

Lifelong learning

Slovenia has long had a high rate of youth participation in learning, which is reflected in a relatively high share of the population with upper secondary and tertiary education. In recent years youth literacy (in mathematics, reading and science) has improved significantly as well and is high by international standards. Nevertheless, the enrolment structure has been slow to adjust to changes on the labour market, creating a mismatch between supply and demand for labour. Demographic change (i.e. a decline in the number of youths) and an increase in emigration in recent years have made securing a sufficient inflow of suitably trained workers an increasing challenge in light of the desired transition to a highly productive economy. There are also certain mismatches between the knowledge and skills of the active working population and the demands of the work they are performing, while the textual, mathematical and digital skills of the older population and the less educated are fairly poor. Lifelong learning could play an important role in improving this situation, but at present participation of adults in lifelong learning is insufficient.

2.1 Knowledge and skills for a high quality of life and work

Knowledge and skills for a high quality of life and work (development goal 2)

The aim is to promote high-quality and accessible lifelong learning in order to improve the competitiveness of the economy and the prosperity of society. The goal will be realised through the promotion of lifelong learning across the entire population, with incentives for those with lower educational attainment and other marginalised groups to participate in education, with improvement of the functional literacy of youths and adults, by making sure education is efficient and of a high quality, by linking the education system to business, and by developing skills to improve employability. Realisation of this goal is essential for an active and healthy life, which the SDS deals with in development goal 1, and for the competitiveness of the economy, which is dealt with in development goal 6.

SDS 2030 performance indicators for development goal 2:

	Latest value		Target value for 2030
	Slovenia	EU average	
Participation in lifelong learning, in %	11.6 (2016)	10.8 (2016)	19
Share of population with tertiary education, in %	30.7 (2016)	30.7 (2016)	35
PISA results, rank	Ranked in top quartile of EU countries (2015)		Maintain ranking in top quartile of EU countries

Participation in learning is relatively high and the educational structure of the population quite favourable, but there is nevertheless a certain mismatch between human resources demand and supply. Youth participation in upper secondary and tertiary education has been above the EU average for several years. The share of youths (aged 20–24) with at least upper secondary education, an attainment which makes it easier for individuals to successfully function in a modern society – has been around 90% for a number of years and is higher than in the EU as a whole. As younger and better educated cohorts transition to higher age groups, the share of adults (25–64) with completed upper secondary education has also been rising, totalling 87.3% in 2017 (EU: 76.9%). After years of high participation in tertiary education, the share of the population with completed tertiary education has been increasing as well and is on a par with the EU average (30.7%). These trends have increased the human capital of the country, but because the structure of enrolment has been changing too slowly and because of demographic change (smaller cohorts of younger generations), the needs of the business sector are not fully met. Demand on the part of the business sector outpaces supply especially when it comes to staff with an upper secondary vocational degree and staff with a tertiary degree in social services, health care, science and technology. Considering the effects of demographic change (the lower number of youths) and the projected needs of the business sector and society, providing a sufficient number of staff with a tertiary degree may become a bigger problem going forward. The potential to provide a sufficient number of staff with a tertiary education is partially restricted by insufficient efficiency of study, as evident in the low permeability from first to second year, and the low enrolment-to-graduation ratio. Availability of a suitably educated workforce is also

hampered by net emigration and daily commuting of Slovenian citizens to work abroad.

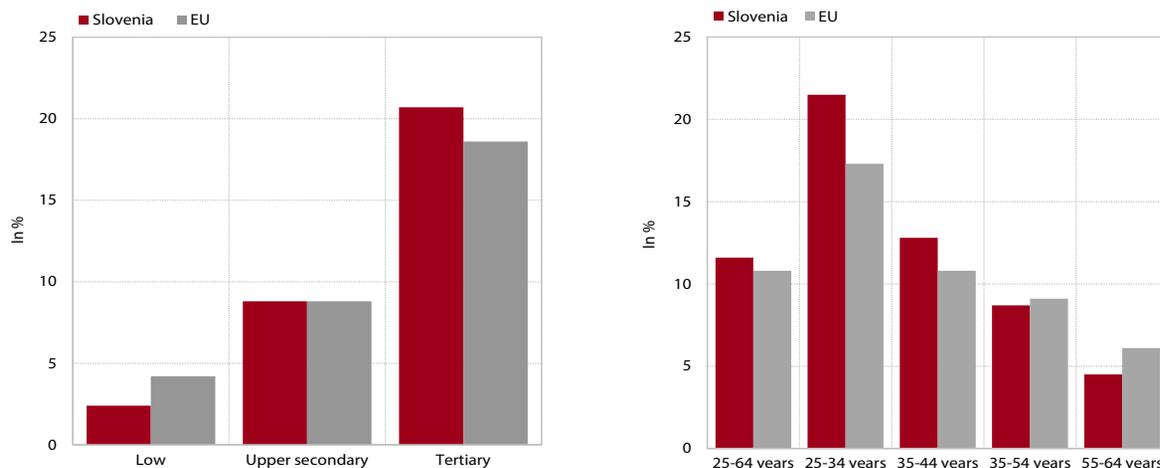
Education quality indicators have improved in recent years. Youth literacy and numeracy results, an indirect indicator of the quality of education, had been relatively poor in the past according to PISA results. But the last PISA study, in 2015, showed a significant improvement and Slovenia was above the EU average in reading, mathematics and science (see Indicator 2.3). However, in terms of inclusion in society and the workplace, poor performance of youths with a lower socio-economic status may pose a problem (data from PIRLS⁴¹ and PISA). Another indicator of the quality of education (formal and informal) are the writing, mathematics and digital skills of adults, which are low in particular among the less educated and the older population. Data from The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018 show Slovenia ranking around the average of EU countries in terms of quality of education for several years.

There are also certain mismatches between the knowledge and skills of the active working population and the demands of the work they are performing. Among the *active working population*, a quarter have an education that does not match the jobs they hold. The share of those underqualified has been declining, but the share of those who are overqualified for the job they are doing has been growing. Employees also lack certain knowledge and skills such as social and verbal skills, logical reasoning, and skills inherent to the workplace setting, including collaboration, flexibility, diligence and independence.⁴² A mismatch

⁴¹ International literacy survey conducted among fourth-year primary school pupils.

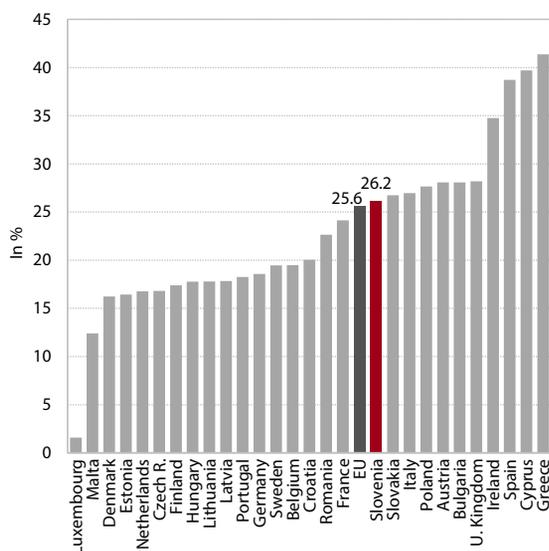
⁴² OECD Skills for Jobs Database, 2017.

Figure 13: Participation of adults (25–64) in lifelong learning, by education (left) and age (right), 2016, in %



Source: Eurostat Portal Page – Education and Training, 2018.

Figure 14: Share of employed people aged 25–34 with tertiary education overqualified for their job, 2016



Source: Eurostat Portal Page – Population and Social Conditions, 2018; calculations by IMAD.

in knowledge and skills also exists among *youths* transitioning from education to employment. The share of those aged 25–34 with an upper secondary education in jobs for which they are underqualified or overqualified has been declining, but in 2016 it still amounted to over 25%. On the other hand, the share of those with tertiary education in jobs for which they are overqualified has been increasing. The knowledge and skills mismatch reflects the structure of demand as the labour market recovered, demographic change, and past structure of enrolment at the upper secondary and tertiary levels, which had been insufficiently adapted to the needs of the labour market (see Indicators 2.4 and 2.5). In recent

years the responsiveness of the education system to the needs of the business sector has improved,⁴³ which may reduce the mismatch. However, a system of long-term monitoring of the required knowledge and skills is yet to be put in place and the country still lacks a strategy for attracting suitable staff from abroad.

Participation of adults (25–64) in lifelong learning is slightly above the EU average, but it has not been increasing. From the aspects of successful functioning of individuals in society and the adjustment of society to global trends such as digitalisation and population ageing, it is too low. What stands out in particular compared to the EU as a whole is the under-average participation of those with low educational attainment and the older population in lifelong learning, which has not been increasing in recent years. Some measures⁴⁴ to promote the lifelong education of adults were initiated in 2017, and the Adult Education Act⁴⁵ of 2018 is supposed to also exert a positive impact. In most private sector activities, participation of employed people in lifelong learning lags behind the public sector, which is hampering efforts to improve competitiveness gains, extend active working years, and reduce the knowledge

⁴³ With measures in vocational upper secondary education that include the introduction of apprenticeships in the school year 2017/2018, grants for occupations in high demand and training of teachers at companies. At the tertiary level, measures include the acquisition of practical experience at companies, transition from programme to institutional accreditation of higher education institutions and a system for monitoring graduate employability (under preparation); taking account of graduate employability in allocating funding for higher education institutions is also being considered.

⁴⁴ The programme Co-financing of Education and Training for Raising Educational Attainment and Acquiring Vocational Competences 2016–2018 and the measure Comprehensive Support for Active Ageing of the Labour Force at Companies (ASI).

⁴⁵ By establishing a network of public service providers in the area of adult education, the new Adult Education Act is intended to contribute to the creation of a stable and predictable financial environment and, by extension, increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning.

and skills mismatch. Another indicator showing that companies do not invest enough in their employees is the WEF study,⁴⁶ which places Slovenia 17th among EU countries. This data also shows a low degree of willingness to learn among employees.

⁴⁶ The Global Competitiveness Index, Historical Dataset 2007–2017 (WEF), 2017.

2.2 Culture and language as main factors of national identity

! Culture and language as main factors of national identity (development goal 4)

The goal involves developing and preserving national culture and the Slovenian language as factors of national identity, strengthening the country's identity, and promoting social and economic progress. Realisation of the goal will be supported with the promotion of participation in cultural activities, development and preservation of culture and cultural heritage, strengthening of cooperation between business and culture, and promotion of creativity and creative industries. Preservation of the Slovenian language and accessibility of culture will also hinge on digitalisation, while strengthening the country's identity will require international cultural collaboration, according to SDS 2030. Involvement in cultural activities contributes to the development of functional literacy, which is dealt with in development goal 2, and a healthy and active lifestyle, which is the focus of development goal 1.

! Performance indicators for development goal 4:

	Latest value		Target value for 2030
	Slovenia	EU average	
Visits to cultural events, per capita number of visits	6.0 (2016)	N/A	8
Share of cultural events performed abroad, in %	2.7 (2016)	N/A	3.5
Open source language resources and tools, number	79 (2017)	N/A	153

The ways culture and language impact national identity, the country's identity in the international arena, and social and economic progress are intertwined, exceedingly complex and typically felt over a longer time horizon, which limits the scope for comprehensive annual monitoring of this SDS development goal. Culture and language contribute to the recognition of our uniqueness, to the openness of society, and to the development of creativity, innovativeness and collaboration, and they are essential factors of economic and regional development.⁴⁷ Inherent to culture are elements such as language, customs and traditions, communication, and the way of life, thought and conduct. This shows its impacts are multi-faceted and intertwined, which is why they cannot be estimated purely with analysis of particular statistical indicators. There are a variety of data available in the cultural sphere, but analysis is largely restricted to trends in individual segments, as attempted below.

Cultural production is prolific across Slovenia, with Ljubljana standing out at the EU level. The number of cultural events is high, the physical accessibility of cultural institutions is comparable to the EU average, while Ljubljana places high by cultural vibrancy⁴⁸ in a ranking of European cities. On the other hand, the share of guest performances abroad is low, which may be an indirect indicator of the quality of cultural production. In cultural heritage, the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 represents an opportunity to enhance the economic potential of this field.⁴⁹ The situation in the

fine arts could improve next year with the percent for art scheme introduced in 2017 for fine arts and intermedia works exhibited in new or renovated public buildings.⁵⁰ Higher quality of domestic cultural production could also entice more foreign visitors and hence strengthen the economic potential of culture.

The trends in book production and general libraries are fairly unfavourable. The number of published books and brochures has been decreasing since 2012. The annual number of Slovenian works of fiction, which may contribute to national cultural identity awareness, fluctuated in 2009–2016 and accounted for only slightly over half of total published works of fiction. Per capita book sales have not been increasing, even though multiple measures have been adopted in recent years to improve the accessibility and sales of (quality) books.⁵¹ The publishing industry could benefit from Slovenia's selection as the honorary guest of the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2022, which may not only contribute to the success of Slovenian authors but also create an opportunity to leverage the potential of cultural tourism. Membership of general libraries, which perform an important role in promoting reading culture, has been decreasing, but members on average borrow more library materials than they did several years ago.

⁴⁷ Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, 2017.

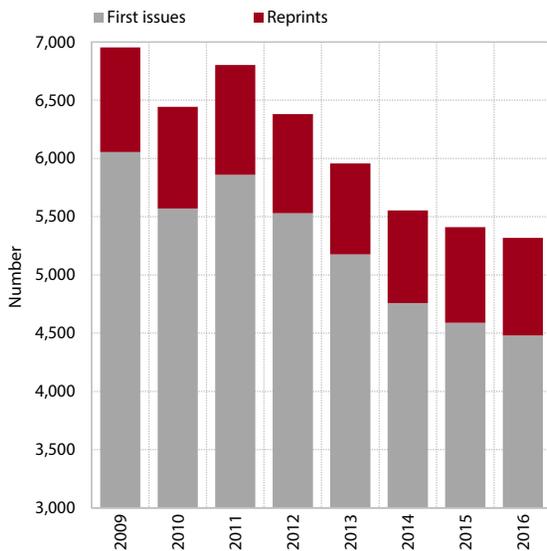
⁴⁸ Measured by cultural vibrancy, it ranks fourth among 36 cities of similar size (The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor, 2017).

⁴⁹ Srakar, 2018.

⁵⁰ The Act Amending the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (ZUJIK-G) of 2017 introduced a percent for arts in public investment projects of 1% or 1.25% (depending on size of investment) for fine arts and inter-media works in new public buildings.

⁵¹ These measures include the introduction of a portal for monitoring the single price of books, the national Growing with the Book campaign, the creation of the Portal Closer to Books and the Portal Revije. In 2016, 2.8 books per capita were sold.

Figure 15: Number of published books (works), first issues and reprints



Source: National and University Library, 2017.

One of the factors that affect Slovenian language and cultural heritage is digitalisation. Digitalisation facilitates the accessibility, preservation and development of the Slovenian language. One major project concerning the accessibility of dictionary information for the general public is the portal Fran,⁵² which is recording a rapid growth in search queries. The National and University Library has also been stepping up activities concerning the archiving of websites as a means of permanently preserving Slovenian cultural heritage on the World Wide Web. Meanwhile the digital library of Slovenia (D-LIB.SI)⁵³ represents an important addition to brick-and-mortar libraries. The scope of digitalisation of library materials was lower than planned in 2016, but the number of queries was among the highest so far.

General government expenditure on culture and the share of the active working population in the sector are high by international standards. Expenditure on culture has been decreasing in real terms for several years, in particular due to a substantial decline in investments. In 2016 it amounted to 1.0% of GDP,⁵⁴ well above the 0.6% of GDP average recorded in the EU in 2015. There are no comprehensive data on private funding of culture, but expenditure for which data are available (exploitation of tax breaks by legal

entities and income tax donations) is low and does not significantly contribute to improving the financial state of organisations.⁵⁵ The share of the active working population employed in culture has increased since the start of the crisis and is high by international standards.⁵⁶ The number increased the most in the performing and visual arts, while dropping significantly in publishing and printing. Culture stands out in terms of its high share of the self-employed, which was at just under a third of the total active working population in the sector.

⁵² The Fran portal combines dictionaries, Slovenian language resources and portals created at the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language, along with dictionaries digitised by the institute. It also allows users to search selected Slovenian language corpora.

⁵³ The Digital Library of Slovenia is an online library of texts, images and multimedia.

⁵⁴ According to Cofog methodology. It includes expenditure on cultural services (0.3% of GDP), radio, television and publishing (0.7% of GDP). The RTV Slovenija licence fee is also included.

⁵⁵ Srakar, 2018.

⁵⁶ According to the Labour Force Survey, it was 3.5% in Slovenia in 2015 (EU: 2.9%).