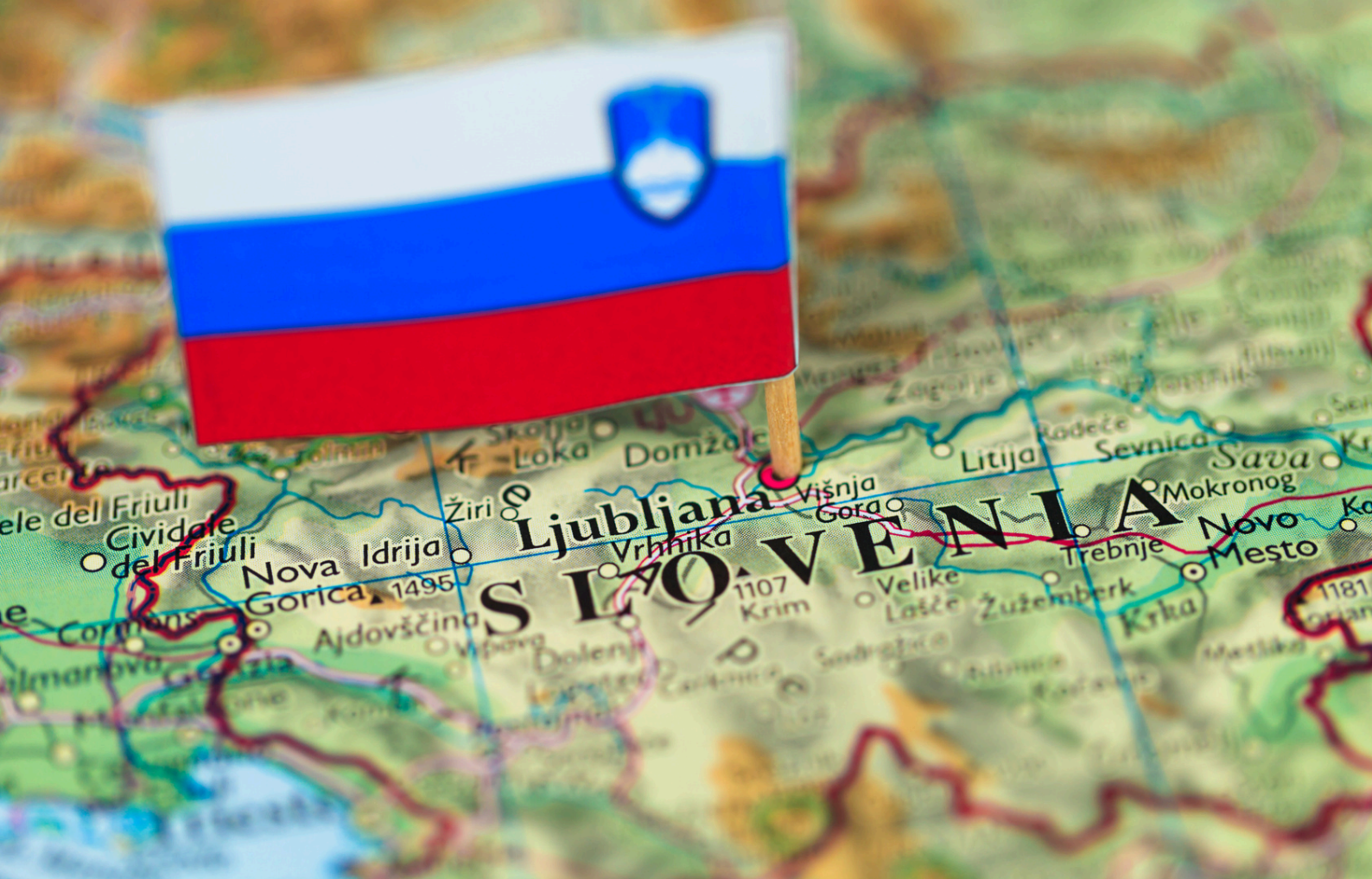




REPORT ON ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

Slovenia



APAC
BETWEEN CHINA AND CEEC

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About APACCCEEC:

The Association for Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation between China and the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe is established in 2015. APACCCEEC is a secondary budget administrator within the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Bulgaria and is dedicated to deepening and expanding the agri-relationships between its Members - Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

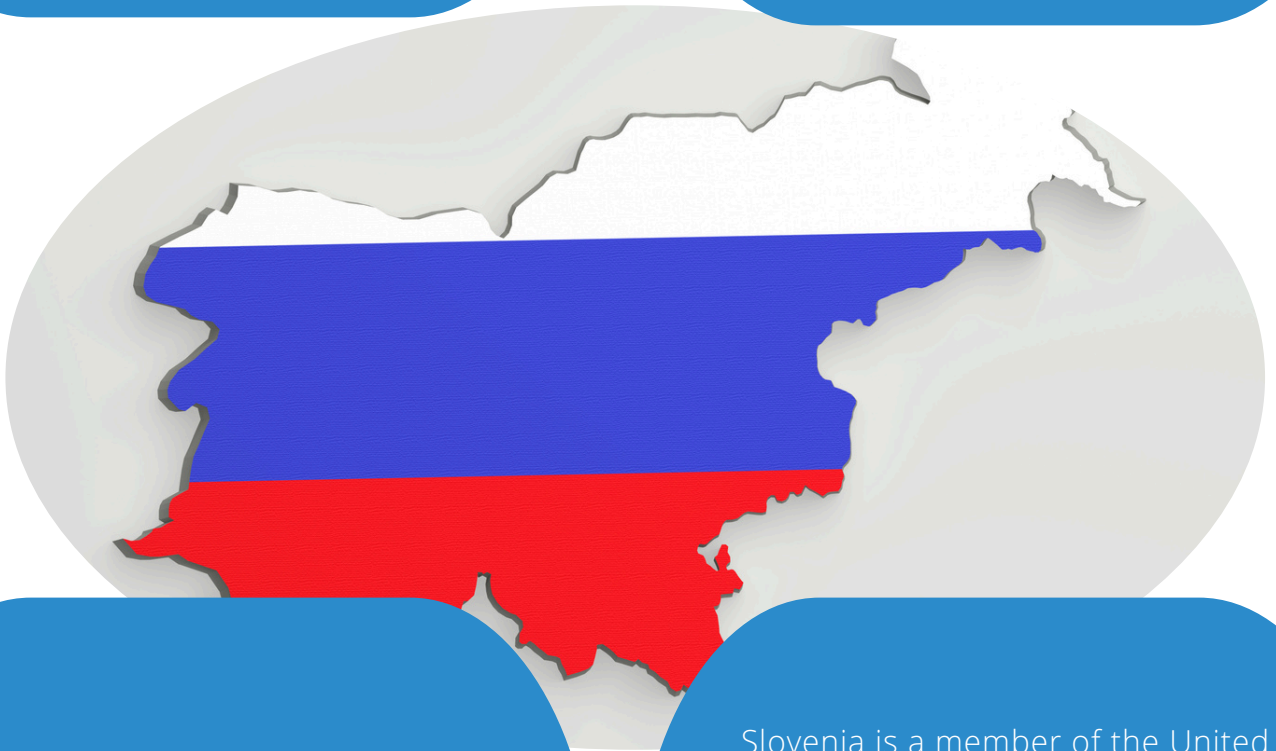
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Cover image: "Map of Slovenia", Getty Images

General Information

Slovenia has a territory of 20,273 sq.km and a population of about 2 million people. The country's capital and main economic center is Ljubljana.

Slovenia is located in the southern part of Central Europe and borders Italy, Croatia, and Austria.



Slovenia's nominal GDP for 2025 is \$34 billion, and its GDP per capita is \$34,000. Slovenia's economic growth in 2025 is 1.8%.

Slovenia is a member of the United Nations (since 1992), the Eurozone (since 2007), the World Trade Organization (since 1995), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (since 2010), the European Union (since 2004), the World Bank, and others.

Structure of the economy

Main Economic Indicators	2023	2024	2025	2026 (прогноза)	2027 (прогноза)	2028 (прогноза)
Population, 1000 persons	2120	2127	2133	.	.	.
GDP, real change in %	2.4	1.7	1.1	1.9	2.2	2.3
GDP per capita (EUR at PPP)	35070	36120	37690	.	.	.
Gross industrial production, real change in %	-5.6	-1	-1.4	.	.	.
Unemployment rate - LFS, in %, average	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5

Structure of the economy

Average gross monthly wages, EUR	2221	2395	2536	.	.	.
Consumer prices, % p.a.	7.2	2	2.5	3	2.3	2.1
Fiscal balance in % of GDP	-2.6	-0.9	-2.5	-2.3	-2.1	-2.1
Public debt in % of GDP	68.3	66.4	65.7	.	.	.
Current account in % of GDP	90.5	87.9	89	-	-	-

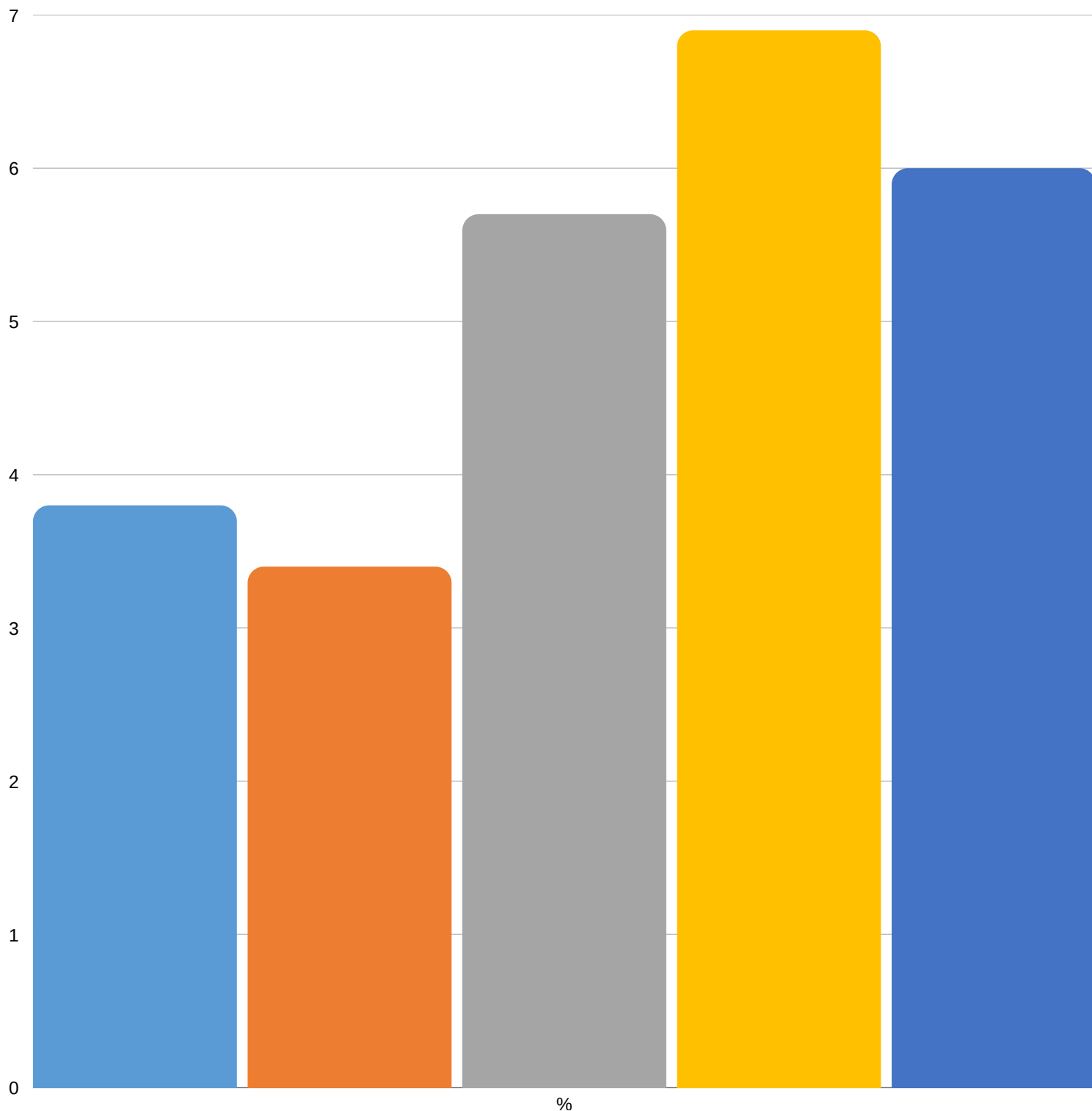
Source: Vienna institute for international economic studies (wiiw)

In the first quarter of 2026, Slovenia's economy grew by 3% year-over-year. This was partly due to lower-than-expected inflation (2.7% year-over-year). However, this growth rate will not be sustained. For the full year, GDP growth is expected to reach 1.9%, driven primarily by private consumption and government spending, reflecting infrastructure investments, recovery from the country's frequent natural disasters, and EU-funded projects. Fluctuations in energy prices and rising labor costs are putting pressure on business confidence. Exports are likely to grow by only 2.2%—slower than imports. Due to these adverse factors, the GDP growth forecast for 2027 is only 2.3%.

However, the Slovenian economy has proven resilient in the face of numerous geopolitical challenges, including the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Slovenia has significant potential in the fields of pharmaceuticals, automotive components, mechanical engineering, electrical equipment, the chemical industry, and other high-tech manufacturing sectors. As a result, the country is more industrially developed than one might expect, given its small population. In this way, Slovenia is also building a diversified economy that mitigates the negative effects of geopolitical turmoil. Some analysts even believe that Slovenia could further tap into its potential in tourism due to the war in the Middle East, as a larger number of tourists would prefer the peaceful Balkan country over the Mediterranean coast.

As of June 2026, the unemployment rate in Slovenia stands at 3.8 %, having remained stable in recent years and even showing a slight decline compared to the previous year. This Balkan country has lower unemployment rates than its neighboring countries—such as Hungary, Austria, Croatia, and Italy—as well as a rate lower than the European Union average (around 6%). One of the reasons for this is the large share of people employed in the tourism sector, particularly younger people.

● Slovenia ● Croatia ● Italy ● Austria ● Средно ниво за ЕС



In 2025, Slovenia's nominal GDP per capita is estimated at approximately \$37,000, ranking the country 36th in the world and second within the China–Central and Eastern Europe Cooperation Initiative (after the Czech Republic). The services sector accounts for the largest share of the country's GDP at 64 percent, and in recent years there has been a trend toward a further increase in the sector's importance. Manufacturing ranks second at 28–29%, while agriculture accounts for only 1.6% of Slovenia's GDP, similar to the economic structure in many other CEE countries.

Slovenia's main export partners are its neighboring countries in the region, including Switzerland, Croatia, Italy, and Austria. Its main import partners are Germany, China, Switzerland, Italy, and Austria. Organic chemicals, pharmaceutical products, vehicles, and mineral fuels account for the majority of Slovenia's imports. Since the country has a highly developed pharmaceutical industry, a large portion of its imports consists of raw materials and components needed for local production and the pharmaceutical sector.

Relations with China

A defining feature of trade relations between the two countries is that they are highly asymmetrical—Slovenia imports far more from China than it exports to the Asian country. China is of particular importance to Slovenia as a supplier of electronics, machinery, and pharmaceutical raw materials. As of 2024, the total value of exports from Slovenia to China was 275 million euros, while imports from China to Slovenia amounted to a full 7 billion euros, bringing the total trade between the two countries to approximately 7.3 billion euros.

China ranks fifth among Ljubljana's trading partners. In recent years, there has been an upward trend in the share of exports to China; in 2024, exports increased by 6% compared to the previous year. Slovenia's exports to China consist primarily of medical devices, automotive components, mechanical components, plastics, and lumber. For its part, Slovenia imports mainly electronics (telecommunications equipment, cameras, small components, etc.), automobiles (especially electric vehicles), machinery, industrial components, photovoltaic systems, and equipment for green energy production from China. One of the reasons for the trade imbalance between China and Slovenia is that Ljubljana prioritizes its trade relations with the European Union.



Port of Koper, Slovenia

The port of Koper is one of the factors that lead China to view Slovenia as a more attractive trading partner than one might expect, given its small population and territory. This has also been stated by Slovenian officials, who emphasize Koper's important role in connecting China's massive trade flows with Central Europe. The Slovenian government has declared the port a "gateway for Chinese companies to the European market." In September 2025, the Director of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Wang Yi, visited Slovenia and met with his counterpart—the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Balkan country, Ms. Tanya Fajon, the country's Prime Minister Robert Golob, and the President of Slovenia, Natasha Musar.



Visit by Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, to Slovenia, September 2025

During the meeting, representatives from Slovenia and China agreed to work toward reducing the trade deficit and to establish a working group to address trade imbalances between the two countries. Ljubljana and Beijing demonstrated a shared commitment to actively cooperating on the green transition and combating climate change. Mr. Wang Yi noted Slovenia's constructive role in the development of relations between China and Europe, as well as, more specifically, in cooperation between China and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Chinese Foreign Minister added that Beijing is ready to strengthen exchanges with Ljubljana at all levels by expanding cooperation in a number of new areas, including high-tech manufacturing, scientific and technological innovation, healthcare and medicine, green energy, and artificial intelligence, as well as to ensure a fair and open business environment for companies from both countries.

Agriculture in Slovenia

Although agriculture accounts for only 1.7% of Slovenia's GDP, it is of great importance for employment in rural areas, food production, and cultural traditions. 36% of Slovenia's territory is agricultural land, and 61% is covered by forests. The agricultural sector is characterized by a large number of small family farms, with 60% of them having less than 5 hectares of land. The most important sectors in terms of production value are forage crops, milk, wine, and cattle. There are about 70,000 farms in Slovenia, most of which are located primarily in the western and northern parts of the country, where Alpine landscapes predominate, making them suitable for livestock farming.

Milk production largely meets domestic demand for this product. In 2025, Slovenian farms produced approximately 615 million liters of cow's milk, which is more than 4% higher than in 2024. Slovenia's self-sufficiency in milk was about 129% in 2024, meaning that production exceeded consumption. In addition, 43,000 metric tons of beef were produced in 2025. Although to a lesser extent, pork production is also present in Slovenia—26,800 metric tons were produced in 2025—but unlike beef, a significant portion of the country's pork must be sourced through imports.



A herd of cattle in the Slovenian Alps, 2024

Among the most popular foods in Slovenia is **Tolminc**—a traditional hard, full-fat cow's milk cheese with a sweet to slightly sour flavor; as well as **Kranjska klobasa**—a type of salami that holds EU Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status, with the history of this traditional sausage dating back to the 19th century.



Tolminc, a traditional Slovenian cheese

In recent years, there has been significant growth in the production of chicken meat and eggs—by 2025, the increase compared to previous years will reach 45%. The main crops grown in Slovenia include corn, wheat, barley, potatoes, and hops. Corn is one of the most important and widely grown crops in Slovenia, used primarily as livestock feed. In 2024, approximately 305,000 metric tons of corn were produced in Slovenia. Rye, oats, spelt, buckwheat, and millet are also produced. However, due to the country's mountainous terrain, crop production lags significantly behind livestock farming.



Vineyards in Slovenia

Wine production is also well established in this Balkan country. The country is divided into three wine-growing regions—Drava, Lower Sava, and Primorski. The country's location at the crossroads between the Alps, the Pannonian Plain, and the Mediterranean has led to the development of a wide variety of grape varieties in the region. An average of about 800,000–900,000 hectoliters of wine is produced annually. Along the Drava River, varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc, Traminer, and Chardonnay are grown, while in the Lower Sava region, varieties such as Pinot Noir thrive. The third region, as its name suggests, lies near Slovenia's Adriatic coast, where grape-growing conditions are ideal—a mild climate, maritime influence, and high temperatures—and Chardonnay production is particularly widespread. Traditional Slovenian wine varieties include: Teran—a full-bodied red wine with a vibrant ruby color; Cviček, which is distinguished by the simultaneous use of red and white grape varieties; Žametovka—a traditional Slovenian red grape variety grown in the area around the Slovenian city of Maribor.



Žametovka, typical of Slovenia, grows mainly around the city of Maribor

Slovenia also has a rich tradition in beekeeping, which is considered part of the country's national identity—Slovenia ranks first in Europe in terms of the number of beekeepers per capita. Honey is produced by the so-called Carniolan honeybee (*Apis mellifera carnica*). Slovenia is the historical homeland of the Carniolan honeybee; the country has approximately 11,000 beekeepers, about 15,000 apiaries, and around 200,000 bee colonies. In 2022, beekeeping in Slovenia was even included on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Slovenia is also actively developing specialized tourism, including visits to apiaries, honey tastings, and apitherapy (inhaling air from beehives or staying in "bee houses").



The AGRA Exhibition

The town of Gornja Radgona in northeastern Slovenia hosts one of the largest and most significant agricultural events in Central and Eastern Europe every year—the “AGRA” (Pomurski sejem) fair—with its 64th edition scheduled for August 2026. The fair attracts an average of about 2,100 exhibitors and 140,000 visitors and is held on a 90,000 sq.m. site. The fair focuses on showcasing the latest technologies in agriculture and forestry, food processing, winemaking, organic farming, and renewable energy sources. High-quality regional food products, organic foods, and traditional wines and spirits are showcased, along with machinery, equipment, current trends, and innovations. Each year, the fair features a partner country; in 2024, Bulgaria was selected as the partner country for the first time.



AGRA 2023

Research and Development

The Agricultural Institute of Slovenia (Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije - KIS) is the leading state-run research organization engaged in research in crop production, animal husbandry, and quality control. The institute is actively involved in ecology and natural resources, agricultural engineering and energy, plant protection, certification, and other areas. The institute actively participates in a number of EU-funded programs and projects. The Slovenian Academy of Beekeeping is also part of the institute.



Gardens of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia

Slovenia does not have a specialized agricultural university, but agricultural programs are offered through specialized departments at the country's major public universities, such as the University of Ljubljana.

In recent years, Slovenia has also seen the development of a number of successful startups in the agricultural sector, which focus primarily on smart farming, pest control, and the application of biotechnology. One example of such startup is Trapview, based in the city of Postojna. Trapview is a modern, automated platform for monitoring and forecasting pests that uses solar-powered smart traps and artificial intelligence to track insect pest populations in real time. The platform analyzes population dynamics and meteorological data to predict future stages in pest development and their impact on agricultural production. Farmers and producers in more than 60 countries actively use this application.



A solar-powered monitoring device for tracking pest populations

Challenges Facing Agriculture in Slovenia

and Conclusion

Agriculture in Slovenia faces several economic, environmental, and demographic challenges, including the effects of climate change, which are causing an increasing number of extreme weather events such as prolonged droughts, heat waves, floods, and hailstorms; Another pressing issue facing the country's agriculture sector is the declining number of people employed in the sector, as fewer and fewer young people want to pursue careers in crop farming and livestock raising. This trend is clearly visible in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Slovenia also faces other distinctive challenges, such as its mountainous terrain, which severely limits the amount of arable land. This terrain also accounts for the large number of small, fragmented farms and holdings, which often result in low productivity and profitability.

Nevertheless, Slovenia has managed to capitalize on its strengths and actively develop agriculture with other economic sectors—a prime example of this is the promotion of beekeeping as a symbol of the country's "national identity" and a way of attracting foreign tourists. The country has traditionally demonstrated a high level of economic development and is a respected partner of both the European Union and China. The most recent high-level meeting between Beijing and Ljubljana underscores the Balkan country's significant role within the China–CEE cooperation initiative, secured by the strategic importance of the Port of Koper.

Useful links

- AGRA Exhibition in Gorna Radgona: <https://www.pomurski-sejem.si/en/>
- Agricultural Institute of Slovenia: <https://www.kis.si/en/>
- Ministry of Agriculture of Slovenia:

<https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/ministries/ministry-of-agriculture/>

- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (Kmetijsko-gozdarski zbornica Slovenije - KGZS): <https://www.kgzs.si/>
- Trapview: <https://trapview.com/>