

## Editorial



As the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU comes to a close, the Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA) looks back on an especially

productive year, despite the continuing progression of the COVID pandemic. Slovenia actively contributed to strengthening the EU's resilience to health, economic, energy, climate and cyber crises. In light of this, we at SBRA, organised numerous events which promoted Slovenia, its institutions and its successes.

Thanks to SBRA being a member of several Brussels-based networks, including Informal Group of R&I Liaison Offices (IGLO) and the Universities Informal Liaison Offices Network (UnLiON), the Jožef Stefan Institute and the National Institute of Chemistry presented Slovenia's priorities in their respective fields. Additionally, SBRA continues to closely collaborate with the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU by organising online seminars which went into detail of the priorities of the Slovenian presidency in education, science, research and innovation. Other initiatives, including matchmaking events in the fields of energy, culture, creativity and inclusive society also proved to be a great success, especially with the uptake of new collaborative online tools and platforms.

Finally, we're especially proud of ongoing cooperation with the Slovenian Ministry of Defence, the European Defence Agency and the European Commission. On 30 November we organised an event which focused on the involvement and participation of SMEs in defence initiatives and resulting consortia. Lastly, as a part of the three day in-person Slovenian festival organised on the Schuman roundabout, SBRA in cooperation with the Slovenian Embassy in Brussels European Movement in Belgium organised a panel debate and presentation on AI-practices. For further information, you're welcome to visit our website.

Dr. Draško Veselinovič  
President, Management Board

## Business Briefs

### Renault Twingo EV to make one-third Slovenia's Revoz output in 2021



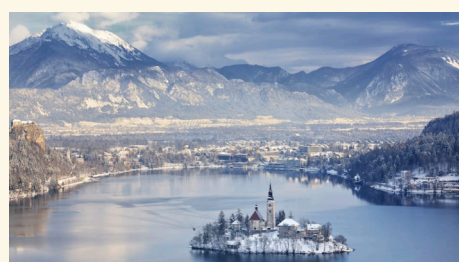
Renault Twingo electric cars will represent a third of this year's output of Slovenian car maker Revoz, a subsidiary of France's Renault. With Slovenia being one of the greenest countries in Europe and given the location of the Novo mesto plant which is practically in the city, the environmental accountability is a constant strategic priority for the plant.

Revoz launched the production of Twingo's electric version in September 2020 and produced approximately 650 vehicles per day mainly sold in Germany, France and Italy, the head of Twingo electric project at Revoz explains Igor Kirar. Revoz at the moment employs some 2,200 people. Its daily production of vehicles is planned to be reduced from mid-November to 480 cars from the current figure of around 650 vehicles. Revoz produces the Clio, Twingo and electric Smart Forfour models.

The automotive industry contributes almost 10% of Slovenia's gross domestic product, employing some 40,000 people - Novo Mesto-based Revoz is the only car manufacturer in Slovenia and one of the country's top exporters.

For more, go to: <https://revoz.si/en/>

### Slovenian tourism soars in October despite COVID-19 epidemic



The latest available month October 2021 suggests that number of foreign tourists visiting Slovenia was four times higher than in the same month last year. The figure reached 161,470 this October, with most foreign tourists arrived from Austria, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Serbia and Hungary. The number of foreign tourists in the first ten months of the year rose by 39 percent compared to the same period in 2020.

Meanwhile, the number of domestic tourists, which accounted for about 64 percent of all tourists in October, more than doubled compared to the same month in 2020. Most tourist overnight stays in October 2021 were recorded in health (spa) resorts, followed by seaside resorts and mountain resorts.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, tourism represented about 10.6 percent of the country's GDP, but this fell to 6.5 percent in 2020. Latest forecasts suggest that that income from foreign tourists will return to 2019 levels by 2024.

For more, go to: <https://www.slovenia.info/en>

## Research Briefs

### Slovenia allocated EUR 1 billion for research and development in 2020

According to provisional data, gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) in Slovenia in 2020 reached a record high of EUR 1 billion, which is 2% more than in 2019. Compared with the previous year, there is a growing trend in gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD), both in absolute terms and as a share of GDP. If GERD is expressed as a share of GDP, in 2020 this share was 2.15% of Slovenia's GDP, which is 0.1 of a percentage point more than in the previous year.

As in the previous years, the largest part of R&D funds in 2020 was spent in the business enterprise sector (EUR 738.6 million or 73% of total funds), followed by the government sector (EUR 138.6 million or 14% of total funds), the higher education sector (EUR 123.2 million or 12% of total funds) and the private non-profit sector (EUR 7.1 million). Compared to the previous year, expenditure on R&D in 2020 slightly increased in all sectors of performance: in absolute terms the most in

the business enterprise sector (by EUR 7.3 million) and relatively the most in the private non-profit sector (by 17%).

According to provisional data, 25,175 persons were engaged in R&D in Slovenia in 2020, which is similar to the previous year.

For more, go to: <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/>

### **Ljubljana declaration on gender equality aims to redress imbalance in research and innovation**



EU Member States have made a fresh commitment to improve gender balance in research in the Ljubljana Declaration on gender equality in research and innovation, which was published on 26 November 2021. The move comes as the latest research shows that despite the fact that as many women as men complete undergraduate degrees, the gender gap in research and innovation-related jobs persists, according to the 2021 edition of the European Commission's 'She Figures' report. Only 33% of Europe's researchers are women, and they remain under-represented at the highest level of academia, with only 26% of full professorship positions held by women. Women are also under-represented among self-employed professionals in science and engineering and ICT, accounting for only 25% of these roles.

The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation is one of the achievements of Slovenian presidency. It highlights the need to be proactive in mainstreaming gender equality across research and innovation, to ensure a just twin transition, triggering new inclusive ways of life for all. The Ljubljana Declaration will bear fruit in the new, revitalised European Research Area (ERA) as an ERA Policy Agenda Action on promoting gender equality and fostering inclusiveness, delivered over the next 3 years, explained the Slovenian Minister for Education, Science and Sport, Ms. Simona Kustec.

### **State Secretary Raščan on the importance of digital transformation for archival science**



State Secretary Stanislav Raščan described how digital transformation brings new opportunities and challenges for archival science. The European Union's Digital Agenda in general concentrates on digital transformation and the completion of an ambitious legislative package designed to strengthen digital resilience and respond effectively to crises. In the context of digitalisation, important changes bring about the development of artificial intelligence with enormous potential and advantages for not only the individual and society but humanity in general.

During its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Slovenia has been striving to step up joint efforts for further progress of the Union in the field of the digital economy, with the aim of ensuring a secure, resilient, human-centric and responsible digital transformation.

### **EUTOPIA alliance adopts academic mobility agreement**



During EUTOPIA Week, held in person in Barcelona from 22 to 26 November, a mobility agreement was signed between the alliance's six founding universities: University of Ljubljana, University of Warwick, Pompeu Fabra University, CY Cergy Paris University, Vrije Universiteit Brussel and University of Gothenburg.

The signed document, which has an initial duration of five years, provides for mobility to start as of the 2022-2023 academic year,

and stipulates that up to 100 undergraduate students from each university should spend periods in other universities in the alliance every year. Moreover, the universities are committed to studying other forms of mobility, such as digital or short-term mobility, to open up the range of possibilities insofar as possible. Finally, the agreement provides that each university will allow up to 10 members of its teaching and research staff and administration and services staff to spend training periods or teaching internships at one of the signatory universities of the agreement.

## **Regional Briefs**

### **Slovenia now member of EU Med**

Slovenia officially became a member of the club of Mediterranean EU countries henceforth known as EU Med, which has grown from seven to nine members with the inclusion of Slovenia and Croatia at a summit in Athens. At the summit, a declaration was issued that the nine countries' leaders committed to implementation of the Paris Agreement to work to rein in climate change and preserve the natural environment of the Mediterranean.

The participants also adopted a joint declaration on issues of political and humanitarian significance, referring to peace, security, and stability in the Mediterranean as a strategic priority of the EU. They also discussed Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and Afghanistan, and joint efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, among other issues.

*Most – meaning bridge in the Slovenian language – is a news bulletin published by the Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA). SBRA is a non-profit organisation acting as a 'bridge' between the business and research communities in Slovenia and the EU institutions, and other public and private bodies at EU level.*

### **Slovenian Business & Research Association**

Rue Belliard 40, B-1040 Brussels  
Tel +32 (0)2 786 3071  
E-mail: [info@sbra.be](mailto:info@sbra.be)  
Web: [www.sbra.be](http://www.sbra.be)

Published: December 2021