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**The EU Environmental Implementation Review
Country Report - SLOVENIA**

Accompanying the document

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the
European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

**The EU Environmental Implementation Review: Common Challenges and how to
combine efforts to deliver better results**

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Executive summary

About the Environmental Implementation Review

In May 2016, the Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), a two-year cycle of analysis, dialogue and collaboration to improve the implementation of existing EU environmental policy and legislation¹. As a first step, the Commission drafted 28 reports describing the main challenges and opportunities on environmental implementation for each Member State. These reports are meant to stimulate a positive debate both on shared environmental challenges for the EU, as well as on the most effective ways to address the key implementation gaps. The reports rely on the detailed sectoral implementation reports collected or issued by the Commission under specific environmental legislation as well as the 2015 State of the Environment Report and other reports by the European Environment Agency. These reports will not replace the specific instruments to ensure compliance with the EU legal obligations.

The reports will broadly follow the outline of the 7th Environmental Action Programme² and refer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³ to the extent to which they reflect the existing obligations and policy objectives of EU environmental law⁴.

The main challenges have been selected by taking into account factors such as the importance or the gravity of the environmental implementation issue in the light of the impact on the quality of life of the citizens, the distance to target, and financial implications.

The reports accompany the Communication "*The EU Environmental Implementation Review 2016: Common challenges and how to combine efforts to deliver better results*", which identifies challenges that are common to several Member States, provides preliminary conclusions on possible root causes of implementation gaps and proposes joint actions to deliver better results. It also groups in its Annex the actions proposed in each country report to improve implementation at national level.

General profile

Slovenia's diverse and rich natural environment is its key natural resource. It also has the biggest share of land area covered by Natura 2000 and is one of the most forested countries in the EU. Well-preserved nature delivers multiple socio-economic benefits. However, it requires a good planning system and environmental infrastructure to provide necessary safeguards.

As regards compliance with the EU environmental legislation, Slovenia still has a relatively high number of environmental infringement cases. To reverse this situation, it should address its key non-compliance cases.

Main Challenges

The three main challenges with regard to implementation of EU environmental policy and law in Slovenia are:

- ❖ Streamlining the legal framework related to planning and environmental assessments by ensuring that EU environmental legislation is respected, while administrative burden and barriers to investments are reduced.
- ❖ Preserving Slovenia's extensive Natura 2000 network by integrating economic and nature considerations in the planning and environmental assessment system.
- ❖ Prioritising waste-water investments to fulfil Slovenia's Accession Treaty obligations.

Main Opportunities

Slovenia could perform better on topics where there is already a good knowledge base and good practices. This applies in particular to:

- ❖ Excelling further in waste management to become one of the EU's top-performing Member States.
- ❖ Accelerating a shift towards a circular economy as part of implementing Slovenian's Framework Programme for the Transition to a Green Economy and the Smart Specialisation Strategy.
- ❖ Boosting knowledge on circular economy among small and medium sized-enterprises (SMEs) and creating investment opportunities for such businesses.

¹ Communication "Delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular Environmental Implementation Review" ([COM/2016/316 final](#)).

² Decision No. 1386/2013/EU of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environmental Action Programme to 2020 "[Living well, within the limits of our planet](#)".

³ United Nations, 2015. [The Sustainable Development Goals](#)

⁴ This EIR report does not cover climate change, chemicals and energy.

Points of Excellence

Where Slovenia leads in environmental implementation, it could share its approaches more widely among other countries. Good examples are:

- ❖ The best performing EU-13 Member State in terms of municipal waste recycling with its state-of-the-art regional waste management centre in Ljubljana.
- ❖ EU-wide, Slovenia boasts one of the highest contributions of revenues from environmental tax.

Part I: Thematic Areas

1. Turning the EU into a circular, resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy

Developing a circular economy and improving resource efficiency

The 2015 Circular Economy Package emphasizes the need to move towards a lifecycle-driven 'circular' economy, with a cascading use of resources and residual waste that is close to zero. This can be facilitated by the development of, and access to, innovative financial instruments and funding for eco-innovation.

SDG 8 invites countries to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. SDG 9 highlights the need to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. SDG 12 encourages countries to achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources by 2030.

Measures towards a circular economy

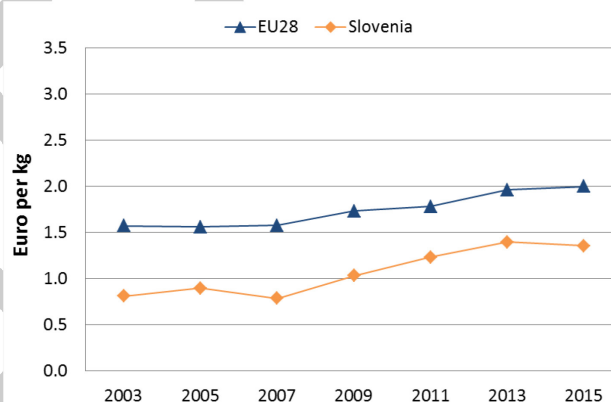
Transforming our economies from linear to circular offers an opportunity to reinvent them and make them more sustainable and competitive. This will stimulate investments and bring both short and long-term benefits for the economy, environment and citizens alike⁵.

The resource productivity (how efficiently the economy uses material resources to produce wealth)⁶ has overall improved in Slovenia over the last ten years. However, it is still below the EU average, especially contrasted with the EU-15. In 2015, it reached 1.35 EUR/kg compared to the EU average of 2.0 EUR/kg as shown in Figure 1.

Slovenia faces numerous opportunities and challenges in the transition towards a circular economy and in eco-innovation development. On one hand, it is the third most forested country in Europe, abundant with natural capital, and endowed with a high level of biodiversity and rich natural habitats. On the other hand, economic and systemic challenges still remain and do not facilitate and encourage the transition towards a circular economy.

By announcing circular economy and green development as Slovenia's strategic objectives, the Government has initiated the first steps in creating the needed political framework.

Figure 1: Resource productivity 2003-15⁷



As part of its circular economy agenda, Slovenia adopted the Framework Programme for the Transition to a Green Economy⁸ in October 2015. It sets strategic guidelines for developing new green technologies, jobs and the promotion of the Slovenian knowledge. Its measures cover nine areas: sustainable resource management, green growth, green jobs, green products and services, green tax reform, sustainable urban development, green public sector, green economy, and green practices in agriculture.

Slovenia also has a well-developed strategic approach to embedding a circular economy within the European Structural and Investment Funds as part of the national Smart Specialisation Strategy⁹.

Despite a strong support to the circular economy in the Government's strategic documents, it seems to be still challenging to operationalise this concept. The gap between the declaratory and actual support, together with the lack of financial incentives, was noted by the

⁵ European Commission, 2015. [Proposed Circular Economy Package](#)

⁶ Resource productivity is defined as the ratio between gross domestic product (GDP) and domestic material consumption (DMC).

⁷ Eurostat, [Resource productivity](#), accessed October 2016.

⁸ Slovenian Government, 2015, [Framework Programme for the Transition to a Green Economy](#)

⁹ Slovenian Government, 2015. [Slovenia's Smart Specialisation Strategy](#).

private sector as the main barrier in the transition towards a circular economy (Vovk, 2016)¹⁰.

SMEs and resource efficiency

SMEs provide 63% of value added and nearly 73% of employment. Slovenian companies in general are not highly competitive and do not have a very high value added per employee, or material and energy productivity.

This situation could be improved without much investment. As the Flash 426 Eurobarometer on "SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets"¹¹ shows, a quarter (25%) of Slovenian SMEs taking resource efficiency actions did not have to invest any of their turnover on resource efficiency in the last two years (EU average 26%); whereas 58% of SMEs invested up to 5% (EU28 average 50%). In terms of type of resource-efficiency actions, 33% offered green products and services (EU28 average 26%), 44% took measures to save energy (EU28 average 59%), 40% minimised waste (EU28 average 60%), 29% saved water (EU28 average 44%) and 45% saved materials (EU28 average 54%). From a circular economy perspective, 30% of SMEs took measures to recycle by reusing material or waste within the company (EU28 average 40%), 19% designed products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse (EU28 average 22%) and 20% were able to sell their scrap material to another company (EU28 average 25%).

The above measures allowed the reduction of production costs in 61% of the Slovenia's SMEs (EU28 average 45%).

The same Eurobarometer shows that Slovenia has an average number of 2.0 full time green employees per SME (EU28 average 1.7)¹².

Eco-innovation

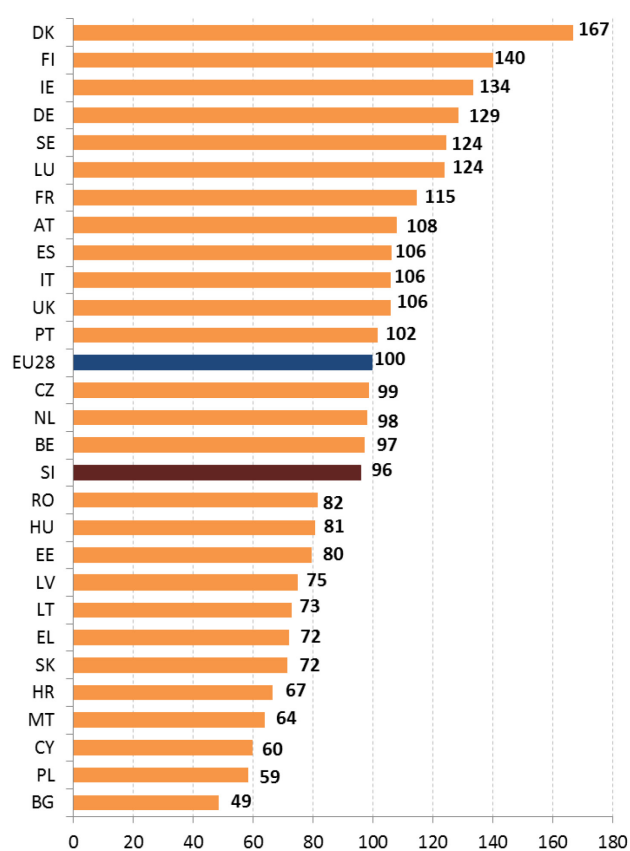
The overall Eco-IS composite index 2015 for Slovenia is 96 (Figure 2), placing Slovenia on the 16th place in the EU ranking of eco-innovative countries, with Denmark, Finland, and Ireland as the leaders. In comparison to the 2014 and 2013 scoreboard, Slovenia's composite index has increased. Namely, in 2014 and 2013 Slovenia performed below the EU average but with an index of 74.3 in 2013 and 90.7 in 2014. Slovenia ranked 15th and 16th in 2013 and 2014 respectively (though caution must be used when comparing 2015 and 2014 indices with

2013 indices, as the scoreboard is being reviewed constantly, and potential new data sources to improve the indicators in the scoreboard are screened in every round of updates).

Slovenia has 10 EMAS registered organisations, which is a quite low with respect to the total of 4034 organisations that hold a registration. There have not been any changes in the number of registered organisation since October 2015.

Concerning the EU Eco-label, Slovenia has 14 licenses, which is quite a low number compared to the 1875 total number of licenses.

Figure 2: Eco-Innovation Index 2015 (EU=100)¹³



Suggested action

- Decrease the discrepancies between the adopted and implemented measures.

Waste management

Turning waste into a resource requires:

- Full implementation of Union waste legislation, which includes the waste hierarchy; the need to ensure separate collection of waste; the landfill diversion targets etc.
- Reducing per capita waste generation and waste

¹⁰ Vovk M., Reuse Ormož, 2016, Interview on barriers and drivers to circular economy and eco-innovation in Slovenia.

¹¹ European Commission, 2015. [Flash 426 Eurobarometer](#) "SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets".

¹² The Flash 426 Eurobarometer "SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets" defines "green job" as a job that directly deals with information, technologies, or materials that preserves or restores environmental quality. This requires specialised skills, knowledge, training, or experience (e.g. verifying compliance with environmental legislation, monitoring resource efficiency within the company, promoting and selling green products and services).

¹³ [Eco-innovation Observatory](#): Eco-Innovation scoreboard 2015.

generation in absolute terms.

- Limiting energy recovery to non-recyclable materials and phasing out landfilling of recyclable or recoverable waste.

SDG 12 invites countries to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse, by 2030.

The EU's approach to waste management is based on the "waste hierarchy" which sets out an order of priority when shaping waste policy and managing waste at the operational level: prevention, (preparing for) reuse, recycling, recovery and, as the least preferred option, disposal (which includes landfilling and incineration without energy recovery). The progress towards reaching recycling targets and the adoption of adequate WMP/WPP¹⁴ should be the key items to measure the performance of Member States. This section focuses on management of municipal waste for which EU law sets mandatory recycling targets.

Slovenia made very good progress as concerns waste management in the past years. According to the 2014 data reported to Eurostat, its municipal waste¹⁵ recycling rates are among the highest in the EU (61%), and have more than doubled since 2007. However, this recycling rate is calculated based on the amount of waste treated and for Slovenia the gap between waste generated and treated is very large (approx. 40% in 2014) *due to incomplete coverage of outputs from pre-treatment of waste*¹⁶. If the recycling rate was calculated based on the amount of waste generated, it would be 36%.

Nevertheless, despite the data uncertainty, Slovenia can still be a useful example to other Member States, showing how to improve waste management in a relatively short time-frame.

Figure 3: Municipal waste by treatment in Slovenia 2007-14¹⁷

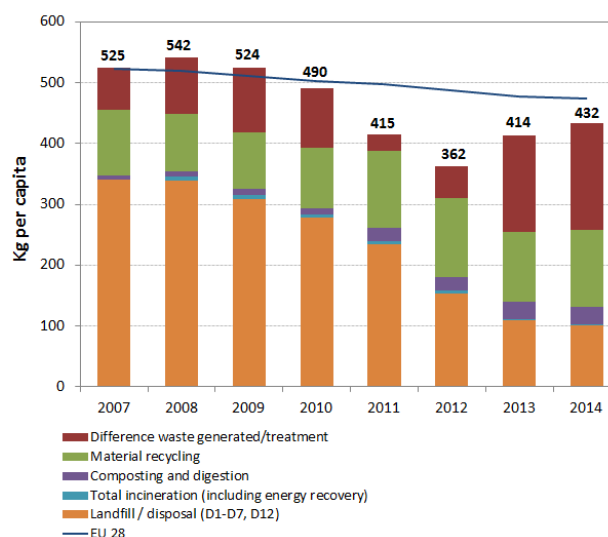
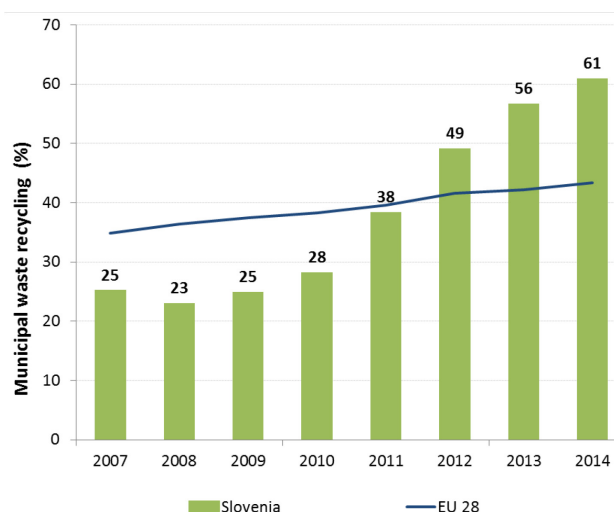


Figure 3 depicts the municipal waste by treatment in terms of kg per capita. It shows an increase of recycling rates, composting and incineration, and a decrease in landfilling.

This is mainly due to the country's overall effort to change their waste management policy and move from a nearly all-landfilling (landfilling rate was 75% in 2007) towards predominantly recycling society. According to the latest Eurostat data (2014), the landfilling rate is 39%.

As shown in Figure 4, Slovenia's material recycling rate is 61% if waste treated is taken as denominator (49% if generation is taken as denominator), Slovenia seems to be on the right path towards meeting the '2020' 50% recycling target¹⁸.

Figure 4: Recycling rate of municipal waste 2007-14¹⁹



¹⁴ Waste Management Plans/Waste Prevention Programmes.

¹⁵ Municipal waste consists of waste collected by or on behalf of municipal authorities, or directly by the private sector (business or private non-profit institutions) not on behalf of municipalities.

¹⁶ The issue has been spotted by the Slovenian Court of Auditors which suggested that the data is not reliable due to inaccurate records being kept by the ministries.

¹⁷ Eurostat, [Municipal waste and treatment, by type of treatment method](#), accessed October 2016

¹⁸ Member States may choose a different method than the one used by ESTAT (and referred to in this report) to calculate their recycling rates and track compliance with the 2020 target of 50% recycling of municipal waste.

¹⁹ Eurostat, [Recycling rate of municipal waste](#), accessed October 2016

However, recent studies²⁰ show that the amount of waste generated by municipalities and waste management performance in individual municipalities vary considerably. To a certain extent, they depend on the lifestyle and awareness of residents, the available capacities for waste disposal, and the willingness of municipalities to find new solutions. On average, 432 kg of municipal waste is produced per person, per year in Slovenia — more than one kg per day. However, large quantities of waste are not necessarily related to the urban way of life. More than 450 kg of waste per resident is generated in seven out of eleven municipalities, but also in four municipalities with less than 2,000 residents²¹.

In 2013, Slovenia adopted a WMP for the municipal waste. However, this Plan did not cover other waste streams. Slovenia also failed to adopt a WPP by 12 December 2013, as required by the Waste Framework Directive. Following an infringement procedure, Slovenia adopted an integrated WMP and a WPP on 30 June 2016.



Irrespective of delays in adoption of plans, there have been several positive developments in waste management.

For example, the national legislation for separate bio-waste collection is in place. In this respect, many municipalities and communities introduced a frequency of collection and door to door collection systems. Many local authorities have put in place collection systems that exceed the requirements of the national legislation. NGOs have been very active in the waste sector; as a result, a number of municipalities and communities (including the city of Ljubljana) have developed Zero Waste policies, with more working towards the same achievement. A recent study²² assessing separate

collection in EU capitals rated Ljubljana as the best performing capital in the EU.

Pay as you throw systems were also introduced. Although the adopted approach is a relatively simple one, and it applies charges to the residual and bio-waste bins.

As regards the waste infrastructure, the Regional Waste Management Centre in Ljubljana (RCERO Ljubljana²³) is one of the most modern waste treatment facilities in Europe. It is also the biggest environmental project in Slovenia in terms of its budget (co-financed by the Cohesion Policy) and waste treatment capacity. It comprises 37 municipalities and serves as a good practice example of cooperation among municipalities. It would further contribute to diverting waste from landfilling.

It is projected that the full implementation of the existing legislation could create more than 2100 jobs in Slovenia and increase the annual turnover of the waste sector by over EUR 220 million. Moving towards the targets of the Roadmap on resource efficiency could create over 2600 additional jobs and increase the annual turnover of the waste sector by over EUR 270 million²⁴.

Suggested action

- Introduce economic instruments to increase the costs of residual waste treatment, e.g. by increasing the current rate of landfill tax, or by introducing a residual waste tax on the other non-recycled outputs from MBT systems (including outputs to thermal treatment).
- Improve data on waste management- including issues of consistency between different sources and a large gap between waste generated and treated.
- Extend and improve the cost-effectiveness, monitoring and transparency of existing EPR schemes and eliminate free-riding (situations where some producers do not adequately comply with their obligations under EPR).

²⁰ European Commission, 2016. [Support to Implementation – The Commission helps eight Member States to improve their municipal waste management, Slovenia country factsheet](#)

²¹ Dvorsak S., Ekart J., Kroslin T., 2011. [Balkwaste –National Report Slovenia](#)

²² BIPRO, 2015. [Assessment of separate collection schemes in the 28 capitals of the EU](#)

²³ [RCERO Ljubljana, 2015](#)

²⁴ Bio Intelligence service, 2011. [Implementing EU Waste legislation for Green Growth](#), study for the European Commission.

2. Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital

Nature and Biodiversity

The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to halt the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2020, restore ecosystems and their services in so far as feasible, and step up efforts to avert global biodiversity loss. The EU Birds and Habitats Directives aim at achieving favourable conservation status of protected species and habitats.

SDG 14 requires countries to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, while SDG 15 requires countries to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The 1992 EU Habitats Directive and the 1979 Birds Directive are the cornerstone of the European legislation aimed at the conservation of the EU's wildlife. Natura 2000, the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, is the key instrument to achieve and implement the Directives' objectives to ensure the long-term protection, conservation and survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats and the ecosystems they underpin.

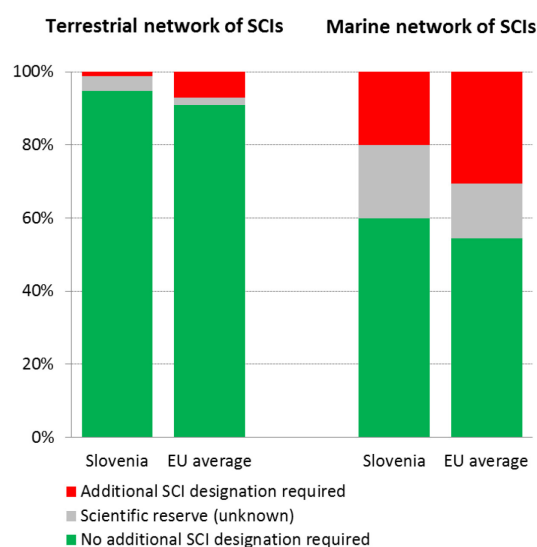
The adequate designation of protected sites as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive and as Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive is a key milestone towards meeting the objectives of the Directives. The results of Habitats Directive Article 17 and Birds Directive Article 12 reports and the progress towards adequate Sites of Community Importance (SCI)-SPA and SAC designation²⁵ both in land and at sea, should be the key items to measure the performance of Member States.

Slovenia designated the Natura 2000 network in 2004 upon the accession to the EU, with subsequent amendments. By early 2016, Slovenia has designated 355 Natura 2000 sites. They include 324 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) under the Habitats Directive and 31 Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive, together covering 37.9% of the land area (which is the largest percentage of MS land area in the EU, EU average 18.1%) and 10.6 km² of marine waters.

²⁵ Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) are designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive whereas Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) are designated pursuant to the Birds Directive; figures of coverage do not add up due to the fact that some SCIs and SPAs overlap. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) means a SCI designated by the Member States.

The latest assessment of the SCI part of the Natura 2000 network shows that there are still some insufficiencies in the designation for the marine components of the network²⁶ (see Figure 5²⁷). This problem is being followed up by the Commission's infringement action.

Figure 5: Sufficiency assessment of SCI networks in Slovenia based on the situation until December 2013 (%)²⁸



All sites have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), but the implementation on the ground and enforcement through sanctions and inspections are still an issue of concern. For example, in the recently adopted management plan for the Triglav National Park, the only national park in Slovenia and one of the oldest in the EU, and which is to a large extent covered by the Natura 2000, the inefficiency of the inspections and inefficient implementation of the

²⁶ For each Member State, the Commission assesses whether the species and habitat types on Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive, are sufficiently represented by the sites designated to date. This is expressed as a percentage of species and habitats for which further areas need to be designated in order to complete the network in that country. [The current data](#), which were assessed in 2014-2015, reflect the situation up until December 2013.

²⁷ The percentages in Figure 5 refer to percentages of the total number of assessments (one assessment covering 1 species or 1 habitat in a given biogeographical region with the Member State); if a habitat type or a species occurs in more than 1 Biogeographic region within a given Member State, there will be as many individual assessments as there are Biogeographic regions with an occurrence of that species or habitat in this Member State.

²⁸ European Commission internal assessment.

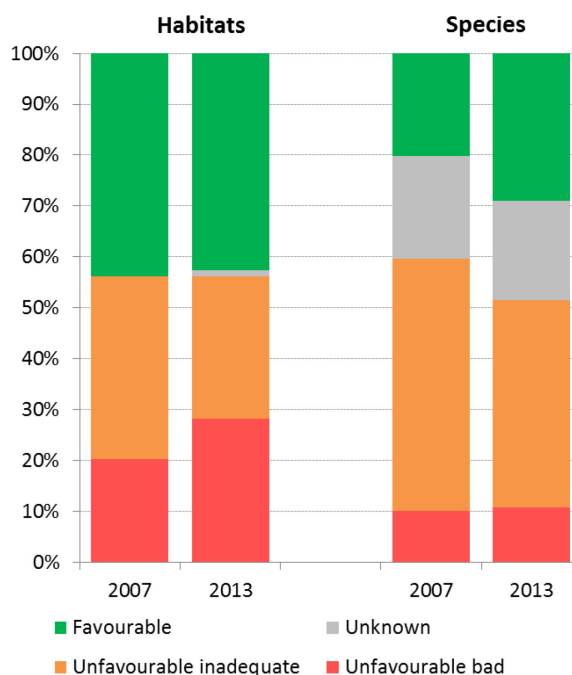
legislation were identified among main challenges²⁹. In order to ensure the effective management of Natura 2000 sites, the management plan includes a number of activities such as regular monitoring, drafting of an action plan for biodiversity conservation and implementation of direct control in nature. However the success of the implementation of these measures is yet to be judged.

As regards conservation objectives and measures, Slovenia has used LIFE programme co-financing to set up the management framework for these sites – i.e. Natura 2000 Management Programme for 2014-2020.

The complaints regarding the implementation of the nature directives mostly concern the degradation of designated sites (for example due to agricultural activities not in line with conservation objectives of the sites) and bad quality of appropriate assessments under Article 6(3).

The lack of awareness among some stakeholder groups and sectors about the requirements of EU nature legislation and the benefits of Natura 2000 network, as well as the lack of willingness to support effective integration with other policies, are major obstacles to achieving the objectives of the nature directives and biodiversity targets in Slovenia.

Figure 6: Conservation status of habitats and species in Slovenia in 2007/2013 (%)³⁰



According to the latest report on the conservation status of habitats and species covered by the Habitats Directive (covering the period 2007-12)³¹, only 43% of the assessments for habitat types and 29% for species indicate a favourable conservation status³² (EU 27: 16%). Furthermore, 28% are considered to be unfavourable-inadequate (EU27: 47%) and 28% are unfavourable – bad (EU27: 30%). As for the species, 29% of the assessments were favourable in 2013 (EU 27: 23%) 41% at unfavourable-inadequate (EU27: 42%) and 11% unfavourable-bad status (EU27: 18%). This is depicted in Figure 6³³. There is an increase in number of habitat types in the unfavourable-bad status and evidence that agriculture is posing increasing threats to habitats.

According to the latest report on the implementation of the Birds Directive³⁴, 24% of breeding bird species and 15% of wintering birds have a decreasing short-term population trends. This is depicted in Figure 7.

²⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 34 of 11.5.2016. [Regulation 1462](#)

³⁰ These figures show the percentage of biogeographical assessments in each category of conservation status for habitats and species (one assessment covering 1 species or 1 habitat in a given biographical region with the Member State), respectively. The information is based on Article 17 of the Habitats Directive reporting - [national summary of Slovenia](#)

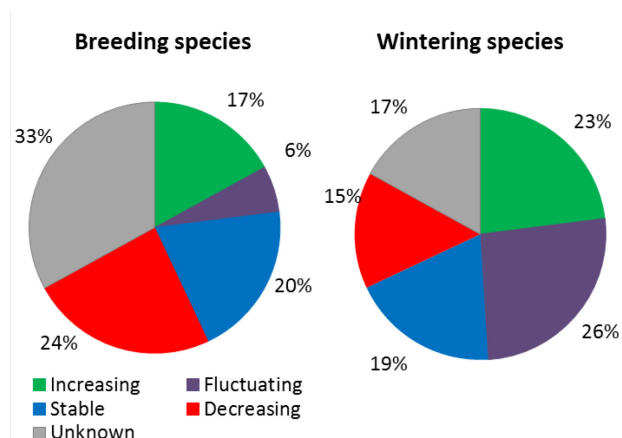
³¹ The core of the 'Article 17' report is the assessment of conservation status of the habitats and species targeted by the Habitats Directive.

³² Conservation status is assessed using a standard methodology as being either 'favourable', 'unfavourable-inadequate' and 'unfavourable-bad', based on four parameters as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive.

³³ Please note that a direct comparison between 2007 and 2013 data is complicated by the fact that Bulgaria and Romania were not covered by the 2007 reporting cycle, that the 'unknown' assessments have strongly diminished particularly for species, and that some reported changes are not genuine as they result from improved data / monitoring methods.

³⁴ Article 12 of the Birds Directive requires Member States to report about the progress made with the implementation of the Birds Directive.

Figure 7: Short-term population trend of breeding and wintering bird species in Slovenia in 2012 (%)³⁵



Suggested action

- Complete the Natura 2000 designation process (in the marine environment) and put in place the necessary conservation measures which correspond to the conservation objectives of the sites, ensuring adequate resources for their implementation in order to maintain/restore species and habitats of community interest to a favourable conservation status.
- Implement fully conservation measures in all Natura 2000 sites, with special attention to adapting agricultural practices within the sites where conservation status of habitats and/or species are experiencing a decline due to agricultural activities.
- Build capacity of the competent authorities (central, regional, site management bodies) for the management of Natura 2000 sites and implementation of nature directives. Improve the quality and availability of data on the conservation status of habitats and species. Strengthen communication with stakeholders.

Estimating Natural Capital

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 calls on the Member States to map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services³⁶ in their national territory by 2014, assess the economic value of such services, and promote the integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national level by 2020.

Slovenia has only joined the EU initiative on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES)³⁷ in 2016. The work on capital accounting is at an initial stage of development.

Suggested action

³⁵ Article 12 of the Birds Directive reporting - [national summary of Slovenia](#)

³⁶ Ecosystem services are benefits provided by nature such as food, clean water and pollination on which human society depends.

³⁷ BISE, [MAES –related developments in Slovenia](#)

- Engage and provide government support for the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services, valuation work and develop natural capital accounting systems.

Green Infrastructure

The EU strategy on green infrastructure³⁸ promotes the incorporation of green infrastructure into related plans and programmes to help overcome fragmentation of habitats and preserve or restore ecological connectivity, enhance ecosystem resilience and thereby ensure the continued provision of ecosystem services.

Green Infrastructure provides ecological, economic and social benefits through natural solutions. It helps to understand the value of the benefits that nature provides to human society and to mobilise investments to sustain and enhance them.

The mainstreaming of the Green Infrastructure objectives into sectoral planning is still insufficient, although Green Infrastructure topics (green areas, restoration and preservation of landscapes, etc.) are explicitly highlighted in both the Spatial Development Strategy and the Slovenian Communication on Climate Change. The current low uptake of Green Infrastructure in the agricultural land, combined with the low uptake of the existing agri-environment measures, is a barrier to effective preservation of the lowland and open area biodiversity. There seems to be also a lack of understanding of the potential benefits from the Green Infrastructure and the enhanced quality of life it could guarantee, if adequately managed.



Soil protection

The EU Soil Thematic Strategy highlights the need to ensure a sustainable use of soils. This requires the prevention of further soil degradation and the preservation of its functions, as well as the restoration of

³⁸ European Union, Green Infrastructure — Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital, [COM/2013/0249](#)

degraded soils. The 2011 Road Map for Resource-Efficient Europe, part of Europe 2020 Strategy provides that by 2020, EU policies take into account their direct and indirect impact on land use in the EU and globally, and the rate of land take is on track with an aim to achieve no net land take by 2050.

SDG 15 requires countries to combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world by 2030.

Soil is an important resource for life and the economy. It provides key ecosystem services including the provision of food, fibre and biomass for renewable energy, carbon sequestration, water purification and flood regulation, the provision of raw and building material. Soil is a finite and extremely fragile resource and increasingly degrading in the EU. Land taken by urban development and infrastructure is highly unlikely to be reverted to its natural state; it consumes mostly agricultural land and increases fragmentation of habitats. Soil protection is indirectly addressed in existing EU policies in areas such as agriculture, water, waste, chemicals, and prevention of industrial pollution.

Artificial land cover is used for settlements, production systems and infrastructure. It may itself be split between built-up areas (buildings) and non-built-up areas (such as linear transport networks and associated areas).

The percentage of built up land in 2009 was 1.85%, below the EU average (3.23%)³⁹.

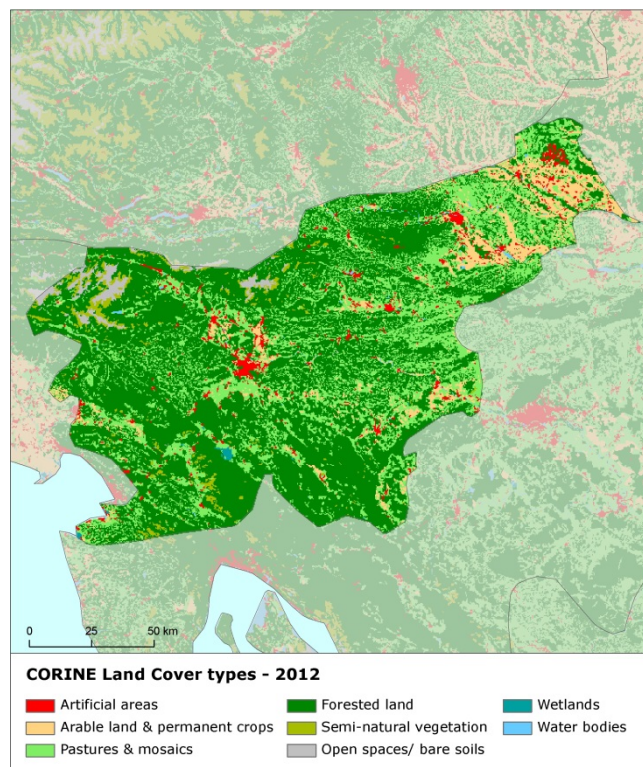
The annual land take rate (growth of artificial areas) as provided by CORINE Land Cover was 0.15% in Slovenia over the period 2006-12 compared to the EU average (0.41%). It represented 90 hectares per year⁴⁰.

The soil water erosion rate in 2010 was 7.45 tonnes per ha per year, well above EU-28 average (2.46 tonnes)⁴¹.

There are still not EU-wide datasets enabling the provision of benchmark indicators for soil organic matter decline, contaminated sites, pressures on soil biology and diffuse pollution. An updated inventory and assessment of soil protection policy instruments in Slovenia and other EU Member States is being performed by the EU Expert Group on Soil Protection.

Figure 8 shows the different land cover types in Slovenia in 2012.

Figure 8: Land Cover types in Slovenia in 2012⁴²



Marine protection

The EU Coastal and Marine Policy and legislation require that by 2020 the impact of pressures on marine waters is reduced to achieve or maintain good environmental status and coastal zones are managed sustainably.

SDG 14 requires countries to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)⁴³ aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 by providing an ecosystem approach to the management of human activities with impact on the marine environment. The Directive requires Member States to develop and implement a marine strategy for their marine waters, and cooperate with Member States sharing the same marine region or subregion.

As part of their marine strategies, Member States had to make an initial assessment of their marine waters, determine GES⁴⁴ and establish environmental targets by

³⁹ European Environment Agency, 2016. [Imperviousness and imperviousness change](#)

⁴⁰ European Environment Agency [Draft results of CORINE Land Cover \(CLC\) inventory 2012](#); mean annual land take 2006-12 as a % of 2006 artificial land.

⁴¹ Eurostat, [Soil water erosion rate](#), Figure 2, accessed November 2016

⁴² European Environment Agency, Land cover 2012 and changes country analysis [publication forthcoming]

⁴³ European Union, [Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC](#)

⁴⁴ The MSFD defines Good Environmental Status (GES) in Article 3 as: "The environmental status of marine waters where these provide

July 2012. They also had to establish monitoring programmes for the on-going assessment of their marine waters by July 2014. The next element of their marine strategy is the establishment of a Programme of Measures (2016). The Commission assesses whether these elements constitute an appropriate framework to meet the requirements of the MSFD.

Slovenian marine waters are part of the Mediterranean sea marine region and of the Adriatic Sea sub-region. Slovenia is party to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)⁴⁵. The Mediterranean Sea region has been identified by the EEA in its 2015 State of the Environment report as one of the main climate change hotspots (i.e. one of the most responsive areas to climate change) due to water scarcity, concentration of economic activities in coastal areas, and reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture. The introduction of invasive alien species presents an important threat in the Mediterranean Sea Region with the number of invasive alien species increasing significantly since 1970. Finally, the unique biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea Region is also threatened by pollution from land-based sources, such as discharges of excess nutrients and hazardous substances, marine litter, over-fishing, and degradation of critical habitats.

Slovenia's determination of GES in 2013 was generally vague and in most cases not fully consistent with the environmental targets that were set. The list of species selected by Slovenia as covered by their GES definition included only protected/ listed habitats, it did not cover fish or cephalopods. Not all descriptors were sufficiently defined and were high-level, lacked thresholds or reference values, and did not go beyond existing legislation⁴⁶. Slovenia has since then been working with other Mediterranean countries within the Barcelona Convention to correct some of these deficiencies.

However, it is still too early to say whether Slovenian waters are in a good state as there were weaknesses in identifying what GES is in the first place.

Slovenia has established a monitoring programme of its marine waters in 2014. However, the monitoring programme needs further refinement. In particular, it is necessary to develop approaches for assessing impacts from the main pressures, in order to lead to improved and more conclusive assessment results for 2018, when the next assessment of marine waters is due.

ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive”.

⁴⁵ http://195.97.36.231/dbases/webdocs/BCP/bc95_Eng_p.pdf

⁴⁶ Report from the Commission "The first phase of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) - The European Commission's assessment and guidance" [COM\(2014\)097](#)

In 2012, Slovenian marine protected areas covered 229.9 square kilometers of its marine waters in the Adriatic Sea⁴⁷.

In its reports on the implementation of the MSFD⁴⁸, the Commission provided guidance to assist Slovenia in its implementation of the MSFD.

Suggested action

- Continue work to improve the definitions of GES in particular for biodiversity descriptors, including through regional cooperation by using the work of the relevant Regional Sea Convention.
- Address knowledge gaps.
- Continue to integrate monitoring programmes already existing under other EU legislation and to implement joint monitoring programmes developed at (sub)regional level.
- Enhance comparability and consistency of monitoring methods within the country's marine region.
- Urgently report and implement the national programme of measures⁴⁹.
- Ensure that the monitoring programme is implemented without delay, addresses all descriptors and is appropriate to monitor progress towards GES.

⁴⁷ 2012 Data provided by the European Environmental – Not published.

⁴⁸ Report from the Commission "The first phase of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) - The European Commission's assessment and guidance" [COM\(2014\)097](#) and Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Commission Report assessing Member States' monitoring programmes under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (COM(2017)3 and SWD(2017)1 final)

⁴⁹ As of 7.10.2016, SI had not yet reported its programme of measures to the Commission.

3. Ensuring citizens' health and quality of life

Air quality

The EU Clean Air Policy and legislation require that air quality in the Union is significantly improved, moving closer to the WHO recommended levels. Air pollution and its impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity should be further reduced with the long-term aim of not exceeding critical loads and levels. This requires strengthening efforts to reach full compliance with Union air quality legislation and defining strategic targets and actions beyond 2020.

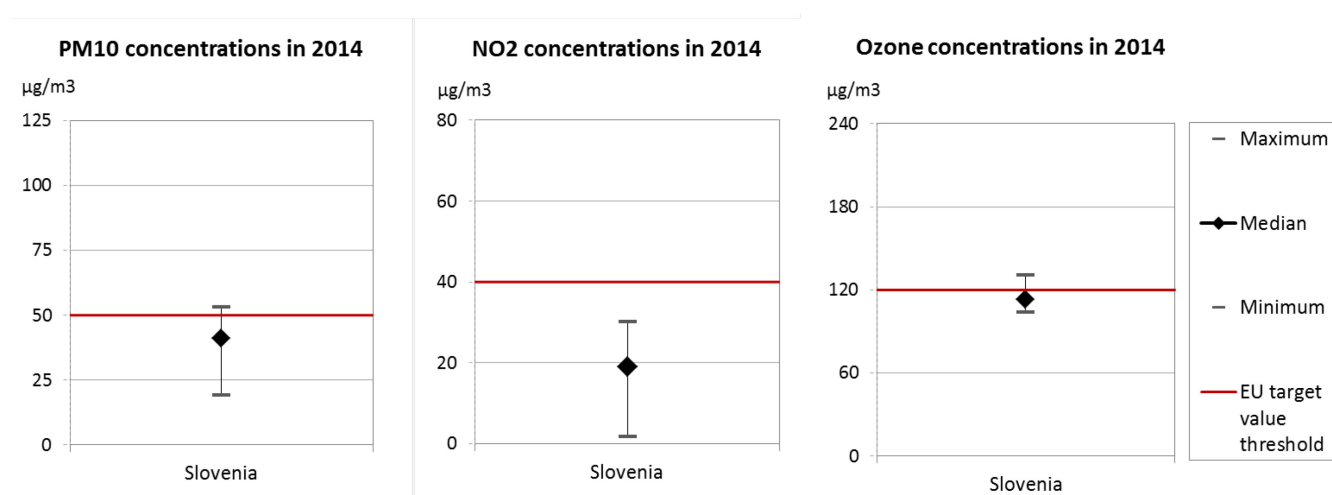
The EU has developed a comprehensive suite of air quality legislation⁵⁰, which establishes health-based

within the currently applicable national emission ceilings⁵².

At the same time, air quality in Slovenia continues to give causes for concern. For the year 2013, the European Environment Agency estimated that about 1 960 premature deaths were attributable to fine particulate matter⁵³ concentrations, 100 to ozone⁵⁴ concentration and over 150 to nitrogen dioxide⁵⁵ concentrations⁵⁶. This is due to exceedances above the EU air quality standards such as shown in Figure 9⁵⁷.

The PM₁₀ levels in Slovenia have been decreasing between 2006 and 2014 throughout all zones and

Figure 9: Attainment situation for PM10, NO2 and O3 in 2014



Note: These graphs show concentrations as measured and reported by the Member State at different locations; specifically they show, (a) for PM10, the 90.4 percentile of daily mean concentration, which corresponds to the 36th highest daily mean, (b) for NO2, the annual mean concentration, and (c) for O3, the 93.2 percentile of maximum daily 8-hour mean concentration values, which corresponds to the 26th highest daily maximum. For each pollutant they depict both the lowest and highest concentration reported, as well as the median values (i.e. note that 50% of the stations report lower concentrations than the respective median value, the other 50% report higher concentrations). The air quality standards as set by EU legislation are marked by the red line.

standards and objectives for a number of air pollutants. As part of this, Member States are also required to ensure that up-to-date information on ambient concentrations of different air pollutants is routinely made available to the public. In addition, the National Emission Ceilings Directive provides for emission reductions at national level that should be achieved for main pollutants.

The emission of several air pollutants has decreased significantly in Slovenia⁵¹. Reductions between 1990 and 2014 for sulphur oxides (-96%), nitrogen oxides (-42%), ammonia (-20%) as well as volatile organic compounds (-56%) ensure that air emissions for these pollutants are

⁵² The current national emission ceilings apply since 2010 ([Directive 2001/81/EC](#)); revised ceilings for 2020 and 2030 have been set by [Directive \(EU\) 2016/2284](#) on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC.

⁵³ Particulate matter (PM) is a mixture of aerosol particles (solid and liquid) covering a wide range of sizes and chemical compositions. PM10 (PM2.5) refers to particles with a diameter of 10 (2.5) micrometres or less. PM is emitted from many anthropogenic sources, including combustion.

⁵⁴ Low level ozone is produced by photochemical action and it is also a greenhouse gas.

⁵⁵ NOx is emitted during fuel combustion e.g. from industrial facilities and the road transport sector. NOx is a group of gases comprising nitrogen monoxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

⁵⁶ European Environment Agency, 2016. [Air Quality in Europe – 2016 Report](#). (Table 10.2, please see details in this report as regards the underpinning methodology)

⁵⁷ Based on European Environment Agency, 2016. [Air Quality in Europe – 2016 Report](#). (Figures 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1)

⁵⁰ European Commission, 2016. [Air Quality Standards](#).

⁵¹ See [EIONET Central Data Repository](#) and [Air pollutant emissions data viewer \(NEC Directive\)](#)

agglomerations in Slovenia. However, for 2014, exceedances of PM₁₀ daily limit values have still been registered in one air quality zone (Continental zone – SIC). Furthermore, for several air quality zones, the target values and long-term objectives regarding ozone concentration are not being met⁵⁸.

The persistent breaches of air quality requirements (for PM₁₀), which have severe negative effects on health and environment, are being followed up by the European Commission through infringement procedures covering all the Member States concerned, including Slovenia. The aim is that adequate measures are put in place to bring all zones into compliance.

In addition it is worth noting that in several zones, the number and type of air quality monitoring stations is not complying with the EU rules. The Cohesion Policy funding is also aimed at addressing this problem and the project on acquiring proper monitoring equipment for key cities in Slovenia is an advanced stage of preparation.

It is estimated that the health-related external costs from air pollution in Slovenia are above EUR 988 million/year (income adjusted, 2010), which include not only the intrinsic value of living a full health life but also direct costs to the economy. These direct economic costs relate to 511 thousand workdays lost each year due to sickness related to air pollution, with associated costs for employers of EUR 50 million/year (income adjusted, 2010), for healthcare of above EUR 3.6 million/year (income adjusted, 2010), and for agriculture (crop losses) of EUR 21 million/year (2010)⁵⁹.

Suggested action

- Maintain downward emissions trends of air pollutants in order to achieve full compliance with air quality limit values - and reduce adverse air pollution impacts on health, environment and economy.
- Reduce PM₁₀ emission and concentration, inter alia, by reducing emissions related to energy and heat generation using solid fuels, to transport and to agriculture.

Noise

The Environmental Noise Directive provides for a common approach for the avoidance, prevention and reduction of harmful effects due to exposure to environmental noise.

Excessive noise is one of the main causes of health issues⁶⁰. To alleviate this, the EU *acquis* sets out several requirements, including assessing the exposure to environmental noise through noise mapping, ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public, and adopting action plans with a view to preventing and reducing environmental noise where necessary and to preserving the acoustic environment quality where it is good.

Slovenia's implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive⁶¹ is significantly delayed. The noise mapping for the most recent reporting round, for the reference year 2011, is complete. However, action plans for noise management in the current period have not been adopted for any of the agglomerations, major roads or major railways within the scope of the Directive. The Commission contacted the Slovenian authorities with regard to the missing action plans, and continues to follow up on the situation.

Suggested action

- Complete action plans for noise management.

Water quality and management

The EU water policy and legislation require that the impact of pressures on transitional, coastal and fresh waters (including surface and ground waters) is significantly reduced to achieve, maintain or enhance good status of water bodies, as defined by the Water Framework Directive; that citizens throughout the Union benefit from high standards for safe drinking and bathing water; and that the nutrient cycle (nitrogen and phosphorus) is managed in a more sustainable and resource-efficient way.

SDG 6 encourages countries to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The main overall objective of EU water policy and

⁵⁸ See [The EEA/Eionet Air Quality Portal](#) and the related Central Data Repository

⁵⁹ These figures are based on the [Impact Assessment](#) for the European Commission Integrated Clean Air Package (2013).

⁶⁰ WHO/JRC, 2011, Burden of disease from environmental noise, Fritschi, L., Brown, A.L., Kim, R., Schwela, D., Kephelopoulou, S. (eds), [World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe](#), Copenhagen, Denmark

⁶¹ The Noise Directive requires Member States to prepare and publish, every 5 years, noise maps and noise management action plans for agglomerations with more than 100,000 inhabitants, and for major roads, railways and airports.

legislation is to ensure access to good quality water in sufficient quantity for all Europeans. The EU water *acquis*⁶² seeks to ensure good status of all water bodies across Europe by addressing pollution sources (from e.g. agriculture, urban areas and industrial activities), physical and hydrological modifications to water bodies) and the management of risks of flooding.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) are a requirement of the Water Framework Directive and a means of achieving the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment across Europe. This includes surface freshwaters such as lakes and rivers, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters up to one nautical mile.

In the first generation of RBMPs⁶³, Slovenia reported the status of 135 rivers, 14 lakes, 6 coastal and 21 groundwater bodies. 61% of natural surface water bodies achieve a good or high ecological status⁶⁴ and none of heavily modified or artificial water bodies achieve a good or high ecological potential (while the status of 59% is unknown). 96% of surface water bodies, 86% of heavily modified and artificial water bodies⁶⁵ and 81% of groundwater bodies achieve good chemical status⁶⁶. 100% of groundwater bodies are in good quantitative status⁶⁷.

Diffuse and point sources of pollution causing nutrients enrichment impose main pressures on Slovenian surface water bodies and lead to the failure to meet good status. It affects 46% of water bodies. Hydro-morphological alteration affects 30% of water bodies.

The planned measures are expected to result in improvement of ecological status of surface water bodies by 30% and chemical status by 4% respectively. The measures should also bring improvement of ecological potential of artificial and heavily modified water bodies by 35% and chemical status by 9%. The chemical status of groundwater is expected to improve by 5%. However, it is difficult to conclude whether this is realistic, as the first

RBMPs under the WFD have some deficiencies that result in uncertainties about the status and effectiveness of the Programmes of Measures⁶⁸. In particular there were weaknesses in methodologies for the assessment of the status of the water bodies. Also, a number of exemptions⁶⁹ were applied.⁷⁰

The second generation of RBMPs (adopted in October 2016) should address, among others, the above deficiencies. The adoption of RBMPs is an element of water ex ante conditionality which pre-conditions the financing of the wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects. Thus, the outcome of the assessment of the RBMPs will be considered in the context of the financing of such investments.

Approximately 97% of the population of Slovenia relies on drinking water sources from groundwater. Therefore, appropriate protection against nitrate pollution is an important issue for the drinking water sector.

Slovenia has one of the highest percentages of ultra-oligotrophic (i.e. 'unpolluted' with very low nitrate concentrations) river monitoring stations. According to the last report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive, referring to the period 2008-2011, of the total of 104 groundwater monitoring points, approximately 79% had an average nitrate level of less than 25 mg NO₃/l. Nitrate levels are on average <10mg/l in rivers. Slovenia applies its Nitrates Action Programme throughout its territory. According to Decree on the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources⁷¹, paragraph 3, the whole territory of Slovenia has been designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ).

As regards drinking water, Slovenia reaches very high compliance rates of 99.25% for microbiological and 100% for chemical parameters and a 98.7 % compliance rate for indicator parameters laid down in the Drinking Water Directive⁷².

⁶² This includes the [Bathing Waters Directive \(2006/7/EC\)](#); the [Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive \(91/271/EEC\)](#) concerning discharges of municipal and some industrial waste waters; the [Drinking Water Directive \(98/83/EC\)](#) concerning potable water quality; the [Water Framework Directive \(2000/60/EC\)](#) concerning water resources management; the [Nitrates Directive \(91/676/EEC\)](#) and the [Floods Directive \(2007/60/EC\)](#)

⁶³ [Commission Staff Working Document](#) (SWD (2012)379 final).

⁶⁴ Good ecological status is defined in the Water Framework Directive referring to the quality of the biological community, the hydrological characteristics and the chemical characteristics.

⁶⁵ Many European river basins and waters have been altered by human activities, such as land drainage, flood protection and building of dams to create reservoirs.

⁶⁶ Good chemical status is defined in the Water Framework Directive referring to compliance with all the quality standards established for chemical substances at European level.

⁶⁷ For groundwater, a precautionary approach has been taken that comprises a prohibition on direct discharges to groundwater, and a requirement to monitor groundwater bodies.

⁶⁸ Each RBMP includes a "programme of measures" to meet the environmental and other objectives of the Water Framework Directive cost-effectively.

⁶⁹ Exemptions are set in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive. They give Member States the possibility to deviate from the "good status" objective in specific circumstances and/or under strict conditions.

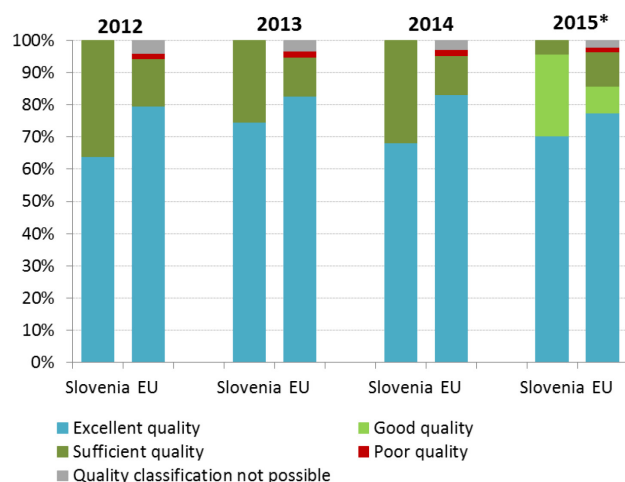
⁷⁰ More information on the implementation status and more specific recommendations can be found at European Commission, [Water Framework Directive Implementation Reports](#)

⁷¹ Uradni list RS, št. 113/09, 5/13 in 22/15.

⁷² [Commission's Synthesis Report on the Quality of Drinking Water in the Union](#) examining Member States' reports for the 2011-2013 period, foreseen under Article 13(5) of Directive 98/83/EC; COM(2016)666

As shown in Figure 10 in 2015, in Slovenia out of 47 bathing waters, 70.2 % were of excellent quality, 25.5% of good quality and 4.3 % of sufficient quality⁷³.

⁷³ European Environment Agency, 2016. [European bathing water quality in 2015](#), p. 26.

Figure 10: Bathing water quality 2012 – 2015⁷⁴

*The category 'good' was introduced in the 2015 bathing water report

With regard to the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, Slovenia's deadline to reach compliance was 31 December 2015. Slovenia is lagging behind when it comes to the implementation of the Directive: the latest data reported (2012) gave information on Slovenia's compliance with its first and second transitional deadlines (2008 and 2010) and showed that only nine agglomerations met the requirements of the Directive in terms of collection requirements and 4 in terms of secondary treatment. Only 33.9 % of the waste water load collected is subject to more stringent treatment in accordance with Article 5 of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive⁷⁵. The Commission is following-up on the above-mentioned non-compliance.

The estimated investment needs (reported by Slovenia under Article 17 of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive) to reach full compliance with the Directive are of EUR 681 million⁷⁶.

A significant contribution for the wastewater infrastructure (EUR 125 million) will come from the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy. It will also include a major investment project for the Ljubljana wastewater treatment plant to ensure its full compliance.

⁷⁴European Environment Agency, 2016. [State of bathing water country reports - Slovenia](#)

⁷⁵Eighth Report on the Implementation Status and the Programmes for Implementation (as required by Article 17) of Council Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment (COM (2016)105 final) and Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report (SWD(2016)45 final).

⁷⁶Eighth Report on the Implementation Status and the Programmes for Implementation (as required by Article 17) of Council Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment (COM (2016)105 final) and Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the report (SWD(2016)45 final).

Suggested action⁷⁷

- Ensure good implementation of upgraded methods for status assessment and pressure analysis.
- Ensure effective implementation of measures to address nutrients pollution from agriculture, following 2015 legislative amendments.
- Ensure the efficient implementation of the Cohesion Policy funding for the urban wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Enhancing the sustainability of cities

The EU Policy on the urban environment encourages cities to implement policies for sustainable urban planning and design, including innovative approaches for urban public transport and mobility, sustainable buildings, energy efficiency and urban biodiversity conservation.

SDG11 aims at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Europe is a Union of cities and towns; around 75% of the EU population are living in urban areas.⁷⁸ The urban environment poses particular challenges for the environment and human health, whilst also providing opportunities and efficiency gains in the use of resources.

The Member States, European institutions, cities and stakeholders have prepared a new Urban Agenda for the EU (incorporating the Smart Cities initiative) to tackle these issues in a comprehensive way, including their connections with social and economic challenges. At the heart of this Urban Agenda will be the development of twelve partnerships on the identified urban challenges, including air quality and housing⁷⁹.

The European Commission will launch a new EU benchmark system in 2017⁸⁰.

The EU stimulates green cities through awards and funding, such as the EU Green Capital Award aimed at cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and the EU Green Leaf initiative aimed at cities and towns, with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants.

⁷⁷The full set of recommendations relevant to the Water Framework Directive is included in Commission Staff Working Document (SWD(2015) 50 final) accompanying the Communication (COM(2015) 120 final).

⁷⁸European Environment Agency, [Urban environment](#)

⁷⁹<http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/>

⁸⁰The Commission is developing an [Urban Benchmarking and Monitoring \('UBaM'\) tool](#) to be launched in 2017. Best practices emerge and these will be better disseminated via the app featuring the UBaM tool, and increasingly via e.g. EUROCIITIES, ICLEI, CEMR, Committee of the Regions, Covenant of Mayors and others.



Ljubljana is one of the cities who received the 2016 EU Green Capital Award⁸¹. It put in place a comprehensive set of policies to deliver a more sustainable city. The capital boasts a vast area of green space (542 m² per inhabitant). Public transport, pedestrian access and cycling networks (220 km of managed cycling routes) are the backbone of its urban mobility system. With its Zero Waste Strategy, Ljubljana makes a significant contribution to Europe's transition to a more circular economy. It can act as a role model, as the European capital with the largest share of separately collected waste and actively promoting recycling and re-use.

International agreements

The EU Treaties require that the Union policy on the environment promotes measures at the international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems.

Most environmental problems have a transboundary nature and often a global scope and they can only be addressed effectively through international co-operation. International environmental agreements concluded by the Union are binding upon the institutions of the Union and on its Member States. This requires the EU and the Member States to sign, ratify and effectively implement all relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in a timely manner. This will also be an important contribution towards the achievement of the SDGs, which Member States committed to in 2015 and include many commitments contained already in legally binding agreements.

The fact that some Member States did not sign and/or ratify a number of MEAs compromises environmental implementation, including within the Union, as well as the Union's credibility in related negotiations and international meetings where supporting the participation of third countries to such agreements is an established EU policy objective. In agreements where

voting takes place it has a direct impact on the number of votes to be cast by the EU.

Slovenia has signed and ratified almost all MEAs. It has signed but not yet ratified the Offshore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention⁸² and the Nagoya Protocol⁸³.

⁸¹ European Commission, 2016. [Ljubljana becomes European Green Capital 2016](#)

⁸² [Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil](#)

⁸³ [Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

Part II: Enabling Framework: Implementation Tools

4. Market based instruments and investment

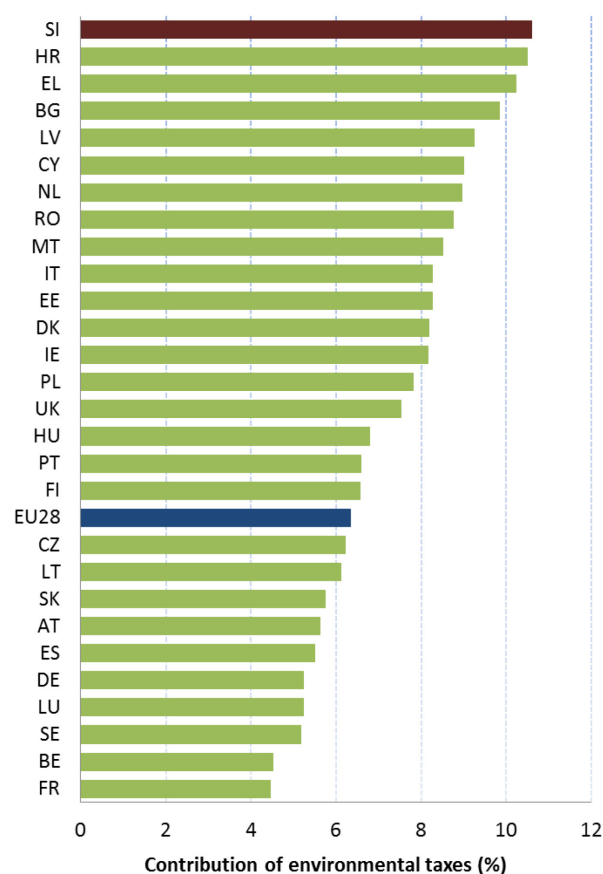
Green taxation and environmentally harmful subsidies

The Circular Economy Action Plan encourages the use of financial incentives and economic instruments, such as taxation to ensure that product prices better reflect environmental costs. The phasing out of environmentally harmful subsidies is monitored in the context of the European Semester and in national reform programmes submitted by Member States.

Taxing pollution and resource use can generate increased revenue and bring important social and environmental benefits.

In 2014, environmental tax revenue amounted to 3.89% of Slovenia's GDP. This percentage share was the second highest in the EU-28 for the year.

Figure 11: Environmental tax revenues as a share of total revenues from taxes and social contributions (excluding imputed social contributions) in 2014⁸⁴



In the same year environmental tax revenues accounted for 10.61% of total revenues from taxes and social-security contributions (EU-28 average: 6.35%) as shown in Figure 11. It puts Slovenia in the first place among other EU Member States. The majority of Slovenia's environmental tax revenue for 2014 came from taxation of energy, which amounted to 3.0% of GDP. Transport (excluding fuel) taxes amounted to 0.46% of GDP, and pollution and resource taxes amounted to 0.45% of the country's GDP.

Slovenia performs well in terms of the use of market based instruments to achieve environmental policy objectives.

Green Public Procurement

The EU green public procurement policies encourage Member States to take further steps to reach the target of applying green procurement criteria to at least 50% of public tenders.

Green Public Procurement (GPP) is a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life-cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

The purchasing power of public procurement equals to approximately 14% of GDP⁸⁵. A substantial part of this money is spent on sectors with high environmental impact such as construction or transport, so GPP can help to significantly lower the impact of public spending and foster sustainable innovative businesses.

A National Action Plan (NAP) was adopted in 2009. The main legislative instrument is the 2011 Decree on GPP for procurers to use minimum and ambitious GPP criteria; however, the Decree does not provide for any sanctions for non-compliance. The EU GPP criteria⁸⁶ are recommended for the following product groups: paper, electricity, office equipment, furniture, transport, food and catering, construction, cleaning products and services⁸⁷. The key target was to achieve 50% GPP by

⁸⁵ European Commission, 2015. [Public procurement](#)

⁸⁶ In the Communication "Public procurement for a better environment" (COM /2008/400) the Commission recommended the creation of a process for setting common GPP criteria. The basic concept of GPP relies on having clear, verifiable, justifiable and ambitious environmental criteria for products and services, based on a life-cycle approach and scientific evidence base.

⁸⁷ European Commission, 2015. [Documentation on National GPP Action Plans](#)

⁸⁴ Eurostat, [Environmental tax revenues](#), accessed October 2016.

2012 by Central Governmental Authorities for eight products categories⁸⁸. The GPP legislative framework in Slovenia is currently under revision. It is planned that the guidelines for GPP criteria in more additional product groups will be prepared.

Investments: the contribution of EU funds

European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations call on Member States to integrate environment and climate objectives in their funding strategies and programmes for economic, social and territorial cohesion, rural development and maritime policy, and reinforce the capacity of implementing bodies to deliver cost-effective and sustainable investments in order to secure the necessary adequate financial support for investments in these areas.

Making good use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)⁸⁹ is essential to achieve the environmental goals and integrate these into other policy areas. Other instruments such as the Horizon 2020, the LIFE programme and European Fund for Strategic Investment⁹⁰ (EFSI) may also support implementation and spread off best practice. The 2014-2020 Partnership Agreement for Slovenia sets the framework for the use of the ESIF.

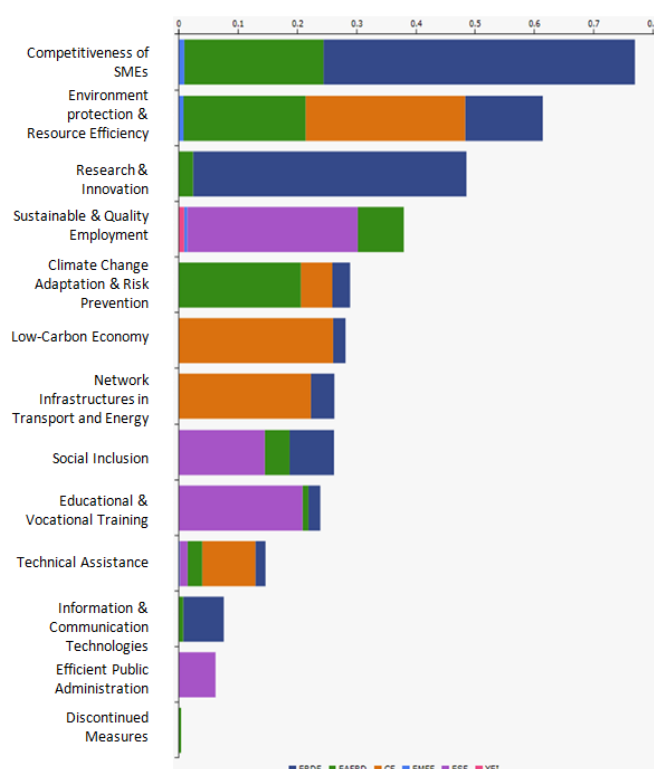
Slovenia is eligible in this period for the overall funds support totalling approximately EUR 3.9 billion (including, approximately EUR 3 billion from the cohesion policy covering ERDF, ESF and CF; EUR 837 million from EAFRD; and EUR 24.8 million from the EMFF), see Figure 12.

The planned EUR 3 billion from the cohesion policy has a clear focus on the competitiveness and innovation of the economy. Nonetheless, almost EUR 500 million of investment will go for environmental protection and the efficient and sustainable use of resources⁹¹. It represents 16.6% of the overall Slovenia's cohesion policy budget which is above the EU average.

As regards specific allocations, the key priority is the water sector with a total allocation of about EUR 264 million (EUR 125 million for drinking water; EUR 125 million for urban wastewater treatment; and EUR 14 million for other water measures). It is followed by EUR

83 million for the climate change adaptation, specifically for flood protection measures and a slightly lower amount of EUR 78 million for the efficient land use within urban areas. Further EUR 40 million is earmarked for Natura 2000 and biodiversity and EUR 26 million for air quality measures. The list closes EUR 8 million to support environmentally-friendly production processes and resource efficiency in SMEs.

Figure 12: European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Budget Slovenia by theme, EUR billion⁹²



It is too early to draw conclusions as regards the use and results of ESIF funds for the period 2014-2020, as the cohesion policy operational programme is still at an early stage of the implementation.

For the period 2007-2013, 567 million, or 40 % of the CF budget was allocated to water, wastewater or waste projects. By the end of 2015 Slovenia fully used the allocated funds which were used to construct six new regional centres for waste management throughout the country, extension of drinking water supply networks, the construction and upgrade of water retention basins; the construction and refurbishment of sewage networks and waste water treatment plants. Thanks to these investments, Slovenia increased by 16% the share of adequate wastewater infrastructure in agglomerations above 2000 p.e. Nonetheless, complying with the Urban Wastewater Directive remains the main investment gap for Slovenia that even the Structural Funds allocation for 2014-2020 will not be able to bridge.

⁸⁸European Commission, 2015. [Documentation on National GPP Action Plans](#)

⁸⁹ ESIF comprises five funds – the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The ERDF, the CF and the ESF together form the Cohesion Policy funds.

⁹⁰ EIB: [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#)

⁹¹This amount includes allocations for water management, flood protection, regeneration and decontamination of brownfields, Natura 2000 and biodiversity, air, as well as environmentally-friendly production processes and resource efficiency in SMEs.

⁹² European Commission, [European Structural and Investment Funds Data By Country](#)

As during 1995 – 2013 period, mixed municipal waste has decreased significantly, it enabled the country to drop an incineration project and a waste treatment centre. Only six regional waste treatment centres have been built covering the whole country. No more waste infrastructure is foreseen for the 2014-2020 period.

The 2007-2013 cohesion policy spending was affected by the transposition gaps of the Directive 2011/92/EU⁹³ (the 'EIA Directive'). It was solved and reflected in the positive assessment of the fulfilment of the horizontal conditionality on environmental legislation for the 2014-2020 funding period. Slovenia has developed a comprehensive EIA Training Action Plan to ensure appropriate training for the authorities involved in the permitting procedures and learn lessons from the previous financial perspective.

The Rural Development Program of Slovenia (the 'RDP'), its EAFRD part, amounts to about EUR 838 million. The budget for agri-environment-climate measure represents 18.2% of the total EAFRD.

Contribution of the RDP towards environmental objectives is limited. Natura 2000 compensation measure is not programmed, although Slovenia has one of the highest Natura 2000 coverages in the EU. Four schemes in agri-environment-climate measure directly contribute to the implementation of the Natura 2000 Management Programme for 2014-2020.

In the context of the RDP, Slovenia improved conditions for projects of land consolidation in order not to harm the natural heritage. It does not support drainage investments (as there is a "moratorium" on construction of drainage in Slovenia), whereas, irrigation investments need to generate potential water savings of 15%.

With regard to the integration of environmental concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the two key areas for Slovenia (as for all Member States) are, first, using Rural Development funds to pay for environmental land management and other environmental measures, while avoiding financing measures which could damage the environment; and second, ensuring an effective implementation of the first pillar of the CAP with regard to cross compliance and the 1st pillar 'greening'. 30 % of the direct payments' envelope (out of total of about EUR 680 million for 2015-2020⁹⁴) is allocated to greening practices beneficial to the environment. An environmentally ambitious implementation of the 1st pillar greening would clearly help to improve the

environmental situation in areas not covered by rural development, including areas of intensive agriculture.

For the year 2015 Slovenia made it possible to use only three elements laid down by the regulation as Ecological Focus Areas⁹⁵ out of possible 19 elements. This is rather a minimalistic approach compared to other Member States. The chosen Ecological Focus Areas are only land laying fallow, areas of catch crops (need to be present on the field as of 15/9-16/10) and nitrogen fixing crops (also soybean without any biodiversity benefits). 26% of Natura 2000 grasslands were designated as environmentally sensitive, of which 0 ha outside Natura 2000, which is very modest.

⁹³ European Union, [Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011/92/EU](#)

⁹⁴ European Commission, [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2015/851 of 27 March 2015 amending Annexes II, III and VI to Regulation \(EU\) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy, OJ L 135, 2.6.2015](#)

⁹⁵ Since 2015, every farmer in the EU who claims a direct payment and has more than 15 hectares of arable land is obliged to have 5% of his arable land covered by ecological focus areas. These are areas which bring benefits for the environment, improve biodiversity and maintain attractive landscapes. Some exceptions to this general rule apply, for example to farmers who have more than 75% of their area under grassland. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/glossary_en

5. Effective governance and knowledge

SDG 16 aims at providing access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. SDG 17 aims at better implementation, improving policy coordination and policy coherence, stimulating science, technology and innovation, establishing partnerships and developing measurements of progress.

Effective governance of EU environmental legislation and policies requires having an appropriate institutional framework, policy coherence and coordination, applying legal and non-legal instruments, engaging with non-governmental stakeholders, and having adequate levels of knowledge and skills⁹⁶. Successful implementation depends, to a large extent, on central, regional and local government fulfilling key legislative and administrative tasks, notably adoption of sound implementing legislation, co-ordinated action to meet environmental objectives and correct decision-making on matters such as industrial permits. Beyond fulfilment of these tasks, government must intervene to ensure day-to-day compliance by economic operators, utilities and individuals ("compliance assurance"). Civil society also has a role to play, including through legal action. To underpin the roles of all actors, it is crucial to collect and share knowledge and evidence on the state of the environment and on environmental pressures, drivers and impacts.

Equally, effective governance of EU environmental legislation and policies benefits from a dialogue within Member States and between Member States and the Commission on whether the current EU environmental legislation is fit for purpose. Legislation can only be properly implemented when it takes into account experiences at Member State level with putting EU commitments into effect. The Make it Work initiative, a Member State driven project, established in 2014, organizes a discussion on how the clarity, coherence and structure of EU environmental legislation can be improved without lowering existing protection standards.

Effective governance within central, regional and local government

Those involved in implementing environment legislation at Union, national, regional and local levels need to be equipped with the knowledge, tools and capacity to improve the delivery of benefits from that legislation,

⁹⁶ The Commission has work ongoing to improve the country-specific knowledge about quality and functioning of the administrative systems of Member States.

and the governance of the enforcement process.

Capacity to implement rules

It is crucial that central, regional and local administrations have the necessary capacities and skills and training to carry out their own tasks and co-operate and co-ordinate effectively with each other, within a system of multi-level governance.

In accordance with the 2015 Council recommendations⁹⁷, *"An unsupportive business environment in Slovenia is a key factor for low investment levels in Slovenian business and the high number of laws and numerous changes in the legislation make it difficult to run a business and comply with local regulation."* It is reinstated in the Commission Staff Working Document on Member States Investment Challenges⁹⁸.

To address these investment challenges, the authorities are planning to reform the spatial planning and building legislation. Any changes should ensure compliance with the EU environmental legislation, in particular, Directives 2011/92/EU, 2001/42/EC⁹⁹ and 92/43/EEC¹⁰⁰ and correct the deficiencies identified by on-going infringement action.



Coordination and integration

⁹⁷ [Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Slovenia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Slovenia](#), p. 5.

⁹⁸ Commission Staff Working Document, Member States Investment Challenges, [SWD\(2015\)400 final/2](#)

⁹⁹ European Union, [Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC](#)

¹⁰⁰ European Union, [Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC](#)

The transposition of the revised EIA Directive¹⁰¹ will be an opportunity to streamline the regulatory framework on environmental assessments. The Commission encourages the streamlining of the environmental assessments because this approach reduces duplication and avoids unnecessary overlaps in environmental assessments applicable for a particular project. Moreover, streamlining helps reducing unnecessary administrative burden and accelerates decision-making, without compromising the quality of the environmental assessment procedure. The Commission issued a guidance document in 2016 regarding the setting up of coordinated and/or joint procedures that are simultaneously subject to assessments under the EIA Directive, Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, and the Industrial Emissions Directive¹⁰².

Slovenia usually ensures timely and correct transposition of the EU environmental directives.

Slovenia is among the countries with the highest number of environmental infringement cases and EU Pilot investigations. Most of them are related to waste management, air and industrial emissions legislation, and nature protection.

Suggested action

- Ensure that the EU environmental legislation is respected as part of the reform of the national permitting system aiming to remove unnecessary administrative burden and streamline procedures.

Compliance assurance

EU law generally and specific provisions on inspections, other checks, penalties and environmental liability help lay the basis for the systems Member States need to have in place to secure compliance with EU environmental rules.

Public authorities help ensure accountability of duty-holders by monitoring and promoting compliance and by taking credible follow-up action (i.e. enforcement) when breaches occur or liabilities arise. Compliance monitoring can be done both on the initiative of authorities themselves and in response to citizen complaints. It can involve using various kinds of checks, including inspections for permitted activities, surveillance for possible illegal activities, investigations for crimes and audits for systemic weaknesses. Similarly, there is a range of means to promote compliance, including awareness-raising campaigns and use of guidance documents and

online information tools. Follow-up to breaches and liabilities can include administrative action (e.g. withdrawal of a permit), use of criminal law¹⁰³ and action under liability law (e.g. required remediation after damage from an accident using liability rules) and contractual law (e.g. measures to require compliance with nature conservation contracts). Taken together, all of these interventions represent "compliance assurance" as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Environmental compliance assurance



Best practice has moved towards a risk-based approach at strategic and operational levels in which the best mix of compliance monitoring, promotion and enforcement is directed at the most serious problems. Best practice also recognises the need for coordination and cooperation between different authorities to ensure consistency, avoid duplication of work and reduce administrative burden. Active participation in established pan-European networks of inspectors, police, prosecutors and judges, such as *IMPEL*¹⁰⁴, *EUFJE*¹⁰⁵, *ENPE*¹⁰⁶ and *EnviCrimeNet*¹⁰⁷, is a valuable tool for sharing experience and good practices.

Currently, there exist a number of sectoral obligations on inspections and the EU directive on environmental liability (ELD)¹⁰⁸ provides a means of ensuring that the "polluter-pays principle" is applied when there are accidents and incidents that harm the environment. There is also publically available information giving insights into existing strengths and weaknesses in each Member State.

For each Member State, the following were therefore reviewed: use of risk-based compliance assurance; coordination and co-operation between authorities and

¹⁰¹ The transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU is due in May 2017.

¹⁰² European Commission, 2016. Commission notice — [Commission guidance document on streamlining environmental assessments conducted under Article 2\(3\) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive \(Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU\)](#)

¹⁰³ European Union, [Environmental Crime Directive 2008/99/EC](#)

¹⁰⁴ [European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law](#)

¹⁰⁵ [European Union Forum of judges for the environment](#)

¹⁰⁶ [The European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment](#)

¹⁰⁷ [EnviCrimeNet](#)

¹⁰⁸ European Union, [Environmental Liability Directive 2004/35/CE](#)

participation in pan-European networks; and key aspects of implementation of the ELD based on the Commission's recently published implementation report and REFIT evaluation¹⁰⁹.

The Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Environment and Spatial Planning (IRSOP) has developed some risk assessment tools for inspections of industrial installations¹¹⁰. Overall challenges have included budget constraints, wide responsibilities and a lack of specialised staff¹¹¹.

Up-to-date information is lacking in relation to the following:

- data-collection arrangements to track the use and effectiveness of different compliance assurance interventions¹¹²;
- the extent to which risk-based methods are used to direct compliance assurance at the strategic level and in relation to critical activities outside of industrial installations¹¹³, in particular in specific problem-areas highlighted elsewhere in this Country Report, i.e. issues related to illegal dumping, the threats to protected habitat types and species, air quality breaches and the pressures on water quality from point and diffuse water pollution, including inadequate urban waste-water infrastructure¹¹⁴; and
- how the Slovenian authorities ensure a targeted and proportionate response to different types of non-compliant behaviour, given that the focus is on administrative procedures and sanctions and that the probability of being prosecuted and criminally sentenced for environmental offences seems to be low¹¹⁵.

The added value of cooperation between different inspection authorities is recognized and a national Inspection Council has been established to ensure joint implementation of inspection tasks, resolve competence

questions and ensure overall consistency¹¹⁶. However, a more coordinated approach with municipal inspectors and other inspection authorities has been considered necessary, in particular in order to reduce illegal dumping of household waste and to undertake combined inspections on chemicals¹¹⁷. Slovenia is active within IMPEL and hosted an IMPEL peer review in 2010.

Slovenia did not report any instance of environmental damage handled under the Environmental Liability Directive for the period 2007-2013. It appears to be short in administrative resources and technical expertise to comply with the technical requirements under the Directive and there is not much practical experience available in remedying environmental damage. Slovenia decided against mandatory financial security (to pay for remediation if an operator cannot), instead opting to promote supply and demand of financial security instruments and to look into the possibility to use an existing environmental fund to cover remediation costs where operators are not identifiable or insolvent. Evidence is lacking of the results.

Suggested action

- Improve transparency on the organisation and functioning of compliance assurance and on how significant risks are addressed, as outlined above.
- Encourage greater participation of competent authorities in the activities of ENPE, EUFJE and EnviCrimeNet.
- Step up efforts in the implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) with proactive initiatives, in particular by setting up a national register of ELD incidents and drafting national guidance. Slovenia should take further steps to ensure an effective system of financial security for environmental liabilities (so that operators not only have insurance cover available to them but actually take it up).

Public participation and access to justice

The Aarhus Convention, related EU legislation on public participation and environmental impact assessment, and the case-law of the Court of Justice require that citizens and their associations should be able to participate in decision-making on projects and plans and should enjoy effective environmental access to justice.

Citizens can more effectively protect the environment if they can rely on the three "pillars" of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters ("the Aarhus Convention"). Public participation in the administrative decision making process is an important

¹⁰⁹ [COM\(2016\)204 final](#) and [COM\(2016\)121 final](#) of 14.4.2016. This highlighted the need for better evidence on how the directive is used in practice; for tools to support its implementation, such as guidance, training and ELD registers; and for financial security to be available in case events or incidents generate remediation costs.

¹¹⁰ IMPEL, 2010. [IRI Report Slovenia](#), p. 4, 33, 44, 48 and 52.

¹¹¹ IMPEL, 2010. [IRI Report Slovenia](#), p. 18, 27, 33, 46-47.

¹¹² The IMPEL IRI Report indicates that IRSOP publishes an annual activity report which is however based mostly only on basic output indicators, which is insufficient to evaluate the quality of inspection work, see p. 22, 53.

¹¹³ The IMPEL IRI Report notes that written procedures and protocols to steer inspection work were not widely used, and that there was a need for a more strategic approach.

¹¹⁴ The IMPEL IRI Report indicates that a risk-based approach and related data collection did not seem to be applied for inspections in environmental policy areas such as water and nature protection, see p. 29, 39 and 41.

¹¹⁵ Milieu, 2012, [Evaluation Study on the Implementation of Directive 2008/99/EC on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law by member States, National Report for Slovenia](#), p. 21-22.

¹¹⁶ IMPEL, 2010. [IRI Report Slovenia](#), p. 29-30.

¹¹⁷ IMPEL, 2010. [IRI Report Slovenia](#), p. 52-53.

element to ensure that the authority takes its decision on the best possible basis. The Commission intends to examine compliance with mandatory public participation requirements more systematically at a later stage.

Access to justice in environmental matters is a set of guarantees that allows citizens and their associations to challenge acts or omissions of the public administration before a court. It is a tool for decentralised implementation of EU environmental law.

For each Member State, two crucial elements for effective access to justice have been systematically reviewed: the legal standing for the public, including NGOs and the extent to which prohibitive costs represent a barrier.

In general, the existing rules and provisions in Slovenia concerning access to administrative appeal and to judicial review are predictable and transparent. However, environmental NGOs still do not have legal standing in many of the environmental sectors. The costs of administrative court procedure, however, are not considered as being prohibitively high¹¹⁸.

Suggested action

- Ensure standing of environmental NGOs to challenge acts or omissions of a public authority in all sectoral EU environmental laws, in full compliance with EU law as well as the Aarhus Convention.

Access to information, knowledge and evidence

The Aarhus Convention and related EU legislation on access to information and the sharing of spatial data require that the public has access to clear information on the environment, including on how Union environmental law is being implemented.

It is of crucial importance to public authorities, the public and business that environmental information is shared in an efficient and effective way. This covers reporting by businesses and public authorities and active dissemination to the public, increasingly through electronic means.

The Aarhus Convention¹¹⁹, the Access to Environmental Information Directive¹²⁰ and the INSPIRE Directive¹²¹ together create a legal foundation for the sharing of environmental information between public authorities

and with the public. They also represent the green part of the ongoing EU e-Government Action Plan¹²². The first two instruments create obligations to provide information to the public, both on request and actively. The INSPIRE Directive is a pioneering instrument for electronic data-sharing between public authorities who can vary in their data-sharing policies, e.g. on whether access to data is for free. The INSPIRE Directive sets up a geoportal which indicates the level of shared spatial data in each Member State – i.e. data related to specific locations, such as air quality monitoring data. Amongst other benefits it facilitates the public authorities' reporting obligations.

For each Member State, the accessibility of environmental data (based on what the INSPIRE Directive envisages) as well as data-sharing policies ('open data') have been systematically reviewed.

Slovenia's performance on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive as enabling framework to actively disseminate environmental information to the public leaves room for improvement. It has indicated in the 3-yearly INSPIRE implementation report¹²³ that the necessary data-sharing policies allowing access and use of spatial data by national administrations, other Member States' administrations and EU institutions without procedural obstacles are available but not fully implemented. Recently amendments were made to the Slovenian Public Information Access Act to implement the Directive on the re-use of public sector information. Data gathered in the public administration during the execution of public tasks will have to be available for reuse without charging fees.

Assessments of monitoring reports¹²⁴ and the spatial information that Slovenia has published on the INSPIRE geoportal¹²⁵ indicate that not all spatial information needed for the evaluation and implementation of EU environmental law has been made available or is accessible. The larger part of this missing spatial information consists of the environmental data required to be made available under the existing reporting and monitoring regulations of EU environmental law.

Suggested action

- Critically review the effectiveness of its data policies and amend them, taking 'best practices' into consideration.
- Identify and document all spatial data sets required for the implementation of environmental law, and make the data and documentation at least accessible 'as is'

¹¹⁸ European Commission, [2012/2013 access to justice in environmental matters in Slovenia](#)

¹¹⁹ UNECE, 1998. [Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters](#)

¹²⁰ European Union, [Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information](#)

¹²¹ European Union, [INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC](#)

¹²² European Union, EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 Accelerating the digital transformation of government [COM\(2016\) 179 final](#).

¹²³ European Commission, [INSPIRE reports](#)

¹²⁴ [INSPIRE Indicator trends](#)

¹²⁵ [Inspire Resources Summary Report](#)

to other public authorities and the public through the digital services foreseen in the INSPIRE Directive.