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Fact Sheet : Republic of Slovenia

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FACT SHEET

Republic of Slovenia

Location: Southeastern Europe, eastern Alps, bordering the Adriatic Sea, between Austria and Croatia

Area: 7,906 square miles, slightly smaller than New Jersey

Population: 2 million, 90% Slovenes

Capital: Ljubljana, 1996 population: 276,397

Climate: Mediterranean, continental, and Alpine

Legislature: Parliamentary Democracy

Bicameral (2-house) legislature . . .

National Assembly is the highest legislative authority, consisting of 90 deputies elected for terms of 4 years by secret ballot, universal adult suffrage; Italian, Hungarian ethnic minorities guaranteed two seats in the National Assembly

National Council, 40 members, elected to represent social, economic, professional, and local interests for 5-year terms

Executive Branch:

President: Milan Kucan
Head of State
Elected for a maximum two, five-year terms, direct election

Prime Minister: Janez Drnovsek
Executive power is vested in the prime minister and an 18-member Cabinet; the government must be approved by the National Assembly

(more)

Slovenia Fact Sheet/2

Judiciary: Judges exercise judicial authority, appointment is for life. There are district and circuit courts, the high courts are appeals courts, while the supreme court is the highest court in the judicial system. The constitutional court has the highest power of review of legislation to ensure its consistency with Slovenia's constitution. Its 9 judges are elected for 9-year terms.

Economic Growth: 4%, 1998 estimate

Indicators: The Slovenian Mission to the United Nations reports:

"The active population is 65% of the total, 51% of women being in the active population group. A high proportion of the population are university graduates, and 11% of the labor force employed in the economy have university degrees.

"Over the last 3 years, there were 18 students per 1,000 inhabitants; 6,000 students graduate annually from university level education. There is an extensive social welfare system in Slovenia. In 1994, there were 219 physicians, 577.7 hospital beds, and 53 dentists for every 100,000 inhabitants. A universal state pension fund is available."

History: From as early as the 9th century, Slovenia has fallen under foreign rulers, including partial control by Bavarian dukes and the Republic of Venice. With the exception of Napoleon's 4-year tutelage of parts of Slovenia and Croatia—the "Illyrian Provinces"—Slovenia was part of the Hapsburg Empire from the 14th century until 1918. Nevertheless, Slovenia resisted Germanizing influences and retained its unique Slavic language and culture.

In 1918, Slovenia joined with other southern Slav states in forming the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as part of the peace plan at the end of World War I.

Renamed in 1929 under a Serbian monarch, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia fell to the Axis powers during World War II. Following communist partisan resistance to German, Hungarian, and Italian occupation, socialist Yugoslavia was born under the helm of strongman Josip Broz Tito.

(more)

Slovenia Fact Sheet/3

During the communist era, Slovenia became Yugoslavia's most prosperous republic, at the forefront of Yugoslavia's unique, mixed economic system.

Within a few years of Tito's death in 1980, Belgrade initiated plans to further concentrate political and economic power in its hands. Defying the politicians in Belgrade, Slovenia underwent a flowering of democracy and an opening of its society in cultural, civic, and economic areas to a degree almost unprecedented in the communist world.

In September, 1989, the General Assembly of the Yugoslav Republic of Slovenia adopted an amendment to its constitution asserting Slovenia's right to secede from Yugoslavia.

On Dec. 23, 1990, 88% of Slovenia's population voted for independence in a referendum.

On June 25, 1991, the Republic of Slovenia declared its independence.

A nearly bloodless 10-day war with Yugoslavia followed; Yugoslav forces withdrew after Slovenia demonstrated stiff resistance to Belgrade. The last Yugoslav soldier left Slovenia on Oct. 25, 1991.

Slovenia adopted its constitution on Dec. 23, 1991.

In 1992, Slovenia was official recognized by the European Union and Slovenia became a United Nations' member. 1992 also saw the first elections held in an independent Slovenia.

Two years later, Slovenia joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and became a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Slovenia became a full member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement in 1996. That year, Slovenia became associated with the European Union and it also associated with the Western European Union.

As a young independent republic, Slovenia pursued economic stabilization and further political openness, while

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Slovenia Fact Sheet/4

emphasizing its Western outlook and central European heritage.

Sources:

U.S. State Department, Background Notes: Slovenia, February, 1999
CIA World Fact Book
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Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations