



EURAXESS members in focus: Slovenia



Capital: Ljubljana

Area: 20,271 km²

Population: 2.081 million
(2019), 83% Slovene

Language: Slovenian, Italian and Hungarian (co-official languages) with English widely spoken

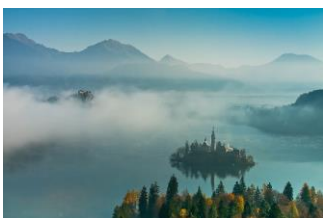
Currency: EURO

Unemployment rate: 4.2%

GDP per capita: 25,946 USD
(2019)

Funds for R&D activities in Slovenia around 2% of GDP

Discover Slovenia at www.slovenia.info/en



Largest universities:

[University of Ljubljana](#)

[University of Maribor](#)

[University of Primorska/](#)

[Univeristá del Litorale](#)

[University of Nova Gorica](#)

Main research institutes:

[The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#)

[ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#)

[Jožef Stefan Institute](#)

[National Institute of Chemistry](#)

Slovenians like to joke that it is the only country in the world with *love* in its name! It is a small yet diverse, green and safe country for the 2 million people who call it home. As a multicultural and multilingual society, Slovenia is seen as a welcoming place to all. Visitors can enjoy the seaside, mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, vineyards, and many historical and cultural sites. Slovenia is also well positioned geographically with neighbours Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia.

As home to **six universities and 16 public research institutes**, there are many opportunities for researchers in various disciplines. There are visible research successes in many disciplines, ranging from medicine to nanotechnology, social sciences, engineering, artificial intelligence, environmental sciences and so on.

Research and science has always been an important part of Slovenian society – a predecessor of today's Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Academia Operosorum Labacensium*, was established in 1693 in Ljubljana.

Today, there are **15,327 researchers** working in 989 research organisations, organised in 1581 research groups and working on 6703 projects.ⁱ

According to the 2017 Better Life Index by the OECD, Slovenia performed well in several measures of well-being, ranking above the average in job and earnings, housing, health status, social connections, education and skills, work-life balance, environmental quality, and personal security.

Slovenia is proud of its low income inequality and high record of tertiary education among the adult population (33%), offering a high quality and accessible education, social and healthcare system.ⁱⁱ

The national research and innovation (R&I) strategy is currently being revised. The main ministries involved are the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Economics with their agencies and public bodies.

The most relevant funding agency is the [Slovenian Research Agency](#), a public funding organisation that performs tasks related to the national research and development programme and the European Research Area. Among many of its activities, the agency promotes international cooperation and funding.

In general, the Slovene R&I strategy is very much focused on responding to the needs of society and international cooperation, while encouraging co-creation and greater involvement by relevant stakeholders.

Backed by stable funding, this strategy aims to enhance the attractiveness and value of researchers' work through supporting infrastructure and efficient and fair conditions.



<https://www.euraxess.si/>

Slovenia's network of EURAXESS contact points and centres are served by eight main universities and research institutes.



Slovenia's National Agency, [CMEPIUS](#), is closely linked to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ programme, one of EU's largest programmes in the field of education, training, youth and sport. It is also responsible for the coordination of the Slovenian EURAXESS network of service centres and contact points, to assist international researchers and their families. It has a special EURAXESS portal for Slovenia, where researchers can find information about working and living in the country.

[EURAXESS Slovenia](#) is dedicated to enhancing its own skills to improve the services it offers to international researchers, assisting them while moving to Slovenia, searching for a job, funding or partners, as well as providing support with practical matters. It cooperates closely with relevant ministries, local authorities and embassies to make international mobility easier. The Slovenian branch is part of a larger pan-European network, cooperating in various projects and activities, exchanging valuable knowledge and experiences.

EURAXESS creates synergies with many other educational programmes and initiatives such as 'Study in Slovenia', a network of Slovene universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) which aims to promote Slovenia as a study destination. There is a comprehensive [Study in Slovenia website](#), supported by social media, promoting Slovenian institutions and the quality of education, research and life.

Main Slovene research institutions

The [University of Ljubljana](#) is the largest and oldest HEI. It is internationally recognised for the high calibre of its scientific and research output. Its research and artistic activities are carried out at faculties and academies covering all research and artistic fields. In 2018, it established the Research and Development Centre of the University of Ljubljana linking various fields of research.

The [Jožef Stefan Institute](#) is the leading Slovenian scientific research centre, covering a broad spectrum of basic and applied research. The staff of about 1050 specialises in natural sciences, life sciences and engineering. Physicist and mathematician [Jožef Stefan](#) (1835-1893) discovered the law of light radiation, which is now called [Stefan's Law](#).

Funded in 1938, the [Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#) is the supreme national institution of sciences and arts. In 1693, the predecessor of the present-day Academy, the *Academia Operosorum*, was founded in Ljubljana (i.e. the same century as the *Académie française*, the Royal Society in London, and the *Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher in Schweinfurt*, or Leopoldina).

The [University of Maribor](#) has an ambitious development strategy focusing on sustainable, socially responsible and high-quality research. The university is committed to excellence in research and to building and maintaining a strong international profile in the wider research space.



[Watch the interview](#) run by EURAXESS ASEAN with **Dr. Ana Bojinović Fenko**, Associate Professor, Chair of International Relations at the Centre of International Relations, University of Ljubljana and **Dr. Rok Zupančič**, Marie Curie alumnus of the Centre of Southeast Europe, University of Graz. Currently, he is Associate Professor at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Defence Research Centre available



EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) that addresses barriers to the mobility of researchers and seeks to enhance their career development. This pan-European effort is currently supported by 42 countries, of which we will profile one in our quarterly e-newsletter.

Why Slovenia?

The best people to answer this question are researchers who have already experienced working and living in the country.

[Julian Ascencio Vasquez](#) came from **Chile** to do his research at University of Ljubljana with the help of the EURAXESS portal. He says he very much appreciates the supporting environment he found himself in.

[Mike Burnard](#) came to the University of Primorska from Oregon, USA. He says that university-industry cooperation is solid, and there is funding available which meant he was able to create his own research environment. Slovenians have been welcoming hosts and he feels well integrated.

[Fayruza Ismagilova](#) is Russian but has no problems communicating with locals in English about everything. Her initial lectures in Slovenia soon grew into more international cooperation and projects, and she finds living in Slovenia very friendly.

Many international researchers that have found their place in Slovenia highly value the quality of life, dedication and cooperation among research teams, excellent infrastructure, tight links with industry, funding opportunities, as well as the support given by the host institutions.

All of the universities and research centres focus on **cooperation with industry** through joint projects, start-ups, spin-offs, and other forms of cooperation, making their shared work relevant and beneficial to society.

Slovenia certainly has a lot of potential and it is worth exploring the mainstream as well as more niche disciplines, projects and developments. Some international researchers decide to stay, others leave and become bridges between countries and ambassadors of bilateral cooperation. Either way, it is a win-win situation for all.



iii

ⁱ Source: Slovenian Current Research Information System - SICRIS.

ⁱⁱ www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-slovenia-2021-1_g2g9eb52-en

ⁱⁱⁱ Photos provided by EURAXESS and Study in Slovenia members, Slovenia.info and Wikipedia