Slovene education system

As the whole Europe, Slovenia is also one of the countries, which is also trying to establish a knowledge-based society. In last 10-15 years Slovenia has made significant investments into education. We have realized knowledge is the key that opens all doors.

»There has to be progress in the economy and technology, and the mindset in society in general must be followed by progress in education. Today, we should strive to find new teaching methods, and education should constantly be adapted to new conditions. Furthermore, modern technical aids should be used in acquiring knowledge. This forms the basis of a high-quality education process, and this is the goal we should pursue. So far, Slovenia has proved to be successful. For instance, we are at the top of the list of European countries with schools equipped with broadband internet. Today, internet serves as the principal source of information and also as an endless source of opportunities for intellectual growth of each individual. Just as the formal education system should adapt to changes in the world, so should the individual fulfill the obligations of their vocational and living environment. Developing one’s skills is a task for each of us, and society’s task is to create opportunities and institutions where these skills can be developed. Individuals who have the opportunity to fully employ their potential and who take advantage of this opportunity are the driving forces behind the social, economic and cultural development of any country. That is why the goal of establishing an efficient education system and other education institutions should be a priority for all of us. The Danish physicist and Nobel Prize winner Niels Bohr once said: “Nothing exists until it is measured.” In terms of education, however, we must not forget that only the knowledge gained truly matters, regardless whether it is measured with grades or not. Nevertheless, I am confident that the data in this brochure serve as a basis for changes that should result in greater quality of the education system. The education system is a living organism that must adapt and follow modern trends in society. It is our task to make sure it is successful and effective in practice, as well, since it will provide the foundations on which Slovenia will establish its knowledge-based society.«
Those are words of Dr. Milan Zver (minister for education from december 2004 to 2008)
Since 2008 the minister for education in Slovenia is now Igor Lukšič.

Slovenia covers an area of 20,273 km² (squaured kilometers) between the Alps, the Adriatic Sea and the Pannonian Plain.
Border length: 1 382 km:
• with Austria: 330 km
• with Italy: 280 km
• with Hungary: 102 km
• with Croatia: 670 km
Seashore length: 46.6 km

System of government
On June 25th 1991, Slovenia became an independent country. Slovenia is a democratic republic, based on the division of power into legislative, executive and judiciary branches (zakonodajno, izvršilno in sodno). The executive power belongs to the government, which reports to the National Assembly, comprised of Ministries. Slovenia is a social state governed by the rule of law. On May 1st 2004, Slovenia became a member of the European Union.

Population
Total population according to the latest census (2002): 1 964 036
Population density: 96.9 per km²
Total population: 2 013 597 (March 31th 2007)

Nationalities
• Slovenian: 1,631,363 (83.1 %)
• Italian: 2,258
• Hungarian: 6,243
• Other: 324,172
We speak slovenian language and the climate is continental in central Slovenia, alpine in the northwest and sub-mediterranean at the coast. 

Valid Currency (to pay with) was from 1991 until 2006 tolar, from January 1st in 2006 it is euro. The capital city is Ljubljana, and the rest of the largest cities and towns are: Maribor, Koper, Kranj, Celje, Velenje, Nova Gorica.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SLOVENIA

In Slovenia, education begins with preschool education. Children from the age of 1 and until they go to school enroll in kindergartens, however, enrolment is not obligatory. We have private and public kindergartens. Kindergartens are supported by the communities. The number of the children enrolled in programs from 1 to 3 years old is increasing. We think the number is increasing, because more and more people do not live with parents anymore, who helped to look over the children. In our kindergarten we also have more request for age 1-3 as 3-6 aged groups. Mother can stay at home for one year (this is called maternity vacation) and after this year mother needs a guardianship for a child. Normally in public kindergartens the children are together in the groups within their ages, but in our kindergarten – montessori, we have mixed aged groups.

In the academic year 2006/2007, 19 private kindergartens, representing 2.4 % of all kindergartens, carried out pre-school education programmes. 975 children were enrolled in these kindergartens (1.7 %).

The obligatory nine-year elementary school is divided into three-year cycles. Children enrol in nine-year elementary school when they reach the age of 6. In first cycle /class 1-3/ there are children age of 6 to 8. In second cycle /class 4-6/t here are children age 9 to 11 and in third cycle /class 7-9/ there are children age 12 to 14. In the 1st class there are always 2 teachers (the second teacher is teacher for preschool children). In the second cycle there are more and more teachers who are specialized for teaching just one subject.
The children with special needs have the rights to be in elementary school for 3 more years or if they have successfully completed 7 years than they can be enrolled in shorter programs of vocational (poklicno) education.

The duration of the school year is from 1st of september until 31st of avgust (there are vacations from 24th of June until 31st of Avguat). The class goes on during the week for 5 days from Monday until Friday and the minimum of hours is 20 (1st class) and the maximum of hours is 30 (9th class).

There are 2 evaluation periods. In first age cycle the grades are descriptive, in second cycle the grades are descriptive and in numbers and third cycle level the grades are impressed in numbers from 1 to 5, where 5 means the highest level of knowledge. At the end of the school year parents and the children gets the certificate of the knowledge. At the end of second and third cycle there is possibility of international tests. At the end of the third cycle there are tests from mother tongue, math and the third subject which is chosen by the school minister every year.

Elementary school is free of charge. Kindergarten and the school has some kind of counsel, which is formed from 3 representatives from the founder, 3 representatives from the parents and 3 representatives from the workers at this school. This counsel helps to support headmister, confirms the program of the school, year plan and supports to decide about other important things or investments in the school. The leader of the school / kindergarten is headmaster / principal and the assistant of the headmaster.

At the beginning of the academic year 2006/2007, 143,988 out of 164,477 children were already enrolled in 9-year elementary school programmes carried out by regular-program elementary schools, representing 87.5 %. In the 59 schools carrying out adapted programmes, 1,624 pupils were enrolled, 1,280 (78.8 %) of whom were enrolled in 9-year elementary school programmes

13,225 teachers teach in regular-program elementary schools, or an average of 1 teacher per 13 pupils. In adapted-program elementary schools, however, 470 teachers are employed, which represents an average of 1 teacher per 4 pupils. In
educational institutions carrying out programmes for adults, 415 teachers are employed, which represents an average of 1 teacher per 5 students.

MINORITIES IN NATIONAL COMMUNITIES (for year 2005)

We have 3 kindergartens teaching in Italian language and 305 children in it. There are 3 elementary schools teaching in Italian and 372 children in it. And 3 secondary schools with 235 children in it. In hungarian national community there are 263 children in bilingual kindergartens, 5 bilingual elementary schools with 844 children in it and 1 secondary bilingual school with 340 pupils.

Secondary education is divided into technical and vocational education (technical and professional, secondary vocational, vocational technical, and short-term vocational), and general secondary education (general and technical “gimnazijas”).

The general secondary education and technical secondary education takes 4 years and can be finished with »poklicna matura« - (matura is general examination before leaving the secondary school), vocational secondary education takes 3 years and short-term vocational education takes 2 years and those programs can be finished with final exams, which means you can go to work after doing this exam. Matura as we know we have »vocational matura« after specific direction and »general matura« which means like general subjects for going to University.

Post-secondary vocational education (višje strokovno) forms a part of tertiary education. It is defined as short-term higher education, and the study programmes are extremely practice-oriented.

The secondary education is free of charge and is for the children age from 15 to 19 years old. But the individual child has to do inscription. Some schools demand grades if there are too many pupils inscribed.

General matura (general final exam) opens the door directly to the University. After the general matura pupil gets certificate with grades. Formal general matura (opens the door to academis higher education and proffessionally oriented higher education) is done every school year in June and consists of testing from 5 subjects:
mathematics, language – slovenian, foreign language and 2 chosen subjects by the will of the pupil. Vocational general matura (opens the door to higher vocational education) consists of 4 subjects: mathematics, slovenian language and 2 chosen subjects.

**Higher education** is divided into three levels. The first level includes vocational higher education study programmes and university study programmes (which takes 4, 4.5, 5 or 6 years), the second level includes Master’s study programmes (which takes 2 years of research work) and the third level incorporates the Doctoral study programmes (which takes 2 years after Master's study and it takes personal research work and cooperation with mentor). Until the amendments to the Higher Education Act in 2004, higher education had two levels, the undergraduate and the postgraduate level (pre-Bologna programmes). Higher education falls within the competence of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

**Adults** acquire education in special educational programmes for adults or in programmes applicable for youth that are being carried out in public educational establishments for adults, public schools and private establishments for adult education.

In Slovenia, the education level is increasing, as the number of people with unfinished elementary school reduced by 15 % in comparison with the year 2000. Furthermore, the number of people who only finished elementary school reduced by 12 %.

Interesting information is also that the average number of foreign languages learnt by pupils in secondary education was in 2005 – 1,5 languages on one pupil. Which means we are quite linguistic. The number of children in kindergartens is also increasing, in 1995/96 it was 56,9% children in kindergartens, in 2007 the number was 64,7% which means there is about 8% more children in kindergartens now.

Those information are taken from Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007 (http://www.mss.gov.si/). In general, only data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (www.stat.si) were used in the publication,