

Slovenia



General Information



Population

2 111 986 (World Bank 2022)

2 107 180 (STAT SI 2022)



Immigration

31 319 (Eurostat 2010)

36 110 (STAT SI 2020)



Emigration

160 197 (UN Emigration Stock 2020)

17 745 (STAT SI 2020)



Working-age population

1 350 072 (World Bank 2022)

1 028 000 (STAT SI 2021)



Unemployment rate

4 % (World Bank 2022)

4.3 % (STAT SI QI 2022)



GDP

60 063 475 466.3 current prices USD (World Bank 2022)

52 020 000 000 current prices EUR (STAT SI 2021)



Refugees and IDPs

Refugees

10 684 (UNHCR 2023)

19 (STAT SI 2021)

Asylum Seekers

1 136 (UNHCR 2023)

5 301 (STAT SI 2021)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2023)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2022)

By Descent

Yes (conditional) (GLOBALCIT 2022)

Years of Residency

6-10 (GLOBALCIT 2022)



Territory

20 273 km² (CIA World Factbook)

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Interior

Line Ministries

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Agencies

Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants

Government Office for National Minorities

Government Office for Slovenians Abroad

Key Policy Documents

2006 Citizenship Act

2007 International Protection Act (consolidated version with amendments 2017)

2010 State Border Control Act

2011 Employment of Foreigners Act

2011 Foreigners Act

2011 Aliens Act (consolidated version with amendments 2014)

2019 National Strategy on Migration

Relevant Publications

2020 Migrant Integration Policy Index

2020 Integration Migration Outlook - OECD

2021 Country report: Slovenia

2021 Background Note Integration

2021 Slovenia Factsheet - UNHCR

Slovenia is a society with an ageing population that amounted to **2.107.180** persons at the beginning of 2022. According to the **Statistical Office of Slovenia**, the share of children and young people under the age of 14 has slightly risen from 14% in 2010 to 15% in 2020. However, the share of people over 65 years of age had doubled over the past thirty years reaching 20.2% in 2020.

The country features diverse migration flows, including considerable arrivals from the Balkan countries. In 2020, **36.110** people immigrated to and **17.745** emigrated from Slovenia, of whom 31% and 32% respectively were Slovenian citizens. While both in- and outflows were on the rise in recent years, 2020 saw the highest positive net migration since 2008. These flows correlate with the performance of the economy, which **recovered in 2018** following the crash of 2008.

The search for better **career and work opportunities**, as well as the **comparative shortage of jobs in Slovenia for those with higher education** represent the prime reasons for emigration. **Many young Slovenes** are migrating to work in wealthier Germany and Austria, despite Slovenia featuring the highest GDP per capita of all former communist countries in the EU. In 2020, a **quarter** of Slovenian emigrants left for Austria and 19% for Germany. Other common destination countries included Croatia and Switzerland. In the period 2019-2020, **10.266** Slovenian students studied abroad, mostly in the United States (5945), Italy (931), Austria (647), the United Kingdom (412) and Belgium (401).

With many medium and high skilled workers leaving the country, the **foreign labour force** is increasingly important for the economy of Slovenia. This also brings the issue of integration to the forefront of migration policy. Slovenia listed integration as one of the six pillars in the **Strategy on Migration** adopted in July 2019. However, in 2020, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (**MIPEX**) evaluated that Slovenia still does not ensure migrants' full access to equal opportunities.

As many as **278.000 foreigners** resided in Slovenia and **24.750 immigrated** to the country in 2020. The newly arriving **immigrants** were mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. Moreover, the nationals of Bosnia Herzegovina account for the largest share of migrants residing in the country and hold over **half** of all valid residence permits in Slovenia, receiving 40 to 50% of new permits annually since 2014. In **2020**, Slovenia granted a total of **19.010** residence permits, over 30% less than in 2018 and 2019, with the vast majority issued for remunerated activities (**9929**) and family reasons (**7105**), and some 10% (**1830**) for education purposes. Meanwhile, the number of valid residence permits at the end of 2020 exceeded **167.000** nearly doubling since 2011. Over **90%** of valid permits are issued for 12 months and more. Permits issued for work and family reasons account for **30%** and **12%** respectively, while **over 55%** of all valid permits are granted for 'other' purposes.

In recent years, Slovenia has become an attractive destination for **foreign students**, whose number has amounted to 7.681 persons in the 2020/2021 academic year. The vast majority of international students come to Slovenia from Serbia, North Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Slovenia is also an important transit country *en route* to the western EU Member States. Most transit migrants reach Slovenia via the route stemming from the Greek-Albanian border, along the Bosnian and Herzegovinian - Croatian - Slovenian corridor. Slovenia took several measures to reinforce

border surveillance, installing and enhancing IT support provided for border checks. In 2015, against the influx of refugees and migrants, Slovenia established a humanitarian “corridor” to provide the migrants with safe passage through the country towards Austria. Between October 2015 and January 2016, 419.205 migrants crossed through Slovenia using this corridor. At that time, Slovenia erected some 200 kilometres (124 miles) of wire and panel fence covering almost a third of its border with Croatia **to prevent the entry of irregular migrants. Slovenia's government plans to remove these barriers by the end of 2022.**

In the context of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, in the first months of 2022 more than 55.000 Ukrainians have transited Slovenia, mostly to reach relatives and friends in Italy, Spain and France. As of 10 March 2022, Slovenia started granting temporary protection to persons fleeing the war in Ukraine. From 24 February and until May 2022, 5738 Ukrainian nationals, of whom 2149 were children, sought temporary protection in Slovenia and a total of 21.980 Ukrainians entered the country since the beginning of the war.

In 2021, Slovenia registered 5301 asylum applications, a 49% increase compared to 2020. As many as 3396 asylum-seekers, of whom 704 were unaccompanied children, absconded before the procedure could be finalised. Nationals of **Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Iraq** submitted the majority of asylum applications in 2021. The same year, Slovenia hosted **833 recognised refugees**. Nevertheless, the number of newly recognised refugees has been **declining since 2016**.

The same year, Slovenian border authorities intercepted **10.067** persons who attempted to enter the country irregularly. While this is 31% fewer than in 2020, a larger share of these persons (+41%) applied for asylum. In 2021, the Slovenian Police returned 4000 of 10.067 apprehended migrants - 60% fewer than in 2020 - based on the readmission agreements. Over 96% of these migrants were returned to Croatia. The majority of persons apprehended for irregular border crossings and returned under readmission agreements were nationals of **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh**.

At the end of March 2021, Slovenia adopted important **legislative changes** in the International Protection Act and the Foreigners Act. The amendments to the former include a new regulation regarding refugee counsellors and legal guardians, the definition of the risk of absconding, shorter timelines for lodging a judicial review, and other procedural changes that limit the rights of asylum seekers in the procedure and limit their ability to effectively participate in the procedure. Further, decisions on asylum applications will now also include a decision on return. The right of appeal to the Supreme Court against an Administrative Court decision was also re-established. Meanwhile, the amendment to the Foreigners Act resulted in a more restrictive policy toward migrants, foreign workers and their families, and students. They allowed the National Assembly to close the border in case of a complex migration crisis. In February 2022, members of the opposition parties submitted the provision of the Foreigners Act to the Constitutional Court for constitutional review.