregated by diverse personal circumstances is otherwise key to full pursuit of the central principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – i.e. leave no one behind.

The Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs identifies demographic change as the first priority cross-sector field. Ageing of the population and the needs of the older and younger population play a key role in addressing the individual areas pertaining to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda. One of the key challenges is setting up an effective long-term care system. Youth as well as the older population believe that it is crucial to address the housing-related issues by dealing with the lack of available housing for youth and housing adapted to the older population. The stakeholders especially emphasised the relevance of intergenerational dialogue. In the field of social services, which also includes health and education, Slovenia should, in the continuation of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, pay more attention to the development and promotion of information technologies and digitalisation. At the same time, computer literacy and the strengthening of competencies for the use of newly developed services for all users are essential.

At the intersection of the economic and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, Slovenia has designed a second priority area, namely the transition to a low-carbon and circular economy and society. In addition to raising awareness of all aspects of the transition and the comprehensive approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the use of renewable energy sources and the development of sustainable mobility play a vital role in attaining the set goal. The need to restructure and decarbonise coal regions has been identified as one of the key challenges. In striving to ensure an efficient transition to a low-carbon and circular economy and society Slovenia also endeavours to simultaneously strengthen the digital competencies of all participating stakeholders and the use of new green technologies, including artificial intelligence.

As the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was prepared in an inclusive manner, involving all Slovenian development regions and local stakeholders through regional consultations, the process also revealed challenges at the regional level. The common sentiment among local stakeholders in most regions was that there unfortunately exists excessive centralisation of the state – the centralisation of state institutions as well as decision-making processes. Local stakeholders largely wished for more integration and cooperation in deciding on matters that directly affect their local environments. The development of Slovenia also needs to take into account the diversity of the individual regions, which is currently not entirely possible at the level of statistical data collection, since statistical data for several indicators are not collected separately by development region.

As evident from the Second Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the SDGs, Slovenia is fully aware of both the progress made and the challenges it has to overcome in the next 10 years of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Namely, we strive to be able to successfully face the greatest challenges of our time and gives space to many innovative ideas, which we collectively turn into actions. We endeavour to confidently open ourselves to partners ready to cooperate and co-create the future Slovenia. Our country proudly enriches the global community with its cultural uniqueness. We strive to protect the green opportunities offered by our natural heritage and to preserve it in all its authenticity.

Even though we live in a time when tackling many challenges and uncertainties has become the new reality, Slovenia is aware that many development challenges, in addition to dangers, also bring new opportunities. Opportunities for the development of a society that will coexist with the environment. A society that will be safe and tolerant and will not leave anyone behind. A society that will be proud of its achievements and cultural heritage.

We believe in transferring the green inspiration from generation to generation and are ambitiously entering a decade of concrete sustainable development measures. We believe that by working together for the sustainable transformation of Slovenia, we can make a key contribution to co-creating a better and fairer world.





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