



European Council: Slovenia

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1 Introduction and Executive Summary

Slovenia is a idyllic little country with two identities. On one hand it is deeply connected to Europe and has a shared history with Austria, on the other hand it is still well connected with the former nations of Yugoslavia. A small nation, surrounded by fellow EU nations and in the Eurozone, it fits economically well into the European fold. The economy is very open and export oriented but vulnerable to global changes in commerce as the crisis of 2008 has made abundantly clear. Despite a strong feeling of nostalgia for the high days of Yugoslavia, Slovenia is very pro-EU and largely favours further integration.

As the Slovene prime minister Marjan Šarec you are quite pro Europe, socially liberally and economically centrist. Your greatest challenge is to balance the politically and economically necessary government involvement in your own economy and the larger European drive for a free market.

2 Societal and Economic History

Slovenia broke away relatively peacefully from Yugoslavia in 1991 with comparably little destruction and conflict. As the economic powerhouse of Yugoslavia and spared from most destruction in all wars of the 20th century, it avoided many of the growing pains which other ex-Yugoslav countries faced after its fall. However, privatization which occurred in the years after the fall proved to be turbulent and government spending and corruption plagued the small country. Unlike most other former communist nations in Europe, Slovenia has a surprisingly positive view of both Yugoslavia and state involvement in the economy.

3 Political Position

The fact that the current centrist coalition government just recently came into power provides the delegate with a blank slate to make it up as it goes along. As a country without looming crisis or anything requiring abrupt changes in course, the nation is relatively simple to represent.

4 Foreign Policy

The most urgent issue of Slovenia is regulating its southern border dispute with Croatia in order to allow Croatia to join Shengen and with that allow a better flow of goods and services through Slovenia, alleviating in part its status of a outskirt region of the EU. Furthermore it is very interested in the completion of large infrastructure projects, in and around Slovenia for the same reason. Brexit is also a topic in which Slovenia has shown interest and aims to protect its citizens in the UK as well as its economic relation, however the integrity of the EU takes precedent and being almost neutral considering the EU budget, the loss of UK contributions are much less of a issue then other nations.

5 Domestic Policy

Political stability and the lack of pronounced ethnic tension make Slovenia stand out from similar nations. However, as the economic transition was only wildy accepted as long as the social institutions of the state remain in tact, this excess Government spending has left Slovenia in quite some debt, something which soured the relationship with both the EU and the international markets. Since 2008 this has been stabilizing but the economy is still in need of both large government led projects in infrastructure and subsidies to remain competitive with Germany and the likes. Most critically is the construction and renovation of the railway infrastructure connecting major cities and the port of Koper and Trieste as well as Austria and Hungary on the opposite side.

Furthermore, as the aging population affects Slovenia, the strong pensioner fraction in the government holds the stance that pensions and other social expenditure are not to be cut and are to increase. Unlike most West European nations, the communist past has entrenched such stances in Slovenia and going against these stipulations is a sure way to find yourself ousted from office. On the other hand, Slovenia, and especially Ljubljana and Maribor, are exceedingly welcoming to former Yugoslav students and support them financially and logistically. This combination has provided for a large and quite visible student population in the cities, yet has failed to provide a noticeable increase of births in the small country. Due to immigration from its southern neighbours and emigration to their northern ones, the population of Slovenia has remained constant during the last decades.

Slovenia stands out for its ecological protection and natural reserves. Slovenia has expressed on many occasions that it favors the expansion of such policies and stressed the importance of both the Paris treaty and the need for doing even more. This ties into the infrastructure as a lot of the rail and public infrastructure is not electrified and accounts for a large portion of Slovenia's CO2 emissions. However, even the electricity production itself still relies in part on coal and other fossil fuels. The government has announced that it plans to cut back on their usage and invest in renewable energies as well as continuing the operation of Slovenia's only nuclear power plant at Krško.