

## **India-Slovenia Relations**

Republic of Slovenia attained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. India recognized Slovenia on 11 May 1992. India supported Slovenia for membership at the UN. Slovenia was admitted into the UN on 23 May 1992.

### **Opening of Resident Missions**

Slovenia opened its resident mission in New Delhi in August 2002. The Mission, initially headed by Charge d'Affaires, was upgraded to Ambassador-level in September 2009. India opened its resident Mission in Ljubljana in February 2007.

### **High-level Visits**

**From India** The highest level visit was of a Parliamentary delegation led by Smt. Meira Kumar, former Speaker of Lok Sabha from May 26-30 2013. Other Ministerial visits include:

- MOS for S&T Prof. Y.K. Alagh (Feb 1997);
- MOS for Finance (Revenue) Shri Gingee N. Ramachandran (Jan 2003).
- Shri Anand Sharma, then MOS (External Affairs) for inauguration of the leased Chancery premises of Embassy of India in 2008.
- Smt. Preneet Kaur, MOS (EA) for participation at the annual Bled Strategic Forum in 2009, 2010 & 2013.
- Gen. V.K. Singh, MOS (EA) in August 2014 for the Bled Strategic Forum.
- Shri M.J. Akbar, MOS (EA) in September 2017 for the Bled Strategic Forum.

### **From Slovenia**

- Former President Dr. Janez Drnovsek attended the inauguration of International Conference on Human values organised by the Art of Living Foundation in Bangalore (Jan 2006) & the Satyagraha Centenary Conference in New Delhi (Jan 2007).
- Former President Dr. Danilo Turk attended the Delhi Sustainable Summit in Feb 2010.
- State Visit of H.E. Mr. Borut Pahor as PM to India (13-16 June 2011).
- Mr. Zerjav Radovan, former Dy.PM and Minister for Economic Development and Technology (Jan, 2013).
- Dy. PM and Foreign Minister Mr. Karl Erjavec (Nov 2013) attended the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi.
- Other high level visits included those by former Foreign Minister Dr. Dimitrij Rupel (1992), Dy. PM for Economic Relations Dr. Dravorin Kracun, Ministers for Science and Technology Dr. Rado Bohinc, Dr. Lojze Marincek and Dr. Jure Zupan.
- Mr. Peter Macek, State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science & Sport led a delegation for the CII's Knowledge Expo 2014 in New Delhi (Nov 2014).
- Dr. Milan Brglez, President of the National Assembly led a Slovenian Parliamentary delegation to India from 24-27 November, 2015.
- Mr. Alojz Peterle, Member European Parliament and Former PM of the Republic of Slovenia participated in the World Culture Festival organized by the Art of Living at New Delhi from 11-13 March 2016.

**Bilateral Agreements/ Protocols/ MOUs** - Given below is the list of Agreements/ Protocols/MOUs that have been so far been signed between the two countries:

- Agreement on setting up Joint Committee on Bilateral Trade and Cooperation (1993)
- Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (1995)

- Agreement between FICCI/ASSOCHAM and the Slovene Chamber of Commerce and Industry to set up Joint Business Council (1995)
- Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (1996)
- Cultural Agreement for cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, education, sports and mass media (1996)
- National Centre for Trade Information, India (NCTI) – Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia (CCS) Agreement for reciprocal sharing of information (1997)
- Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (2003)
- Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) – Slovenian Export Corporation (SEC) Cooperation Framework Agreement (2003)
- Bilateral Air Services Agreement (2004)
- MOU between ICCR and University of Ljubljana for establishment of Hindi Chair (2009)
- Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments (2011)
- MOU between the Bureau of Indian Standards and Slovenian Institute for Standardization (2011)
- MOU between the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and University of Nova Gorica for Cooperation in the Field of Research and Education (2011)
- MOU for the establishment of Long Term Chair of Hindi at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana (2011)
- MOU between Air India, Aerodrom Ljubljana and Adria Airways (2011)
- Protocol amending the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (2012)
- Agreement on Short-Stay Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic Passports (2013)
- Agreement between Air India and Adria Airways on code-sharing arrangements (2013)
- MOU between Prasar Bharati and RTV on Co-operation in Broadcasting (2013)
- MOU between NIMS University of Rajasthan, Jaipur and University of Primorska on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Science and Research (Nov 2014)
- Agreement on Gainful Occupation of Dependents of Members of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts (April 2015)
- Protocol Amending the Convention and the Protocol for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income (May 2016)
- MOU between Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH and University of Primorska (July, 2016)

**Slovene Parliamentary Friendship Group with India-** In December 2018, the National Assembly of Slovenia established a Parliamentary Friendship Group with India. Ms. Suzana Lep Simenko, is the Chairperson of the Group.

**India-Slovenia Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs)** – There have been seven sessions of the FOCs so far, the last at New Delhi in July 2010. In addition, political consultations between India and Slovenia took place in February 2014 in Ljubljana, in which Indian delegation was headed by JS (CE). It is Slovenia's turn to hold the next.

**JCTEC** - The bilateral Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (JCTEC) has so far held eight sessions. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of India-Slovenia JCTEC was held on July 16, 2013 in New Delhi. It is now Slovenia's turn to host the JCTEC.

**Bilateral Trade** - Year-wise trade in goods between Slovenia and India (in Euro Million) is as under:

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018 (Upto August)</b>
Exports to India	73.14	87.11	86.49	65.39
Imports from India	236.89	219.77	183.52	132.34
Total	310.03	306.88	270.01	197.73
Balance in India's Favor	163.75	132.66	97.03	66.95

*\*Slovenian sources.*

Main **items of imports from India** include organic chemicals, pharmaceutical products, coffee, tea and spices, electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof, plastic and articles thereof, rubber and articles thereof, iron and steel, machinery and mechanical appliances, etc. Main **items of export from Slovenia** to India include organic chemicals, iron and steel, machinery and mechanical appliances, electric machinery and equipment, plastic and articles thereof, aircraft, wood and articles thereof, etc.

The major visible breakthrough in Indian market by any Slovenian company was by M/s Pipistrel, maker of ultralight aircraft, which signed a contract for the supply of 194 trainer aircraft to India in October 2015. In July 2018, two Indian lady pilots, Keithair Misquitta and Aarohi Pandit, on their way to circumnavigate the globe in 90 days in a tiny Slovenian-built Pipistrel Sinus Light Sports Aircraft made a two-day stopover in Ajdovščina, Slovenia. Other major Slovenian companies doing business in India are: KRKA, Lek, Le Technika, Gostol, Litostroj, Bosio, BIA Separations, etc.

Slovenia identified India as one of its strategic focus markets in 2013.

**Investment** between India & Slovenia year-wise

	(in Euro mn)		
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
India's investment in Slovenia	-12.8	-11.2	-11.3
Slovenia's investment in India	-0.1	-0.4	0.4

*\*Bank of Slovenia*

**Participation in business events** - Mr. Iztok Mirošič, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, led a business delegation in the 4<sup>th</sup> India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IEBF) held in New Delhi in March 2018. Though there was no official delegation from Slovenia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> IEBF held in December 2016, two Slovenian companies Nektor Natura and Intri D.O.O. participated in the event. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> India Central Europe Business Forum (ICEBF – later renamed as IEBF), Slovenia was represented by Mr. Tomaz Menčin, Head, Department of Public Diplomacy and Bilateral Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the 1<sup>st</sup> ICEBF, the 15-member Slovenian business delegation was the third largest delegation from Central Europe.

A group of six Slovenian companies led by Mr. Franc Matjaz Zupacic, State Secretary, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, participated in India Water Impact Summit from 4-7 December 2017 in New Delhi.

National Small Industries Commission (NSIC) has traditionally been coordinating participation of small companies from India in the MOS International Trade Fair in Slovenia

since 2009. 18, 26 and 15 Indian companies participated at the Fair in the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. However, NSIC could not participate in 2017 and 2018 editions of Celje fairs. GOI Tourist Office, Frankfurt participated at the Alpe-Adria Tourism and Leisure Show in Ljubljana in 2014 and 2015. An Indian wine distributor participated at the Vino Ljubljana in 2014, 2015 and 2016. A group of eight businessmen and professionals visited Slovenia and participated at Slovenia-India Business Forum 2017 held on 30 May at Ljubljana. An Apparels Exports Promotion Council (AEPC) delegation is scheduled to visit Slovenia in December 2018.

In 2018, the Indian Embassy in Ljubljana organized presentations titled 'India Surging Ahead: Opportunities for Slovenia' in three municipalities, namely, Maribor, Kamnik and Ptuj in partnership of concerned municipalities and local business chambers. The Embassy participated in the 56<sup>th</sup> International Fair of Agriculture and Food (AGRA) in Gornja Radgona in August 2018 and 51<sup>st</sup> MOS Trade Fair in Celje in September 2018. A three-member delegation from Apparels Exports Promotion Council (AEPC) visited Slovenia from 5-7 December 2018.

**International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE)** - The ICPE traces its origin to the International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries set up on a UN initiative in 1974, which was reconstituted as an intergovernmental organization in 1980 with more than 40 developing countries as its member states. In 1997 the formal name was changed to International Center for Promotion of Enterprises to "give the Center a more 'inclusive' and broad-based mandate in keeping with the changed economic and political priorities of the new host country, Slovenia, and many of the leading member states, including India". Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) is the nodal agency in the Government of India for ICPE. The current DG of ICPE is a retired IAS officer.

**S&T** – The bilateral S&T programmes between the two countries are being pursued under the bilateral Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed between India and Slovenia in January 1995 in New Delhi. A Joint Working Group (JWG) on Scientific and Technological Cooperation has been set up to sign executive Programmes of Cooperation (PoC) concluded for a specified period. The 4<sup>th</sup> India-Slovenia JWG on S&T met in New Delhi in November 2014 and identified joint projects for implementation for the period 2015-17.

**Culture and Education** –The last Cultural Exchange Programme for 2010-14 is in implementation and discussions for the next CEP are going on with the Slovene side.

The Embassy, with the support of the Ministry of AYUSH, is running an AYUSH Information Centre to promote and disseminate information pertaining to traditional medicine system of India and Yoga. In March 2018, Prof. Anand Vijay Kalaskar joined as an Ayurveda Chair at the University of Primorska. Yoga is immensely popular among local population and many centres are running Yoga programmes. A number of Slovenians visit India for Yoga training/meditation/Ayurvedic treatment. The Embassy of India, with the support of Ministry of AYUSH, co-hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> International Ayurveda Congress, as a part of the 11<sup>th</sup> European Congress for Integrative Medicine, from 21 to 23 September 2018 at Grand Hotel Union, Ljubljana.

There is considerable interest in Indian culture. A Hindi Chair was functional in Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana from 2009-2013. Currently, Mission is facilitating Hindi classes in the University of Ljubljana. An India Corner was opened in May 2018 in the Library of the University of Ljubljana by the Mission.

Slovenian educational institutions such as Joseph Stephen, National Institute of Chemistry and University of Maribor are getting popular among Indian research scholars, coming under

Erasamus Scholarship Programme. Some Slovenian institutions have tied up with Indian educational institutions for students' exchange.

There are three busts of important Indian personalities in Slovenia – (i) Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in Maribor; (ii) Mahatma Gandhi in Slovenje Gradec; and (iii) Jawarhar Lal Nehru in Gorinska Brda.

Given Slovenia's beautiful and diverse landscape, some Indian films, especially from South India, were shot in different locations of Slovenia.

The Indian mission in Slovenia organizes regular cultural events including film weeks, dance and performances etc. with the assistance of Indian Council of Cultural Relations and other Indian agencies. In 2018, the following events were organized by the Mission:

- World Hindi Day on 10 January in collaboration with the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.
- An Indian Fairytales Illustrations Exhibition titled "The journey into the magical world of Indian fairytales" on 5 April.
- Naye Natua – a 10 member Theatre Group from Kolkata, sponsored by ICCR, participated in the 48th Festival of Slovenian Drama on 5 April.
- Celebrated 157th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore on 7 May in Maribor.
- On 18 May at Ormoz, Ambassador Param Jit Mann inaugurated an exhibition titled "Seeking Magdalena", which is about a Slovene Missionary who spent most of her life serving the humanity in Kolkata.
- On 29 May, after inauguration of the India Corner at the University of Ljubljana, the First Act of Bhasa's Consecrations was performed by the students of Vedic and Classical Sanskrit.
- On 16 June, the International Day of Yoga was celebrated.
- On 2 October, the Embassy organised an event at Slovenj Gradec, where the bust of Mahatma Gandhi is located, to commence the year-long events to mark 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. A set of seven commemorative postage stamps on Mahatma Gandhi was released. In the evening, an LED projection highlighting initiatives and lessons from Mahatma Gandhi's life ran on Chancery Façade.
- On 14 November, Ambassador Param Jit Mann, along with Franc Muzic, Mayor of Brda Municipality, paid tributes at the statue of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Goriska Brda.
- On 22 November, Ambassador Param Jit Mann inaugurated a photographic exhibition titled "Forgotten images of my India" of renowned Slovenian photographer Arne Hodalic.

**Indian Community:** There is a very small Indian community of about 150, comprising mainly of students and PIOs.

**Useful links**

- Mission's website: <http://eoiljubljana@gov.in>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/indiainslovenia>

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