

## Editorial



The world is at crucial crossroads, as is the EU and Slovenia – its small but active and essential member.

As it stands, Slovenia was the first of the new

EU Member States to join the Eurozone in 2007. It has a very stable political situation and the government is striving to implement numerous and necessary reforms in healthcare and other social issues, including a more sustainable pension system. In recent years, Slovenia has had a very steady and high economic growth rate – one of the highest in the EU – in 2018 GDP expanded by 4.1%.

Well documented global and European developments have had an impact on both Europe's and Slovenia's GDP growth rates, showing a noticeable slowdown. Nevertheless, in the second quarter of 2019, GDP continued to expand at 2.6% year-on-year. The latest economic forecast shows a similar expansion for 2020. Very favorable and positive results also indicate that Slovenia is one of the very few EU countries which has had a budget surplus, therefore successfully lowering its public debt.

Besides the very positive macroeconomic climate, individual achievements have not been lacking either. Slovenian companies continue to forge successful international deals in a variety of sectors. More so, the country's research institutes have achieved important milestones and internationally recognized results. In fact, Slovenia is the most prosperous country with the EU-13 regarding Horizon 2020 and other EU financed projects.

The gap continues to narrow with leading EU economies. Additionally, in 2017 Slovenia became a member of the Vanguard Initiative – which aims to pioneer new approaches to support EU industry internationalisation and competitiveness by bringing regions together. Thanks – in part to this particular Brussels-based network – Slovenia has become a very active and reliable partner in high tech projects.

Dr. Draško Veselinovič  
President, Management Board

## Business Briefs

### ***ELES developing infrastructure for mass charging of electric vehicles***



As a transmission system operator, ELES is one of the main actors in the electricity market. With increasing use of electric vehicles, new challenges will arise for ELES and other operators as the pattern of electricity consumption changes. ELES is aware that a long-term transition to e-mobility is only possible with close cooperation of key stakeholders – from automotive industry, smart charging station manufacturers, building and parking space owners, transmission and distribution system operators, regulators and policymakers. Therefore, to effectively participate in the development of e-mobility, ELES developed the E8 concept.

The E8 concept is based on eight principles of optimal development, and balances all key aspects determining accessibility, robustness, sustainability and rapid expansion of private charging stations. Since ELES wanted to test its E8 concept for massive charging of e-vehicles, it has launched the pilot project. The first results of the project are expected in the last quarter of 2019.

For more, go to: [www.e8concept.com](http://www.e8concept.com)

### ***EIF, SID Bank co-finance €100 million programme to back Slovenian SMEs***

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Slovenia's SID Bank are providing a €100 million loan to a joint equity investment programme to support the access of Slovenian small and medium enterprises and midcaps to growth and expansion equity capital. The programme is guaranteed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the Investment Plan for Europe. The Slovene Equity Growth Investment Programme (SEGIP) was launched in November 2017 with the objectives to support Slovenian SMEs and midcaps to attract international

private equity investment to the country and to build local capacity by supporting emerging fund managers which focus a significant part of their investments into Slovene companies.

For more, go to: [www.sid.si](http://www.sid.si)

## Research Briefs

### ***Boosting Innovation for EU Industry: Industrial Infrastructures and Open Innovation Ecosystems***



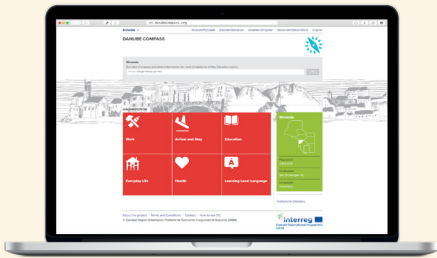
On 3 April 2019, the Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA) organised in partnership with the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana and the European Commission a conference entitled Boosting Innovation for EU Industry: Industrial Infrastructures and Open Innovation Ecosystems. Over 200 participants attended the event, which brought together key decision-makers in the region and many high-level speakers, including several Slovenian ministers, rectors, deans, as well as Deputy Director-General Ms. Signe Ratso from the European Commission, DG RTD.

Increasingly companies across the EU need access to open innovation ecosystems, to assist upscaling new technologies, product testing and validation support. The cost of such open innovation ecosystems and their associated infrastructures can be very high, especially for SMEs and start-ups.

The conference also showcased several excellent examples of innovation support with special emphasis on Slovenia and the wider region, provided feedback to high level EU representatives and discussed the needs of the local industry. Participants were also among the first to be presented new changes to the European Innovation Council (EIC), including a budget increase of another €2 billion to improve and encourage entrepreneurs and innovation in Europe.

For more, go to: [www.sbra.be](http://www.sbra.be)

**Danube Compass Information Platform a fundamental tool for empowering people**



To know is to be able to decide on one's future and be in control of one's life. To know is to have access to information. Therefore, the Danube Compass Platform is a fundamental tool for empowering people by giving them access to vital information on numerous aspects of everyday life when moving to a new country.

Danube Compass Platform is a digital platform bringing together all the information regarding arrival and stay, work, education, everyday life, health and how to learn the local language with one simple intention: to facilitate one's life, be it for an Erasmus student, asylum seeker, potential investor, or an average citizen. Shortly, to provide information for newcomers to one of the 8 countries of the Danube Region: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany and the Czech Republic. All the information is available in the local languages and in languages of origin countries of majority of migrants.

The end goal is to improve integration outcomes for newcomers in the region through enhancing public institutions' capacities for supporting them in becoming fully integrated in the labour markets, as well as everyday life of the Danube region's societies.

For more, go to: [si.danubecompass.org](http://si.danubecompass.org)

**National Institute of Chemistry in Slovenia have developed a novel approach to regulate human cell response**



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHEMISTRY

Researchers from the National Institute of Chemistry in Slovenia have developed a novel approach to regulate human cell

response, endowing cells to respond to extracellular stimuli in minutes instead of hours. The authors believe that their system could be useful in various medical applications. Cells function on the basis of a large number of processes working in conjunction to detect and respond to diverse stimuli. The control of cellular response is important in cellular therapy, as it could improve its efficiency and safety.

For more, go to: [www.ki.si](http://www.ki.si)

**University of Primorska among the U-Multirank Top 25 performers**



The latest results from the international university ranking programme U-Multirank 2019 mark the latest milestone for University of Primorska (UP): the title of Global Top 25 performer in the field of international orientation of study programs. The excellent performance was achieved thanks to UP's Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technologiess study and research areas of mathematics, computer science and biology. This year, U-Multirank evaluated 1,711 universities from 96 countries.

For more, go to: [www.upr.si](http://www.upr.si)

**Regional Briefs**

**Ljubljana receives the Best of Cities sustainable tourism award**



At one of the largest and most important tourism trade fairs in the world, the ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus Börse) concluded with a ceremony of prestigious

awards to the best destinations from the Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations list. This year, Ljubljana won in the Best of Cities category, receiving the award for its best practice – the implementation of the Locally Grown Food Exchange (Borza lokalnih živil). This is already the fifth award Ljubljana has received by the Green Destinations organisation.

The jury observed the three criteria: The Green Destinations sustainable assessment of Ljubljana (their Green Destinations Gold Award), the implementation of the Locally Grown Food Exchange (Borza lokalnih živil) innovative project and the options of implementing such practice in other locations.

For more, go to: [www.visitljubljana.com](http://www.visitljubljana.com)

**BMW production facility to be built in Slovenska Bistrica**



Slovenian aluminum producer Impol will supply German car producer BMW with aluminum rods for the bodywork of its new electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. The deal is worth €40 million and will run until 2024, with production expected to be launched at the end of 2020 in a new 3,000 square metre production facility to be built in Slovenska Bistrica.

*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.*

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