

## **INDIA-SLOVENIA RELATIONS**

Republic of Slovenia attained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. India recognized Slovenia on 11 May 1992. India supported Slovenia for membership at the UN. Slovenia was admitted into the UN on 23 May 1992.

### **Opening of Resident Missions**

Diplomatic relations with Slovenia were concretized when the Ambassador of India in Vienna presented credentials on February 3, 1993 for concurrent accreditation to Slovenia. India opened its resident Mission in Ljubljana in February 2007.

Slovenia opened its resident mission in New Delhi on 1 August 2002 and upgraded it to Ambassador-level in September 2009. Slovenian Embassy in New Delhi has concurrent accreditation in Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Slovenia has its Honorary Consuls in India in four cities - Kolkata, Bangalore, Mumbai and Chennai.

### **High-level Visits**

#### **From India**

Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji, accompanied by a large delegation including MOS for Women and Child Development and two Members of Parliament from Lok Sabha, paid the first-ever State visit to Slovenia from 15-17 September 2019. A business delegation also accompanied him during the visit. Rashtrapatiji was granted State Honours by the Slovenian President. His engagements including tete-a-tete with the Slovenian President, delegation-level talks, calls by Slovenian President of National Assembly and Prime Minister. During his visit, he also addressed the Indian community and Slovenia-India Business Forum. The following agreements were signed during the visit:

- Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Ministry of Science and Technology of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia for the period 2020-2022.
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Sport between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia.
- Programme of Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Arts, Education, Sports and Mass Media,
- Programme of Cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Slovenian Institute for Standardization (SIST) on Technical Cooperation in the field of Standardization,
- MoU between Invest India and SPIRIT Slovenia,
- Memorandum of Understanding between IIT Kanpur (for cGanga / India) and VGB (Slovenia),
- Memorandum of Understanding between IIT Kanpur (for cGanga / India) and Space-SI (Slovenia),
- Cooperation Agreement between Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

**Other visits include:**

1. Prof. Y.K. Alagh, MOS for S&T (Feb 1997);
2. Shri Gingee N. Ramachandran, MOS for Finance (Revenue) (Jan 2003).
3. Shri Anand Sharma, then MOS (External Affairs) for inauguration of the leased Chancery premises of Embassy of India (30 March- 1 April 2008).
4. Smt. Preneet Kaur, MOS (EA) for participation at the annual Bled Strategic Forum in 2009, 2010 & 2013.
5. Smt. Meira Kumar, former Speaker of Lok Sabha, led a Parliamentary delegation (May 26-30, 2013)
6. Gen. V.K. Singh, MOS (EA) for the Bled Strategic Forum (August 2014)
7. Shri M.J. Akbar, MOS (EA) for the Bled Strategic Forum (September 2017)

### **From Slovenia**

8. Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, Former Foreign Minister (1992 & 2004)
9. Dr. Janez Drnovsek, Former President attended the inauguration of International Conference on Human values organised by the Art of Living Foundation in Bangalore (Jan 2006) & the Satyagraha Centenary Conference in New Delhi (Jan 2007)
10. Dr. Danilo Turk, Former President attended the Delhi Sustainable Summit in Feb 2010.
11. Mr. Borut Pahor as PM to India on State Visit (13-16 June 2011)
12. Mr. Zerjav Radovan, former Dy. PM and Minister for Economic Development and Technology (Jan, 2013) □
13. Mr. Karl Erjavec, Dy. PM and Foreign Minister attended the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi (Nov 2013) □
14. Dr. Milan Brglez, President of the National Assembly led a Slovenian Parliamentary delegation to India (November 2015) □
15. Mr. Alojz Peterle, Member European Parliament and Former PM of the Republic of Slovenia participated in the World Culture Festival organized by the Art of Living at New Delhi (March 2016)

### **Agreements/Protocols/MOUs signed between the two countries are:**

1. Agreement on setting up Joint Committee on Bilateral Trade and Cooperation (1993);
2. Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (1995);
3. Agreement between FICCI/ASSOCHAM and the Slovene Chamber of Commerce and Industry to set up Joint Business Council (1995);
4. Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (1996);
5. Cultural Agreement for cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, education, sports and mass media (1996);
6. National Centre for Trade Information, India (NCTI) – Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia (CCS) Agreement for reciprocal sharing of information (1997);
7. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (2003);
8. Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) – Slovenian Export Corporation (SEC) Cooperation Framework Agreement (2003);
9. Bilateral Air Services Agreement (2004);
10. MOU between ICCR and University of Ljubljana for establishment of Hindi Chair (2009);
11. Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments (2011);
12. MOU between the Bureau of Indian Standards and Slovenian Institute for Standardization (2011);
13. MOU between the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and University of Nova Gorica for Cooperation in the Field of Research and Education (2011);

14. MOU for the establishment of Long Term Chair of Hindi at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana (2011);
15. MOU between Air India, Aerodrom Ljubljana and Adria Airways (2011);
16. Protocol amending the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (2012);
17. Agreement on Short-Stay Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic Passports (2013);
18. Agreement between Air India and Adria Airways on code-sharing arrangements (2013);
19. MOU between Prasar Bharati and RTV on Co-operation in Broadcasting (2013);
20. MOU between NIMS University of Rajasthan, Jaipur and University of Primorska on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Science and Research (Nov 2014);
21. Agreement on Gainful Occupation of Dependents of Members of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts (April 2015);
22. Protocol Amending the Convention and the Protocol for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income (May 2016);
23. MOU between Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH and University of Primorska (July, 2016).
24. Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Ministry of Science and Technology of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia for the period 2020-2022 (September 2019);
25. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Sport between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia. (September 2019);
26. Programme of Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Arts, Education, Sports and Mass Media. (September 2019);
27. Programme of Cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Slovenian Institute for Standardization (SIST) on Technical Cooperation in the field of Standardization. (September 2019);
28. MoU between Invest India and SPIRIT Slovenia. (September 2019);
29. Memorandum of Understanding between IIT Kanpur (for cGanga / India) and VGB (Slovenia). (September 2019);
30. Memorandum of Understanding between IIT Kanpur (for cGanga / India) and Space-SI (Slovenia). (September 2019);
31. Cooperation Agreement between Chamber Of Commerce And Industry Of Slovenia (CCIS) and the Associated Chambers Of Commerce And Industry Of India (ASSOCHAM). (September 2019);
32. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the New (Nova) University, Ljubljana and Centre for Eastern & North-Eastern Regional Studies—Kolkata (CENERS-K) on 03 September 2021.
33. A consent paper on establishing of India Studies Centre was signed at New University in Ljubljana on 27 September 2021.
34. MOU signed between NSIC and SPIRIT SLOVENIA on 22 August 2022.

**Institutional Mechanism:** In December 2018, the National Assembly of Slovenia established a Parliamentary Friendship Group with India with Ms. Suzana Lep Simenko being its Chairperson. There have been nine sessions of the **Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs)** so far, the last session was hosted by Slovenian side through virtual mode in December 2021 due to Covid-19 pandemic situation. It is now India's turn to hold the next FOC. The bilateral **Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (JCTEC)** has so far held 9<sup>th</sup> sessions. Slovenian side hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of India-Slovenia Joint Committee Meeting in virtual mode on 23 March 2021. It is now India's turn to host the JCTEC.

## **Bilateral Trade**

As per revised and final data published by Statistical Office Republic of Slovenia, total bilateral trade in calendar year 2021 increased by 6.28% from EUR 339.62 million to EUR 360.96 million. Indian exports to Slovenia increased by 12.35% from EUR 221.40 million to EUR 248.75 million and Indian import from Slovenia decreased by 5.07% from EUR 118.21 million to EUR 112.21 million. India has continuously enjoyed a trade surplus with Slovenia. Slovenia identified India as one of its strategic focus markets in 2013.

Main items of imports from India to Slovenia in calendar year 2021 include Organic chemicals, Pharmaceutical products, Aluminium and articles thereof, Machinery, mechanical appliances, nuclear reactors, Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof, Iron and steel, Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, Ores, slag and ash, Plastics and articles thereof, Rubber and articles thereof.

Main items of export from Slovenia to India in 2021 include Organic chemicals, Machinery, mechanical appliances, nuclear reactors, boilers, Iron and steel, Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof, Paper and paperboard, articles of paper pulp, Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical, Plastics and articles thereof, Inorganic chemicals, organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals, of rare-earth metals, Rubber and articles thereof, and Miscellaneous Chemical products.

As of 2022, the current preliminary data published by Statistical Office Republic of Slovenia for the period January – April 2022, shows total bilateral trade increased by 32.79% from EUR 116.57 million to EUR 154.79 million. Indian exports to Slovenia increased by 42.81% from EUR 77.92 million to EUR 111.28 million and Indian import from Slovenia increased by 12.59% from EUR 38.65 million to EUR 43.52 million.

**International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE):** India is a member of International Center for Public Enterprises (ICPE), a multilateral organization with its headquarters in Ljubljana. Ministry of Finance is the nodal agency in the Government of India for ICPE.

**Science and Technology:** The bilateral S&T programmes between the two countries are being pursued under the bilateral Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed between India and Slovenia in January 1995 in New Delhi. A Joint Working Group (JWG) on Scientific and Technological Cooperation finalizes executive Programmes of Cooperation (PoC) concluded for a specified period. Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Ministry of Science and Technology of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia was signed during the visit of former President of India to Slovenia from 15-17 September 2019, for the period 2020-2022.

Slovenian educational institutions such as Joseph Stephen, National Institute of Chemistry and University of Maribor are popular among Indian research scholars, coming under Erasmus Scholarship and other programmes.

**Culture and Education** – The Programme of Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Arts, Education, Sports and Mass Media for the period 2019-24 was signed during Rashtrapatiji's

visit to Slovenia from 15-17 September 2019 under the Cultural Agreement for cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, education, sports and mass media signed in December 1996.

Although, Ayurveda is an official practice in Slovenia, it is classified as a Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practice (also in the law it is defined as Traditional Indian Medicine) and not as a healthcare practice.

India corners have been established since 2018 in the Library of the University of Ljubljana by the Mission. India corners were also opened at Nova University on 26 January 2022 and at City Library of Ljubljana in February 2022 with gifts of 100 books each.

Three busts of Indian leaders have been installed in Slovenia – (i) Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in Maribor on 26 November 2011; (ii) Mahatma Gandhi in Slovenje Gradec on 1 October 2010; and (iii) Jawarhar Lal Nehru in Gorinska Brda on 28.05.2013.

**Visa** - In 2013, an agreement on Short-Stay Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic Passports was signed between the two countries. Since April 2017, India has been issuing five-year multiple entry tourist and business visa to Slovenian citizens. Since August 2015, Slovenian citizens are also entitled for e-visa. During the COVID-19 pandemic time, the issuing visa was hold till the travel restrictions from both sides were on. These have been lifted since December 2021 and issuing of five year visas have been resumed.

**Transport and connectivity** - There is no direct air connectivity between India and Slovenia.

**Indian Community:** There is a small Indian community of about 300, comprising mainly of students, professionals and PIOs.

**Useful links** - Mission's website: <http://eoiljubljana@gov.in>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/indiainslovenia>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IndiainSlovenia>

\*\*\*

6 September 2022