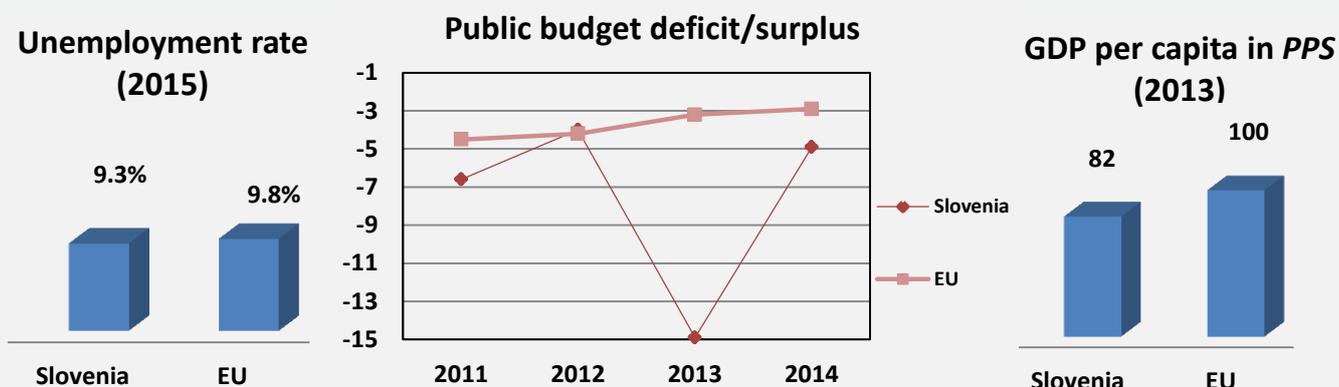


## Recent history

Slovenia was the first republic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to break away, when it declared its independence in June 1991. While the rest of the federation collapsed into ethnic civil war, Slovenia escaped following only a very brief conflict. Slovenia was recognised by the United Nations (UN) in May 1992. In the years following independence, Slovenia established a successful liberal democracy that pursued a policy of steady economic reform. Slovenia succeeded in securing membership of NATO and the EU in the same year – 2004.

Slovenia has a long-standing dispute with Croatia over sea and land borders that go back to the break-up of Yugoslavia. However, after several months Slovenia dropped its block on Croatia's membership of NATO. In September 2009, it removed restrictions it had put in place in December 2008 that prevented Croatia's EU membership, which came into effect in 2013.

In September 2011 the coalition in the Slovenian government, led by centre-left Prime Minister Borut Pahor, collapsed following a vote of no confidence related to the ratification of the EU bailout fund and major pension reforms. Elections were held in December 2011 and July 2014.



## Current government

Slovenia is a parliamentary republic where executive power is shared between the President and the Prime Minister. The current President is former Prime Minister Borut Pahor, who was elected in 2012. The President's role is largely ceremonial but it does have powers in defence and foreign affairs. The current Prime Minister is Miro Cerar, leader of the new Modern Centre Party, which governs in *coalition* with the liberal-conservative Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) and the centre Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS). Cerar, a former professor and legal advisor to the Slovenian Parliament, is a political newcomer who won a snap election in July 2014 following the resignation of former Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek. The Parliament has two chambers. The 90 member National Assembly (*Državni Zbor*), the more powerful of the two chambers, is directly elected and appoints the 40 member National Council (*Državni Svet*), which has a limited advisory and control power. The 88 members of the National Assembly are elected by a system of *proportional representation* every four years. The other two members are elected by the Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities resident in Slovenia.

## Slovenia: key facts



❖ Capital	Ljubljana
❖ Population	2 million (2014)
❖ % of total EU population	0.4%
❖ Official language	Slovenian
❖ Year of EU accession	2004
❖ Currency	Euro since 2007
❖ Schengen Area member	Yes, since 2007
❖ Seats in European Parliament	8



## Slovenia and the EU

Membership of the EU was an important political goal of Slovenia on independence from Yugoslavia. Having moved away from the communist system, it made a strong effort to distance itself from Eastern Europe and to become more integrated with the West. In particular, it made efforts to identify itself as a Central European country – alongside Austria and Germany – rather than as part of the communist sphere of influence. On 23 March 2003 the Slovenian people voted in a referendum on EU membership, with almost 90% of the population voting in favour of joining. Slovenia officially became a member state in May the following year.

Roughly two-thirds of Slovenia's trade is now with the EU. It has made significant attempts to become more like other European countries, particularly by pursuing a programme of *privatising* formerly state-owned companies, although this process has been quite slow in Slovenia compared with other Eastern European countries.

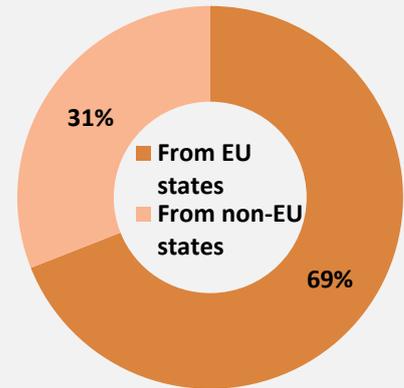
When it joined in 2004, Slovenia did not adopt the Euro immediately, although it did subsequently on 1 January 2007, again the first of the 2004 accession countries to do so. This involved maintaining strong control over inflation and borrowing in order to meet the *convergence criteria*.

In December 2007 Slovenia became part of the Schengen zone enabling free movement across national borders. Slovenia was the first former communist country to hold the Presidency of the European Council for the first half of 2008, during which it successfully oversaw the signed the previous year.

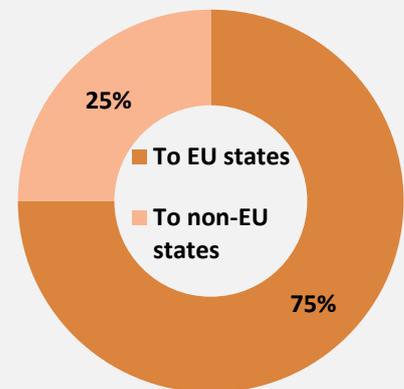
## Facts and figures

- ❖ The majority of Slovenes work in manufacturing jobs
- ❖ Slovenia is the only country in Europe that combines the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pannonian (a flat plain surrounded by mountains) and the Karst (a limestone plateau region)

## Slovenian imports (2014)



## Slovenian exports (2014)



### Technical Terms

- ❖ **Coalition:** a formal agreement between political parties to share power in government
- ❖ **Privatisation:** the transfer of companies from state ownership to private control
- ❖ **Convergence criteria:** the rules set down in the Maastricht Treaty that all countries have to meet in order to qualify for membership of the Euro
- ❖ **Proportional representation:** electoral system where the overall number of votes determines the distribution of seats
- ❖ **PPS:** GDP per head is expressed in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) to eliminate the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries

### Links

- ❖ <http://www.gov.si/en/>
- ❖ [http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/czechrepublic/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/czechrepublic/index_en.htm)
- ❖ [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country\\_profiles/1047864.stm#facts](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1047864.stm#facts)
- ❖ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
- ❖ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2145.html>