

# Slovenia National Day

## Seeing progress with pride and confidence

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AMBASSADOR OF SLOVENIA



Slovenia, the only country in the world with “love” in its name, is only 26 years old, but can look back on the road it has traveled since its independence with pride and confidence. Things that seemed

out of reach three decades ago have now been achieved and today Slovenia serves in many fields as a good example to other developed countries. Among its advantages, especially its high-quality health care, maternity protection, early education of children, kindergarten system, healthy environment, safety and other things should be pointed out.

Slovenia is more than 9,000 km away, about the size of Shikoku with 2 million inhabitants. As a NATO and EU member, and the first among new member states to assume the presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2008, Slovenia is actively adjusting to changes in the world and challenges faced by the young state, Europe and the entire international community, ranging from terrorism to climate change, migration and aging populations.

Japan recognized an independent Slovenia 25 years ago and in mid-October we will mark the 25th anniversary of our

diplomatic relations. Our partnership is firm and constantly on the rise. Last year we witnessed the visit of Prime Minister Miro Cerar to Japan for a meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Trust in our business environment was shown when Yaskawa Electric Corp. chose Slovenia as the location for its first factory for the production of industrial robots in Europe. Soon after that, Kansai Paint Co. decided to purchase Slovenia’s Helios Group to transform it into its European center for R&D, innovation and business development. Additionally, Hitachi Ltd., the Japanese government’s New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization, the Slovenian government and Eles Company jointly launched a smart grid project that uses advanced solutions of modern electricity systems in light of sustainable development.

There are many more things people should know about Slovenia and they can feel them when visiting. Just recently, the 2017 Save the Children’s report was published showing that Slovenia was ranked No. 1 in the world as the best place for children to grow up. Slovenia is among the leading nations in the last World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report, thanks to its positive attitude on gender equality. Slovenian women are economically independent and enjoy one of the world’s lowest income gaps. Regarding the political empowerment of women, we have reached a successful level with half of

the Slovenian government being represented by women. The 2017 Global Peace Index, a comprehensive analysis on the state of peace, ranked Slovenia among the world’s top-seven countries.

Slovenians are very sporty people and gold-medal-winning gymnast from the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, Miroslav Cerar, father of our prime minister, is still an internationally active supporter of Olympic values. We often find ourselves among countries with the highest medal-per-capita rankings, and Slovenian athletes are looking forward to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Slovenia is rich in medieval history, with countless unspoiled areas of outstanding natural beauty. With 60 percent of its territory forested, safe, high-quality and locally produced food is the vision of Slovenian agriculture. Therefore our initiative to declare May 20 as World Bee Day by the U.N. is to be adopted this year.

In every corner of Slovenia, visitors are pleasantly surprised by delicious culinary delicacies and by the indigenous wines. Chef Ana Ros of the Hisa Franko restaurant has put Slovenian cuisine on the map by being named the World’s Best Female Chef in 2017. Recently, traditional Slovenian potica holiday cake, a rolled dough cake with walnut filling, made headlines all over the world. For this, and many other reasons, visitors are welcome to Slovenia. If Slovenia isn’t at the top of your must-visit list, you might want to reconsider your travel plans.