



SLOVENIA

COUNTRY PROFILE

DRIM

Danube Region
Information
Platform for
Economic
Integration of
Migrants

Authors:

Sanja Cukut Krilić, Martina Bofulin

SHORT INTRODUCTION

Prior to attaining independence in 1991, Slovenia did not have significant experience with international migration movements, as internal migration from the former Yugoslav republics was the prevailing form of immigration. After attaining independence, migration flows from/to Slovenia became increasingly diversified. Nevertheless, the population from the former Yugoslav republics still represents the majority of the foreign-born population and of foreigners that reside in Slovenia. Similar trends can also be observed among foreign workers, who are disproportionately highly represented in construction. The number of international protection claims is low, as are the numbers of people granted such protection. Regarding irregular border crossings, a significant increase has been noted in 2015, following the intensification of irregular migration in the Western Balkans. Migration policy in Slovenia has been based mostly on larger political (forcible displacement during the wars in Croatia and especially Bosnia and Herzegovina) and economic developments (effects of the economic crisis), rather than on a definite and deliberate strategy.

TABLE WITH BASIC INFORMATION¹

Capital: Ljubljana
Official language(s): Slovenian with Italian and Hungarian language in areas with national minorities
Population (end of year 2016): 2,065,879
Foreigners as percentage of total population (end of year 2015): 5.2%
Percentage of foreigners in the labour force (end of year 2015): 7.0%
Unemployment rate (end of year 2016): 8.1%
Degree of urbanisation, number of cities over 100,000 inhabitants: 1 (Ljubljana)
Country's accession to the EU: 1 May 2004
Accession to the Schengen Area: 22 December 2007

¹ Information obtained by the Employment Service of Slovenia from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) on 30 March 2017.

THE MIGRANT POPULATION

In 2016, 107,766 foreign citizens lived in Slovenia, which represents 5.2% of the total population of Slovenia (SORS, 2016). While the majority of foreigners originate from European countries, only a minority among these are EU citizens (16% in 2016), whereas others are from non-EU countries. The share of the foreign-born population was 11 per cent of the total population of Slovenia according to the results of the last census (2011). The majority of foreign citizens as well as the foreign-born population come from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 2011 census, almost 90 per cent of those that immigrated to Slovenia were from countries of the former Yugoslavia (SORS, 2015). Such migration movements have been present for almost half a century, beginning in the 1960s and continuing also after Slovenia attained independence. The highest number of foreign citizens in Slovenia is from Bosnia and Herzegovina (47,726), Kosovo (13,556), Macedonia (10,422) and Serbia (9,839). Among migrants from the EU, Croatia (8,900) and Bulgaria (2,615) are the most important countries of origin.

Among migrants, men are prevalent. The share of women is around one third of the total migrant population but has been rising (in the last four years, the number of women has increased by almost four per cent). Regarding the age structure, foreigners from EU countries are generally older: 12.6% of the population is above 65 years of age, while among foreigners from the non-EU countries this share is only 3%. Regarding educational structure, the majority of foreigners have completed secondary school and EU citizens have higher shares of tertiary education than non-EU citizens. However, these data differ for particular groups of foreigners and also reflect to a certain extent the immigration and labour market policies in Slovenia.²

² For example, Cukut Krilić, Novak and Jurišić (2013) report that in 2002, the educational structure of foreigners from the three main immigration countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia and Croatia) was quite similar: most of them had attained upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. The educational structure of foreigners from Macedonia was slightly lower than for the citizens of Slovenia: most of them had attained primary and lower secondary education. Foreigners from Ukraine, however, had on average a much higher educational structure, also compared to the general population: as many as 64.4 per cent had attained upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, and 29.5 per cent of all foreigners from Ukraine had higher educational levels (tertiary education).

Table 1: Citizenship of foreigners, top 10 countries – EU/non-EU (end of year 2016):

Citizenship EU	Number of persons	Citizenship non-EU	Number of persons
Croatia	8,900	Bosnia and Herzegovina	47,726
Bulgaria	2,615	Kosovo	13,556
Italy	1,841	Macedonia	10,422
Germany	891	Serbia	9,839
Slovakia	476	Russian Federation	1,998
United Kingdom	435	Ukraine	1,705
Hungary	413	China	1,027
Austria	391	Monte Negro	794
Romania	343	United States	346
France	229	Moldavia	256

Source: Information obtained by the Employment Service of Slovenia from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia on 30 March 2017.

In the past few years, the number of applications for international protection was quite low – only several hundred applications per year with only several dozen persons being granted protection. The numbers increased significantly in October 2015, when in just several months 423,000 persons crossed the border. Out of them only 277 (in 2015) and 1,308 (in 2016) applied for international protection in Slovenia. 46 applications were granted in 2015 and 170 applications in 2016. Most applicants came from Afghanistan (17%), Iraq (17%) and Iran (12%). In 2015, the government agreed to the relocation of 567 refugees from Greece and Italy as part of the EU relocation plan and to resettle 20 persons from third countries (OECD, 2016). In 2015, there were 2,183 irregular border crossings which represents a 98,6% increase in comparison to 2014. Such a rise could be attributed to the rise of irregular migration in the area of the Western Balkans (Poročilo o delu policije, 2015).

While the number of students with Slovenian citizenship is in decline, the number of foreign students is slowly rising (3,961 students in the 2015/2016 academic year in comparison to 3,301 in 2011/2012). Among foreign students, there are more students from non-EU countries than EU countries. Despite this, their share in the total student population is extremely small (less than 5%).

LABOUR MIGRANT POPULATION

Data from 2010 to 2016 show that of all the persons employed in Slovenia about 7% are foreign workers. This share has not changed much throughout the observed years. The majority of foreign workers in Slovenia come from non-EU countries and only about 1 per cent comes from EU member states. In line with the data on the characteristics of foreigners in Slovenia, most foreign workers also come from former Yugoslav republics, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the EU member states, most workers come from Croatia, Bulgaria and Italy (SORS).³ Men predominate among foreign workers in Slovenia. The construction sector records the highest number of foreign workers both in absolute (15,528 foreign workers work in construction) and relative terms (almost 30% of all the workers in construction are foreigners). High numbers of foreign workers also work in 'manufacturing', 'transportation and storage' and 'administrative and support service activities' (SORS).⁴ Most foreigners are registered to be working around the capital city of Ljubljana in the Central Slovenia region, although in reality, many are only registered with the Employment Service in Ljubljana, but work somewhere else. Such is the example of the construction sector workers, who commute daily to construction sites around Slovenia. In the summer months, the rise of seasonal workers can be noticed in the coastal regions in the 'accommodation and food service sector' (Pajnik 2009a; 2009b).

POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO (LABOUR) MIGRANTS

Foundations of the migration law in Slovenia in its present form only date back to the period after the country attained independence in 1991. Before that period, there were no official restrictions on internal migration between the Yugoslav republics (Zavratnik Zimic, 2002) and international migration was not significant. The two 'umbrella' documents in the migration policy are the Resolution on Immigration Policy (1999) and the Resolution on Migration Policy (2002). The Resolution on Immigration Policy pertains to questions of the regulation of migration, the asylum policy as part of the refugee policy, and to the integration policy. The pluralistic model of integration, referring to state and society measures guaranteeing favourable conditions for immigrants' quality of life, is emphasised. To this, the [Resolution on Migration Policy](#) also adds the active prevention of discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

The most important document with regard to the foreign citizens in Slovenia is the [Aliens Act](#), which was last changed in 2017. It regulates aspects such as entering, residing

³ The data was obtained by the Employment Service of Slovenia from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), which collects data on foreign workers in Slovenia.

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and leaving the state, forms of removal and integration of aliens. In the area of the labour market position of foreign workers the main act is the [Employment, Self-Employment and Work of Aliens Act](#) that also regulates issues pertaining to the transposition of EU directives into national legislation (EU Blue Card, Return and Employers Sanctions Directives, etc.). One of the main novelties of the 2015 amendment to the Act was the single permit for stay and work that is issued at administrative units, which means that separate residence and work permits are generally no longer needed. The umbrella document in the field of labour migration is the [Strategy of Economic Migration](#) that provides a general framework for its management.

OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

In Slovenia, the opportunities for migrants to get reliable and up-to-date information are limited. Most of the information service providers are NGOs; the [Slovene Philanthropy Association for Promotion of Voluntary Work](#) has been supporting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, as well as other vulnerable groups for two decades. Other NGOs active in the field include: [Counselling Office for Workers](#) (offering legal aid and advocacy to migrant workers), [Legal-Informational Centre for Nongovernmental Organisations – PIC](#) (providing legal advice to vulnerable groups), [Social Center ROG](#) (offering various kind of support including language courses), [African Centre](#) (different projects for migrants as well as integration through work). Among governmental services, the [Employment Service of Slovenia](#) offers support to registered job seekers and unemployed persons. Online information can be accessed through the Ministry of the Interior’s homepage for foreign citizens, [info.tujci.si](#) in the English, Spanish, French, Russian, Bosnian and Albanian languages. Limited information is also available on the homepage [Slovenia.si](#) and the Ministry of Public Administration’s [e-uprava](#). Comprehensive information for foreign business entrepreneurs is available, but only in English, on the Ministry of Public Administration’s website [Slovenia Business Point](#). Information for posted workers can be found at [Napoteni delavci.si](#) (in the Slovenian, English, German and Croatian languages). E-manuals for migrants’ orientation have been published by Urbane Brazde (Compass for Migrants in the Croatian, English and Arab languages) and the Employment Service of Slovenia (Signpost, only in the Slovenian language). Most recently, the booklet “Employment Toolkit” for persons granted international protection in Slovenia was published by IOM Slovenia. In the field of health care, a [multilingual aid for better communication in healthcare](#) in Slovenian, English, French, Russian, Chinese, Arab, Farsi and Albanian was published in 2017.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (STATE/INTERNATIONAL/NGO SECTOR)

Public institutions:

- Employment Service of Slovenia, <https://www.ess.gov.si/tujci>
- Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia, <http://www.id.gov.si/en/>
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Labour Market and Employment Office, http://www.mddsz.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/labour_market_and_employment/
- Ministry of the Interior, <http://www.mnz.gov.si/en/>
- Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, <http://www.arhiv.mvzt.gov.si/si/>

NGOs:

- African Centre, <http://www.afriski-center.si>
- Counselling Office for Workers, <http://www.delavskasvetovalnica.si>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) Slovenia, <http://www.iom.int/countries/slovenia>
- Legal-Informational Centre for Nongovernmental Organisations – PIC, <http://pic.si/about/>
- PRO BONO medical clinic for people without health insurance, http://www.ordinacija.net/members/www-pzs.php?lang=eng&mg_pzs_id=74
- Social Center ROG, <http://www.njetwork.org>
- Slovene Philanthropy, Association for Promotion of Voluntary Work, <http://www.filantropija.org/en/contact>

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