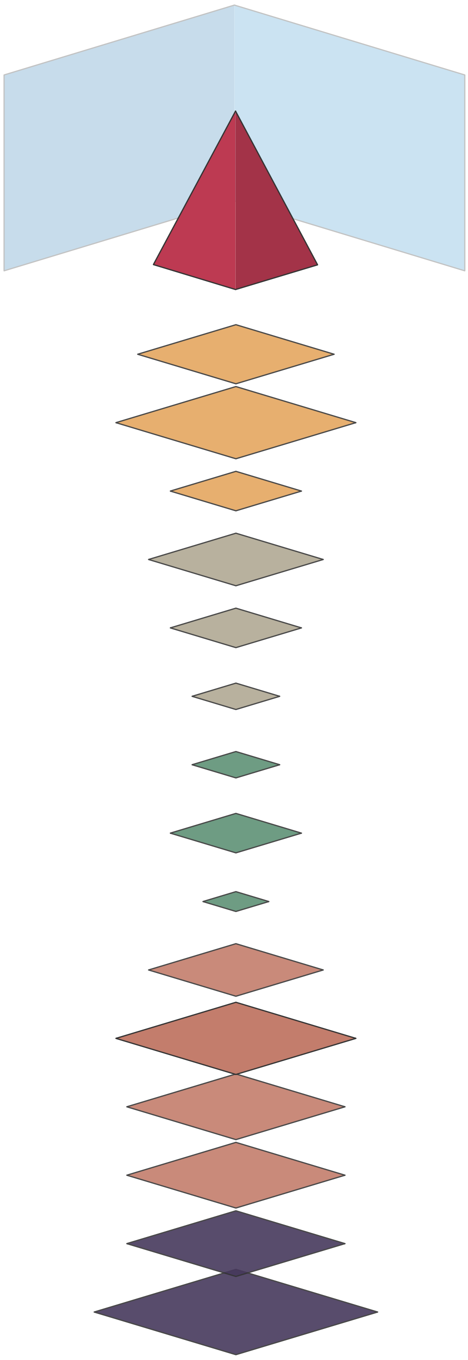
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

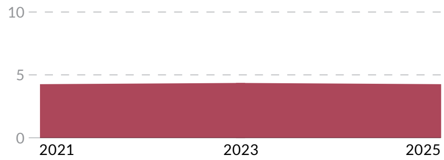
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

SLOVENIA



4.28 ↘0.08 CRIMINALITY SCORE

140th of 193 countries ↘2
32nd of 44 European countries ↘1
17th of 17 Central and Eastern European countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS 3.97 ↘0.07

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50	↗0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	2.00	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.00	↘1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	1.50	↘1.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.50	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.00	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50	↗0.50

CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.60 ↘0.10

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00	↘1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.50	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.00	0.00

This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.

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Funded by the European Union

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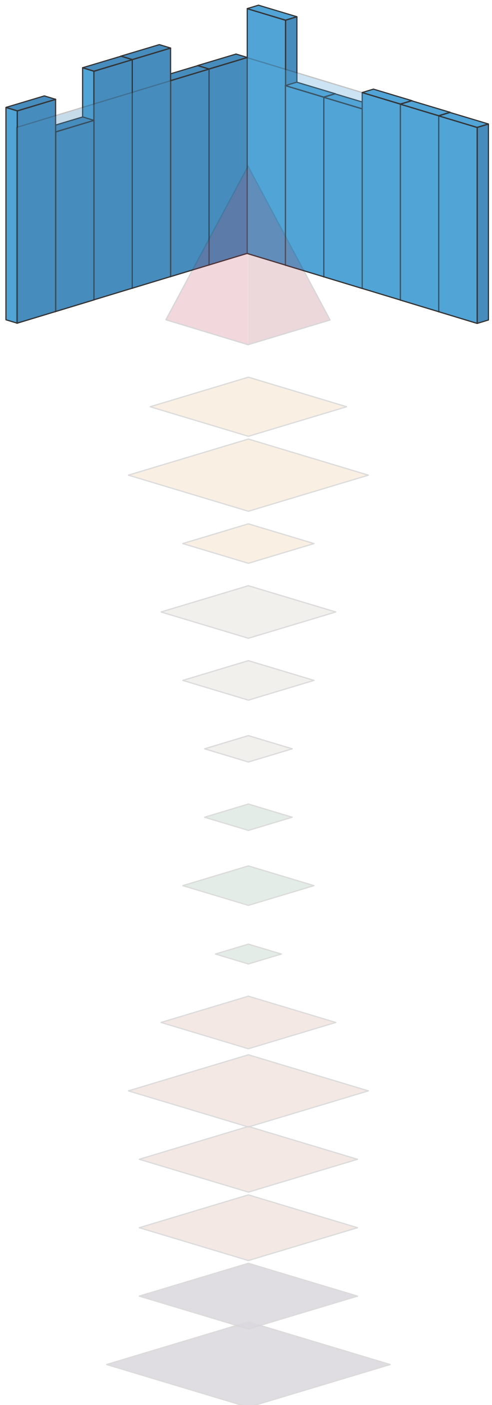
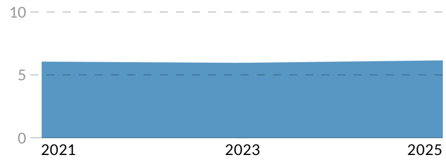
SLOVENIA



6.21 ↗0.17 RESILIENCE SCORE

33rd of 193 countries ↗4
24th of 44 European countries -
2nd of 17 Central and Eastern European countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50	↗0.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50	↗0.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	7.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50	↗0.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50	↗0.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.00	0.00
PREVENTION	6.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00	0.00

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Slovenia continues to function as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with victims primarily exploited for labour and sexual services. Migrants from Ukraine, Taiwan, Romania, Hungary and the Balkan states are particularly vulnerable, with reports indicating that employers confiscate passports and coerce individuals into exploitative labour conditions. Slovenia's position along the Balkan migration route increases its exposure to trafficking, as victims often pass through on their way to Western Europe. At the same time, some become trapped in sexual or labour exploitation. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has exacerbated this criminal market, with Ukrainian women increasingly becoming targets. Criminal networks, likely associated with organized groups from the Balkans, are suspected of playing a central role in this illicit trade; however, specific actors remain unidentified. The exploitation of victims continues to occur as oversight remains weak.

Slovenia is a key transit hub for irregular migration due to its location on the Balkan route, which has seen a significant increase in human smuggling operations. The country serves as a primary transit point for irregular migrants seeking passage to Italy, Austria and other European destinations. Recent arrests by the Slovenian police have uncovered smuggling rings connected to the trafficking of weapons and illicit funds. Organized networks facilitate smuggling through online advertisements, offering clandestine migration for high fees. Foreign nationals from Serbia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan dominate the market, while local actors provide logistical support. Migrants often endure inhumane conditions, including forced marches without sufficient food and water, as well as confinement in overcrowded vehicles. Human smuggling operations are closely associated with money laundering and drug trafficking, further solidifying Slovenia's role as a conduit for broader criminal networks.

While large-scale extortion is not a primary concern in Slovenia, localized incidents involving threats and coercion do occur. Small criminal groups and individuals often target business owners, demanding payments under the pretence of providing security services. Although there is no substantial evidence of organized mafia-style racketeering, isolated cases indicate that extortion continues to be a method for criminal financial gain.

TRADE

Slovenia plays a minor yet notable role in regional arms trafficking, primarily serving as a transit country within the broader illicit arms network of the Balkans. Weapons typically enter Slovenia from Bulgaria before being transported westward into Europe. Slovenian groups collaborate with the Balkan Cartel, which dominates much of the trade and is often tied to drug trafficking operations. While local demand for illicit arms is not well defined, the country's strategic location enhances its role in transit trafficking rather than domestic distribution.

The counterfeit goods market in Slovenia is moderate in scale but persistent. Fake clothing, shoes, electronics and toys primarily enter the country from China, Hong Kong and Türkiye through the Port of Koper. While some products transit through Slovenia to other EU nations, a significant portion is consumed domestically. The involvement of organized groups is suspected but not well documented. Slovenia is also identified as a source of counterfeit cigarettes, particularly for the French market. Slovenian authorities have dismantled illegal cigarette factories, highlighting the sophistication of the networks involved. Although the overall size of the illicit trade has declined since 2021, counterfeit goods remain a steady component of the country's underground economy.

The smuggling of excise goods, particularly cigarettes, remains a structured criminal activity with transnational links. Groups involved in the illicit tobacco trade employ sophisticated smuggling techniques and extensive logistical networks, resulting in losses of tax revenue. Despite this, there is little evidence to suggest the market has a significant impact on the country.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Slovenia are not well documented, but they do exist. Illegal logging occurs sporadically, primarily for firewood, although some organized groups target high-value timber. This crime remains underreported and affects both state and private forests. Wildlife trafficking is a minor yet persistent issue in Slovenia. The country primarily serves as a transit hub for wildlife trafficking, particularly for birds smuggled from Romania, Bosnia and Croatia to Western Europe. The illegal collection of date mussels poses an environmental threat to marine ecosystems, while the illicit trade in brown bears remains a minor but ongoing concern. Wildlife crimes have declined in recent years, largely due to stronger enforcement and preventive measures. Slovenia plays a limited role in non-renewable resource crimes, mainly acting as a transit point for illegally traded minerals. Coal reserves are largely depleted, and there have been no major reported cases of illicit mineral trade in recent years.

DRUGS

Slovenia's heroin market is well established and largely controlled by the Balkan Cartel. The country is situated along the Balkan route, a crucial corridor for heroin trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe. Although there was a temporary decline in the market in 2020, recent years have witnessed a resurgence in growth, with heroin trafficking closely associated with human smuggling and arms trading. Slovenian and European law enforcement agencies have successfully dismantled several trafficking cells; however, the trade remains robust, with Ljubljana emerging as a hub for these activities.

Cocaine consumption in Slovenia is substantial. The Balkan Cartel dominates the trade, managing logistics and distribution through ports in the Mediterranean and the North Sea while collaborating with suppliers from Latin America. Slovenia serves as a key transit and consumption market, with local gangs operating smaller-scale trafficking networks. Although law enforcement has intensified cocaine seizures, the illicit market remains strong, driven by rising consumer demand. Seizures at the Port of Koper highlight Slovenia's role in the European cocaine supply chain.

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug in Slovenia, accompanied by a burgeoning culture of small-scale cultivation. While Slovenia is not a major regional hub or production centre, the trade is connected to the Balkan Cartel, which oversees the transportation and distribution of cannabis imported from Africa through Mediterranean routes. Police raids conducted in 2023 and 2024 have confirmed that cannabis cultivation in Slovenia is not limited to small-scale, individual home growers. Instead, these activities appear to be part of a larger, coordinated operation managed by organized criminal groups. This indicates a significant level of criminal involvement in the country's cannabis trade.

Synthetic drug markets, particularly those involving amphetamines and methamphetamines, remain under-researched. The trade is linked to both local production and transit trafficking from Afghanistan. While Slovenia is not a major hub for synthetic drugs, organized crime groups, including the Balkan Cartel, benefit from its position in the supply chain. Recent seizures of illicit drug laboratories indicate that domestic production is on the rise. However, consumption levels remain lower than those of heroin and cocaine.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime in Slovenia remains stable, yet large companies and government entities are increasingly targeted by ransomware attacks. High-profile cyberattacks have specifically targeted energy companies and financial institutions, highlighting the risks posed to critical infrastructure. Foreign hacker groups, potentially linked to state-sponsored actors, are suspected of involvement. The illicit profits generated from cybercrimes are often laundered through cryptocurrency channels, complicating enforcement efforts.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crime in Slovenia is widespread, with fraud, online scams and procurement corruption presenting challenges. Bank scams have surged, resulting in multi-million-euro losses. Major fraud cases have involved government and EU funds, including embezzlement from Erasmus+ projects and the misappropriation of tourism funds. In 2024, Slovenia's largest hospital was embroiled in a procurement scandal, reinforcing concerns about vulnerabilities in financial oversight. High-profile fraud cases suggest potential involvement from both state and non-state actors, with public sector corruption remaining a notable concern. International financial crime networks exploit Slovenia's financial system for money laundering, while local actors facilitate illicit transactions.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

There are no credible reports of large, hierarchical mafia-style groups operating within Slovenia. While small gangs are present, particularly in the drug trade, they lack the level of organization and territorial control characteristic of traditional mafia entities. The absence of such groups may be attributed to the dominance of foreign criminal actors and decentralized criminal networks, which have assumed significant roles in Slovenia's illicit markets. Despite the absence of established mafia organizations, smaller criminal elements operate in fragmented ways, primarily engaging in drug distribution and other opportunistic crimes. Criminal networks in Slovenia function with varying degrees of influence and fluidity. These groups are mainly involved in drug trafficking, arms smuggling and human smuggling, often operating independently rather than under a unified cartel structure. While their specific names and identities remain largely unknown, they are not believed to be formally linked to the notorious Balkan Cartel. While there are indications of transnational connections, particularly in drug and arms trafficking, the overall level of violence associated with these networks remains relatively low. Law enforcement agencies struggle to accurately map their distribution across Slovenia, as these groups appear to be dispersed throughout the country rather than concentrated in specific cities or regions.

Corruption within Slovenia's political and financial institutions poses significant vulnerabilities, with state-embedded actors contributing to the development of criminal markets. Political elites, rather than local government officials, are more frequently implicated in corruption-related cases. Recent high-profile incidents illustrate how high-level state actors can influence regulatory frameworks, financial oversight and judicial processes, ultimately hindering Slovenia's ability to combat organized crime effectively. Although there is no concrete evidence linking state-embedded actors to direct involvement in transnational criminal enterprises, their noncompliance with anti-corruption recommendations creates an environment conducive to illicit activities. Political interference in law enforcement operations, combined with inadequate regulatory oversight, raises concerns about the integrity of Slovenia's governance institutions and their susceptibility to criminal exploitation.

Foreign criminal actors exert influence over Slovenia's illicit markets, with the Balkan Cartel playing a dominant role. This transnational group is extensively involved in drug and arms trafficking, smuggling cocaine from Latin America through maritime routes and transporting heroin overland from Afghanistan through the Balkans. The cartel's logistics networks extend into Slovenia, where shipments are processed and redistributed to other European markets. While there is no definitive evidence confirming the cartel's direct involvement in human smuggling, suspicions persist regarding its connection to Afghan and Uzbek smuggling groups operating within Slovenia. Over the past four years, the population of foreign nationals in Slovenia's detention centres has increased, reflecting a broader shift in the country's criminal demographic structure. Beyond the Balkan Cartel, cybercriminal groups linked to Russia and China have also targeted Slovenian institutions and businesses, executing sophisticated attacks against government agencies and financial entities. These activities underscore the evolving nature of foreign criminal threats in Slovenia, as cybercrime joins traditional illicit markets such as drug and arms trafficking. Additionally, Slovenia has served as a refuge for foreign fugitives associated with organized crime. In 2024, authorities apprehended a fugitive leader of the Neapolitan Camorra, marking a significant breakthrough in international efforts to dismantle transnational crime syndicates. This arrest highlights Slovenia's continued significance within Europe's broader criminal landscape, both as a transit point and as a temporary haven for foreign actors seeking to evade law enforcement.

The involvement of private-sector actors in Slovenia's criminal economy, particularly through corruption and financial crimes, has attracted scrutiny from EU regulatory bodies. the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has identified lobbying and corporate corruption as systemic risks, particularly within the sports and construction industries. Construction firms operating in Slovenia and the broader Balkans have been implicated in money laundering, fraudulent bankruptcies and illicit real estate transactions, with some cases prosecuted in Bosnia. While there is no evidence suggesting that private-sector actors directly control any specific criminal market, their role in money laundering and financial crimes is substantial. Construction companies and other corporate entities frequently facilitate illicit financial flows, exploiting regulatory gaps to transfer criminal proceeds across borders. The transnational nature of these operations indicates an interplay between legitimate business structures and organized crime, enabling illicit actors to obscure the origins of their wealth and evade detection.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Slovenia has demonstrated a strong commitment to combating organized crime, particularly in the areas of drug trafficking and human smuggling. The government has publicly acknowledged these issues and has launched awareness campaigns aimed at both security forces and potential victims of human trafficking. The Ministry of Interior has actively collaborated with other ministries and international organizations, contributing to the progress noted by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). Despite these efforts, corruption remains a significant challenge.

Although Slovenia maintains high levels of administrative and budget transparency, it has struggled to comply with GRECO's anti-corruption recommendations fully, indicating persistent governance weaknesses. To enhance its efforts in combating corruption, the government has implemented digital measures, including e-payment systems and online access to procurement contracts, which ensure greater public scrutiny. While these initiatives bolster accountability, enforcement gaps and political interference continue to be areas of concern.

On an international level, Slovenia actively cooperates with European and global institutions to combat transnational organized crime. The country has ratified multiple international conventions and participates in security cooperation initiatives with neighbouring states, the EU and law enforcement agencies such as Europol. Bilateral agreements, particularly with Albania, Italy and Austria, have resulted in improved joint operations against human smuggling and drug trafficking. However, gaps persist in Slovenia's capacity to enforce international anti-corruption standards, which limits the overall effectiveness of its international engagement.

Slovenia's national policies and laws demonstrate a strong commitment to combating various forms of organized crime. Ongoing efforts to refine and improve these laws, particularly regarding human trafficking, indicate a proactive approach to enhancing the state's resilience against organized crime. However, the legislation suffers from inadequate implementation.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Slovenian judicial system comprises four levels: local courts, district courts, higher courts and the Supreme Court. A specialized judicial department is responsible for prosecuting organized crime cases, and legal assistance is available to individuals who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. However, concerns regarding judicial independence remain, as stagnant salaries for judges heighten the risk of undue influence. Although funding for the Public Prosecutor's Office has increased in recent years, Slovenia performs moderately in terms of judicial independence, indicating ongoing challenges in effectively combating corruption and organized crime.

Law enforcement in Slovenia is responsible for addressing all criminal activities; however, there is no specialized unit exclusively dedicated to organized crime. The country performs moderately in terms of law enforcement effectiveness within Europe. While Slovenia's police participate in regional security collaborations, the mechanisms for intelligence sharing and investment in advanced crime-fighting capabilities are limited. There is also limited information available regarding public perceptions of law enforcement or the effectiveness of intelligence-gathering operations against criminal groups.

Slovenia faces challenges in maintaining its territorial integrity, particularly in border regions that are vulnerable to drug trafficking and human smuggling. As part of the Balkan route, Slovenia serves as a transit point for illicit activities, although it is not a primary entry hub for the EU. Border security measures have been strengthened through international cooperation; however, control gaps persist due to the involvement of neighbouring non-EU countries, such as Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in smuggling networks. In response to threats posed by terrorism and organized crime, Slovenia has recently extended its border controls with Croatia and Hungary, aligning its efforts with broader EU security measures.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Slovenia has taken steps to enhance its anti-money laundering (AML) framework, particularly in response to criticism from the EU regarding the inadequate implementation of financial crime regulations. Amendments to Slovenia's Criminal Code have strengthened legal provisions against money laundering, aligning national laws with EU standards. However, Slovenia remains compliant with only a portion of the Financial Action Task Force's recommendations, and enforcement gaps persist, especially concerning the oversight of cash flows within the EU. While Slovenia is classified as low-risk for money laundering, concerns persist about the effectiveness of its implementation mechanisms, particularly in light of allegations of political interference in financial crime prevention.

Slovenia's economic regulatory environment generally aligns with EU standards, fostering significant foreign investment and ensuring financial sector stability. In recent years, however, challenges have emerged around regulatory efficiency and market openness. Corruption risks and political lobbying continue to influence economic decision-making, and the government has yet to fully implement GRECO's anti-corruption recommendations, raising concerns about potential private-sector influence on regulatory frameworks. Nonetheless, Slovenia maintains strong property rights protections and a stable financial sector despite these ongoing challenges.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Slovenia has made progress in providing support services for victims and witnesses, particularly those affected by human trafficking. While the budget for shelters and assistance programs has remained stable, there is a notable lack of awareness among law enforcement regarding the various forms of trafficking. The Ministry of the Interior has launched an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging victims to seek help, and NGOs play a crucial role in identifying and assisting these individuals. Nevertheless, there are still gaps in the compensation mechanisms available for trafficking victims, as highlighted by GRETA. While harm reduction initiatives exist for drug users, such as needle exchange and opioid substitution programs, funding for long-term rehabilitation remains limited.

Prevention strategies in Slovenia primarily target human trafficking and drug-related crime. The government collaborates with NGOs and international bodies through the Interdepartmental Working Group, which coordinates prevention activities. While Slovenia's legislative framework for human trafficking has improved, criticism remains regarding its enforcement. The government has also approved a long-term national drug prevention strategy aimed at reducing youth drug use and enhancing law enforcement capabilities against narcotics trafficking.

However, prevention efforts against environmental crimes, such as wildlife trafficking, remain underdeveloped, despite reported progress in curbing market activity.

Non-state actors, including NGOs and media organizations, play a significant role in enhancing Slovenia's resilience against organized crime. Slovenia is classified as a free country in global civil liberties indices, characterized by high transparency in electoral processes and robust protections for political pluralism. Civil society organizations actively contribute to policymaking and assist in victim protection, particularly in cases of human trafficking. However, press freedom remains a concern, adversely affected due to political pressure on journalists. Although hostility toward media professionals has decreased in recent years, some news outlets continue to operate under the influence of politics, which limits the capacity of investigative journalism to expose corruption and 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.