

# SLOVENIA

*By Walter G. Steblez  
United States Geological Survey*

Slovenia's economy (GDP) grew by about 3% in 2001 compared with that of 2000, and total output of industry by about 2.9%. The country's positive economic performance over several years to a large extent mirrored a social and political environment that was more stable than that of the rest of the republics which formed the former Yugoslavia. Slovenia's industries and infrastructure also compared more favourably with those of the EU-member countries than with those of its former Yugoslav partners.

Slovenia's minerals output, within the context of regional and global mineral production levels, was modest and included coal, natural gas, petroleum and a variety of industrial minerals. Mineral raw materials required by

the country's industries mainly were met through imports. Preliminary trade returns for 2001 show Slovenia's net import reliance (in value) on iron and steel (65%), nonferrous metals (6.5%), and crude and refined petroleum (almost 100%).

In 2001, mining and quarrying as a percentage of GDP was reported at 0.9%, which was a decline of more than 7% compared with its comparable status in 2000. The total volume of mine production in 2001 showed a decline of about 8%. However, the output of basic metals and semi-manufactures showed a gain of about 6.7%. The year's mining results in the mineral fuels branch registered declines in brown coal, lignite and natural gas production of about 7%, 8% and

## Slovenia Mineral Production (t)

Commodity	1999	2000	2001
Aluminium, ingot, primary and secondary	77,200	83,800 <sup>r</sup>	76,632
Ferrochromium	560	—	—
Ferrosilicocalcium	200	200	100
Ferrosilicon	8,000	9,000	9,000
Crude steel	405,000	519,000 <sup>r</sup>	500,000
Semi-manufactures	418,000 <sup>r</sup>	466,000 <sup>r</sup>	450,000
<b>Industrial Minerals</b>			
Cement ('000 t)	1,224 <sup>r</sup>	1,300	1,300
Ceramic clay	2,500	2,500	2,500
Kaolin:	10,000	10,000	10,000
Lime ('000 t)	150	150	150
Pumice <sup>°</sup>	40,000	40,000	40,000
Quartz, quartzite, glass sand:	210,000	210,000	200,000
Salt	5,000	5,000	2,000
Sand and gravel ('000 t)	12,419 <sup>r</sup>	12,526 <sup>r</sup>	12,500
<b>Mineral Fuels</b>			
Brown coal ('000 t)	758	737 <sup>r</sup>	685
Lignite ('000 t)	3,804	3,743 <sup>r</sup>	3,448
Natural gas ('000 m <sup>3</sup> )	5,700 <sup>r</sup>	6,800 <sup>r</sup>	6,100
Petroleum	800 <sup>r</sup>	600 <sup>r</sup>	700

<sup>°</sup> Estimated. <sup>r</sup> Revised

10%, respectively. Although a rise in production was indicated for crude petroleum, the actual output of this commodity was negligible. The contraction of mining and quarrying output correlated with declines in the sector's labour force which, with respect to employment levels in preceding years, had fallen by 8.3%, 15.5%, 5.3% and 2.6% in 2001, 2000, 1999 and 1998, respectively. Employment increases, however, were recorded mainly in the service sectors of Slovenia's economy.

Slovenia's metallurgical sector largely consisted of primary aluminum production at Kidričevo (Talum) and three steel mills. Slovenske Železarne (SŽ), a state-owned holding company, maintained ownership of SŽ Acroni Jesenice (Acroni) and SŽ Metal Ravne (Metal Ravne). In 2001, SŽ reported seeking foreign investors in its Acroni and Metal Ravne operations, preferably through joint venture arrangements.

Acroni's total steelmaking capacity amounted to about 490,000 t/y, however, less than one-half of this has been in production in recent years. An investment programme to modernise Acroni during 2000-2004 (US\$52 million) was set to raise the plant's annual stainless production to 100,000 t from 50,000 t. The modernisation of the plant's process control system and the re-heat furnace also was scheduled. Another major component of Acroni's investment programme addressed the improvement of environmental aspects of steelmaking, which included dust abatement at the electric arc furnace (EAF) operations, the upgrading of the water treatment system, as

well as dust removal and slag handling and processing). In addition to stainless steel, Acroni also produced carbon and alloy steels. Planned investment at Metal Ravne for 2001 (about US\$4.5 million) largely was to go for the modernisation of the plant's medium section mill. Metal Ravne produces about 150,000 t/y of carbon alloy and stainless steels

Investment plans for 2001 (about US\$2.7 million) at Inexa Štore (formerly Jekla Štore), which has been a subsidiary of the Inexa Group of Sweden since 1999, called for the modernisation of the EAF and continuous caster; also the construction of the smelter's dust abatement technology was to begin in 2001 and be fully installed by 2003. Inexa Štore has a 145,000-t/y capacity to produce engineering, forging and spring steels (Barrett, pp. 27-30).

### References

- Barrett, Richard, 2001, Set for sale: Metal Bulletin Monthly (Europe/CIS Supplement), June, pp. 18, 19.
- Bednas, Maja, editor-in-chief, 2002, Spring report 2000 Economic development in 2001 and analytical explication of spring economic forecast for 2002 and 2003: Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (Ljubljana), 168 p., pp 142-143.
- Statistichi Urad Republike Slovenije (Statistical Directorate of the Republic of Slovenia), 2002, Slovenia v stevilah (Slovenia in figures): Statistichi Urad Republike Slovenije, Issn 1318-3745, 64 p., p. 60.