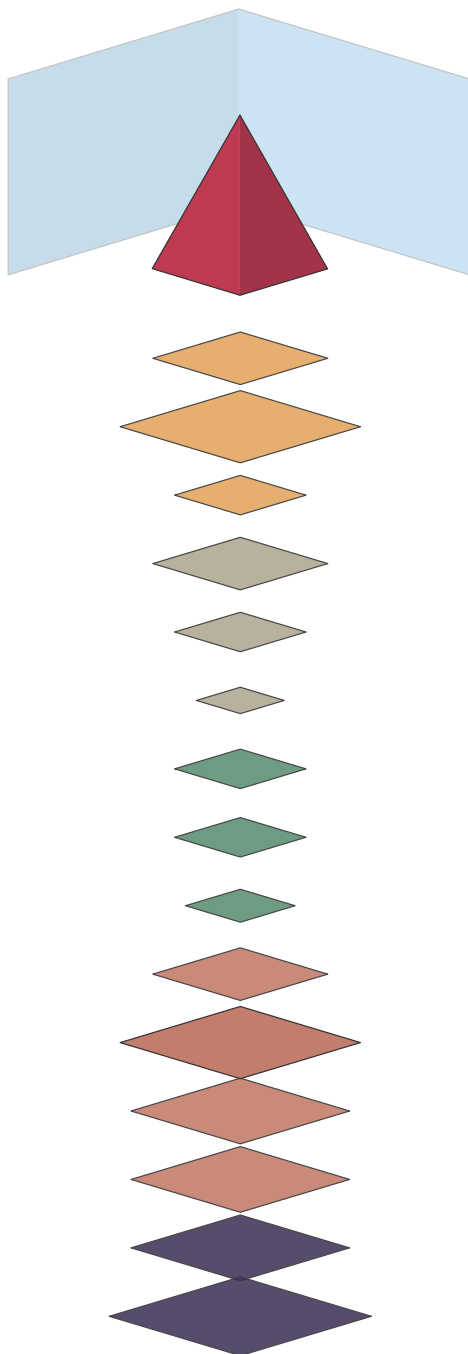




SLOVENIA



4.37

CRIMINALITY SCORE

138th of 193 countries

31st of 44 European countries

17th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.03

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	2.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.50
HEROIN TRADE	4.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.50
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.70

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.00



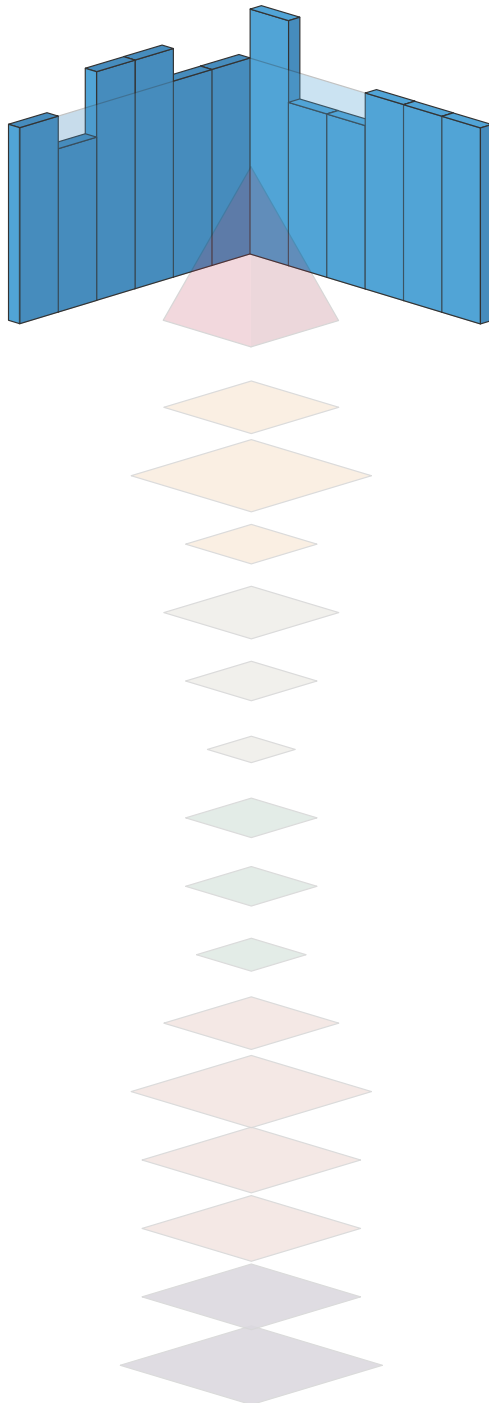
6.04

RESILIENCE SCORE





SLOVENIA



6.04

RESILIENCE SCORE

37th of 193 countries

24th of 44 European countries

2nd of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	7.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.00
PREVENTION	6.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00



4.37

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.03



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.70



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Slovenia is primarily a transit point for human trafficking, but also serves as a source and destination country. People who are trafficked across Slovenia are most frequently destined for Germany, Austria, and Italy, where they are exploited for labour purposes. Women and children originating from Slovenia, as well as those from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and South East Asia, are mainly subjected to sex and labour trafficking within Slovenia and Western European countries. Trafficking victims are exploited in the transportation, construction, domestic service, and hospitality industries, as well as forced begging. Romani individuals from Slovenia are especially vulnerable to forced begging domestically. Local and transnational criminal groups that run sex trafficking rings lure women victims from Eastern Europe or Latin America, especially the Dominican Republic, through false promises of legitimate jobs in the country, usually in the hospitality sector, and later exploit them in nightclubs.

As an EU member state situated on the Balkan route, Slovenia continues to be a preferred transit country for human smuggling. Smuggled individuals are primarily destined for Western and Southern Europe, especially Italy and Spain. Perpetrators are often a combination of local people and nationals of the origin and destination countries, including Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian citizens, while most smuggled individuals originate from West and South Asia. Human smuggling is considered a low-risk criminal market and is exceptionally well paid, and Slovenian people often engage in it to earn extra money. In terms of transit methodology, victims are typically trafficked in the back of a van, truck or car. In Slovenia, casual cases of extortion and protection racketeering, characterized by predatory and parasitic behaviour, are known to occur, with local and foreign criminal groups, the latter being mainly Eastern European, targeting individuals and businesses, usually in combination with other criminal offences.

TRADE

Slovenia is reportedly a transit and, to a lesser extent, destination country for arms trafficking. Arms are sourced from the Balkans and transported by land towards Western Europe via Slovenia. Slovenia has very strict firearm policies and deems their use for any purpose other than hunting as illegal. Arms trafficking is known to contribute to criminal network-related violence in the Western Balkans and in other EU countries. Foreign and local criminal actors are involved in arms trafficking in a transnational criminal network, with

Western Balkan countries such as Croatia having strong ties to the market. These actors are also often involved in drug trafficking. A transnational criminal network referred to as the 'Balkan cartel', made up of Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian nationals, is active in this market.

There is a limited but persistent market for counterfeit products in Slovenia. Counterfeit branded clothing and accessories are some of the most commonly traded products. Counterfeit medicines are also sold in Slovenia, primarily through illicit online pharmacies. Regarding the illicit trade of excise goods, tobacco products are believed to be a large contributor to the total amount of goods trafficked in Slovenia and the subsequent level of excise fraud in the country. However, the flow of illegal cigarettes into the country is understood to be lower than the outflow, and consumption is on the decline. Although difficult to quantify, the illicit trade in alcohol should also not be ignored.

ENVIRONMENT

The criminal market for flora crimes in Slovenia is not consolidated but seems to be growing. The country increasingly serves as both a transit hub and source for the illegal timber trade. Residents in need of firewood and organized criminal actors using sophisticated equipment both engage in illegal logging. The illegal felling of trees in Slovenia is mostly carried out in areas owned by the state or the church, although it does also take place on privately owned land, this latter often involving rare or extremely good quality timber. Slovenia is also considered to be a transit country for illegal wildlife trade to the rest of Europe. Wildlife crime in Slovenia, however, continues to be sparse and loosely organised. The illegal hunting and capture of bears and other wildlife, typically by people from elsewhere in Europe, is a significant problem. Furthermore, there is a growing market for exotic pets, which is known to include illegal fauna.

Slovenia it is not a key producer of mineral resources in the region. However, it is likely a transit country for illegally traded minerals being trafficked to Europe. The country's significant deposits of coal have mostly been depleted, leaving limited non-renewable resources to trade on the illicit market.

DRUGS

Slovenia is a transit and, to a lesser extent, destination country for heroin trafficking. Heroin reportedly has a high level of purity in Slovenia and smuggling of the drug has been a problem in the country for decades. Criminal groups are known to establish legitimate transport businesses in Slovenia, then to utilize heavy goods vehicles to smuggle

large quantities of illicit drugs, including heroin. However, local demand for and consumption of the product is small. Research suggests that the existing group of heroin users is aging and that fewer people are taking up the drug owing to social stigma. There are two types of criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking in Slovenia: criminal networks operating solely within the country and foreign actors operating within international criminal networks. Slovenia is also a transit and, to a lesser extent, destination country for the cocaine trade. Most of the cocaine trafficked into Slovenia is not intended for the local market but destined for various other countries. Cocaine reportedly has a high level of purity in Slovenia and, as with heroin, the criminal actors involved in this illicit trade are both foreign and Slovenian. Organized criminal groups from the Western Balkans are involved in cocaine trafficking through the Balkans, but as most of the product originates in South America and reaches Slovenia through Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, the Balkan route is less important to the cocaine trade than to the heroin trade.

Cannabis is one of the most prevalent drug markets in Slovenia, with the country acting as both a source and transit point. Larger criminal networks, both foreign and local, that are involved in cocaine and heroin trade are also involved in illicit cannabis trade, as a means of furthering profits. Locally produced cannabis is sufficient to meet domestic demand, and a portion is traded in nearby countries, including Austria, Croatia, Germany, and Italy. Possession of small amounts of cannabis for individual use is not punishable by incarceration in Slovenia. Moreover, attitudes towards cannabis are becoming more relaxed at both the government and societal level, and it is now the most socially acceptable drug in Slovenia.

Even though reports seem to indicate a dramatic increase in the synthetic drugs trade, as these substances are becoming more popular among teenagers, the market for these drugs remains unconsolidated in Slovenia. The country does not have a large and continuous local demand for synthetic drugs, such as MDMA and amphetamine. However, the synthetic drug market in the country is known to be dynamic, with an ever-changing demand for specific substances, which is swiftly responded to by organized crime groups active in this market. The use of the dark web to purchase synthetic drugs has become common, especially among young users, even following the lifting of measures imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Slovenia has been cited as the most cryptocurrency-friendly country in the world, with hundreds of locations in the capital accepting these types of payments. The widespread use of cryptocurrencies has resulted in increased rates of cryptocurrency-related cybercrime in the country. For instance, cryptocurrency startups in Slovenia have been targeted by hackers, mainly established in other countries,

some known to be state-sponsored. Ransomware attacks are also on the increase, with perpetrators, mostly living abroad, targeting both individuals and businesses in Slovenia, including media companies.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Online fraud, especially phishing, is said to be on the rise in Slovenia. Various cases of bank and corporate fraud have occurred in the country in recent years, including the use of so-called 'bogus' companies to commit carousel fraud. Investment fraud is one of the most common types of financial crime in the country, followed by advance-fee scams, fake loan scams, and romance scams.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

There is evidence of systemic corruption in Slovenia and a considerable degree of state capture. State-embedded actors are believed to be involved in money laundering, corruption and the influence of informal networks. The situation became even more apparent with the country's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Foreign actors also form part of the criminal landscape in Slovenia, and they are active, usually in collaboration with Slovenian accomplices and racketeers from neighbouring countries, in human trafficking, human smuggling, and arms trafficking. These criminals mainly operate along the Balkan route, especially from Croatia through Slovenia and into Italy. There is also an overlap with Croatian criminal actors in the Slovenian arms trafficking network. These connections to foreign actors have exposed hybrid threats and key linkages to other Schengen countries, under the influence of multinational companies. It is probable that some powerful criminals, mainly from Russia, see Slovenia as a safe haven and neutral territory to carry out their business.

Reports also suggest the increasing existence of domestic criminal networks in the country, generally involved in firearms trafficking, human trafficking, and human smuggling. Most of these networks collaborate or overlap structurally, at times with foreign actors, and many are thought to be subcontracted by larger transnational networks on occasion. Some well-known informal networks are known to be involved in construction, money laundering, and tax evasion, but do not engage in traditional organized crime activities. With regard to private sector actors, although their presence appears to be limited in Slovenia, some significant money laundering rackets were recently found to have been masterminded in the country. These activities involved several notable private companies in the sport and construction sectors, typically in collaboration with criminals based in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are still no substantial reports of mafia-style groups operating in Slovenia, an absence attributed to the strong presence of foreign criminal actors. Small groups in the country are

generally highly adaptable and informally organized, rather than structured and identified by name or membership.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The government is vocal in its condemnation of organized crime and regularly issues statements that indicate its support of and participation in various international initiatives to combat these activities. Slovenia's approach to tackling the standard and classic forms of organized crime, especially drug trafficking and tobacco smuggling, is effective. However, it is ill-equipped to handle the newer challenges of hybrid crime, such as sophisticated white-collar organized crime and large-scale fraud. Nevertheless, the country's main problem area remains its high levels of corruption. Government action against corruption, nepotism, clientelism, and the inflated costs of public projects remains woefully inadequate. Moreover, public perception of the government has deteriorated, owing to a lack of accountability for incidents such as the corruption scandals surrounding the procurement of personal protective equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. That being said, conflicts of interest between government officials and private industry are the primary form of corruption in Slovenia. Despite these shortcomings, however, Slovenian democratic governance, leadership, and transparency are still considered fairly good.

Slovenia remains active in international efforts to combat human smuggling and trafficking. The country is part of INTERPOL and a National Central Bureau for the organization operates in Ljubljana. Slovenia's National Control Bureau is part of the International Police Cooperation Division, which sits in the Criminal Police Directorate, a specialized criminal investigation unit of the Slovenian National Police. Recently, the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration hosted an international exercise aimed at preparing for possible cyber-attacks on nuclear facilities. In addition, Slovenia and Finland have signed a memorandum of understanding to increase cooperation on digital transformation, including the goal of strengthened cyber-security. Slovenian law has several provisions against organized crime, which prove effective. These include measures against drug trafficking, human trafficking, the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms, flora and fauna crime, and cybercrime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Slovenian judiciary efficiency and public trust in the judiciary have improved in recent years, but a significant negative perception does still exist. This may be because of the fact that several judicial rulings have been ignored by the government, resulting in compliance delays. Furthermore, although the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays in the processing of court cases, these setbacks reportedly did not adversely affect the cases involving serious crimes, such as human trafficking. The lack of incentives for members of criminal groups to denounce their bosses and the two-year maximum detention time are other issues affecting the judicial and detention systems in the country.

The Slovenian National Police Force is a civilian police force that operates under the Ministry of the Interior. It contains a special division dedicated to tackling organized crime, subdivided into sections focusing on illicit drugs, counterterrorism and extreme violence, and criminal groups. The fact that almost every government that comes into power in Slovenia replaces the top personnel of various law enforcement agencies may be indicative of undue political influence being exercised in the country. Changes in government are frequent, and this may be the cause of some of the issues of continuity and effectiveness in law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement in Slovenia, however, continues to maintain communication with its foreign counterparts in order to counter organized crime effectively. As Slovenia's territory is considerably small, it is easy to protect. The Border Police Division within the Slovenian police force oversees state border security and the Slovenian army assists at the borders when required. However, owing to the country's location on the Balkan route, irregular migration through Slovenia towards Western Europe continues to pose a challenge to these efforts. Furthermore, Slovenia is a popular transit country for organized crime, because of its location at the European entry point to the Balkan route, which is used for various forms of illicit activity such as human trafficking, human smuggling, firearms trafficking, and drug trafficking.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovenia has anti-money laundering laws, but they lack effective implementation. The country is at relatively low risk of money laundering and terrorist financing, although its performance in relation to the management of virtual

assets has decreased. The effectiveness of legislation remains problematic, mainly due to difficulties in applying certain provisions. Regarding economic regulatory capacity and transparency, Slovenia has been praised for its international cooperation efforts. Furthermore, the country's economic regulatory environment is considered to be conducive to doing business. However, corruption hampers further development in this field. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, opaque tendering led to contracts being awarded to dubious or unqualified companies.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Slovenian government continues to support human trafficking victims' access to services such as psychological assistance, reintegration programmes, and housing provision. However, concerns have been raised regarding the under-identification of, and subsequent lack of support for, labour trafficking victims. Slovenian civil society actors continue to work in victim support and raising awareness, largely with the backing of the government's working group on human trafficking. Additionally, the Slovenian government hosts annual training for officials from the International Protection Procedures Division of the Ministry of Interior, as this agency screens for trafficking indicators among asylum applicants. Owing to Slovenia's geographical location, witness protection in cases of serious organized crime is practically impossible, signalling a need for the country to enhance its international cooperation in order to move protected witnesses abroad.

Police in Slovenia continue to pursue various crime prevention strategies. These include the presence of neighbourhood police officers, as well as the government's working group on human trafficking. While some human trafficking prevention efforts in Slovenia have been maintained,

including the adoption of a new action plan and increased personnel resources for the Anti-Trafficking Service Office, shortcomings have been reported in implementation. There have also been efforts made to increase the security of citizens online and prevent possible cyber-attacks, through public awareness and education programmes. Additionally, local action groups coordinate drug prevention campaigns alongside NGOs and civil society organisations with evidence-based, evaluated, structured, and manual-based intervention campaigns.

Slovenia makes a significant effort to maintain productive relationships with NGOs and civil society actors. The government funds an NGO-run safe house for victims of human trafficking, and there is strong coordination between NGOs and the police in efforts to identify victims. However, friction between civil society actors, government actors, and the media has been reported, following some NGOs being discredited or pressured by local government officials or the media. However, these do seem to be isolated incidents. Press freedom is an issue in Slovenia, as defamation remains criminalized, resulting in lawsuits and verbal attacks on the media by well-known politicians. The media is partially controlled by influential businesses and various white-collar criminals who have been repeatedly linked to organized crime. This makes the independence of the Slovenian media vulnerable, if not precarious, particularly regarding the reporting of organized crime.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.