



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

# RIO Country Report 2017: Slovenia

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## Summary

Slovenian GERD declined in 2016 to €809m or 2.0% of GDP, primarily due to the lower funding of R&D activities by the business sector (Eurostat provisional data). A small increase in GBAORD (€2.9m) did not offset this trend, which was expected due to the delays in the implementation of the smart specialisation strategy. The legal framework for R&D activity saw limited progress in 2017- a draft law was presented for public consultation in the autumn of 2017, receiving numerous comments from stakeholders. Real GDP increased by 4.8% in the first half of 2017 surpassing its pre-crisis peak. Growth is forecast to increase to 4.7% in 2017, 4.0% in 2018 and 3.3% in 2019. The unemployment rate is expected to decline to around 5.2% in 2019 (EC, 2017a).

## Challenges for R&I policy-making in Slovenia

1. **Ensuring the sustainability of R&D&I funding.** The Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia planned a constant increase in the resources for R&D, in order to achieve the Europe 2020 target of 3% of R&D intensity. However, in 2016, GERD was at 2.0%, a decline from 2.58% achieved in 2013. Only a very slow increase of GBAORD is planned in the budget for 2017-2018.
2. **Development of a well co-ordinated and transparent R&I governance.** Slovenia lacks an effective governance structure for R&I due to weak coordination across responsible departments and collaborative links between major stakeholders in innovation policy. Yet, no change has been observed in this area except for the new coordination body for the implementation of RIS3.
3. **Human resources in S&T.** Slovenia has managed to increase the enrolment of youth in tertiary education significantly. With special measures to promote doctoral studies, the number of students engaged in them has increased too. With the diminishing public resources for R&D, Slovenia experienced a situation of a much larger outflow of PhDs than the research sector was able to absorb. This led to increased unemployment among the high-skilled, with some leaving to find jobs abroad and others accepting work below their qualifications level.

## Main R&I developments in 2017

- **Draft law on R&D.** MESS presented draft law on R&D in end of Oct. for public discussion till end of November. In view of numerous comments received from various science communities the text of the Law has only been submitted to other ministries in end January 2018.
- **Action plans of Strategic Research & Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs).** Following the initial call in Dec. 2016, the nine SRIPs selected by GODC prepared their Action Plans, which were approved by the coordination body and published in July 2017.
- **Policy Support Facility (PSF).** The Slovenian authorities are using the PSF under Horizon 2020 to address the issues of internationalisation of Slovenian science and improve the cooperation between the science base and business. A second draft was submitted to the Slovenian authorities by end of the summer, but the final report has not yet been submitted by the expert group.

## Smart specialisation

Slovenia adopted its Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) in 2015. RIS3 identifies three priority areas: a) Digital, b) Circular and c) (S)Industry 4.0. Delays in the preparation of RIS3 have also resulted into a delay in implementation. Over the period 2016 – 2018, Slovenia plans to invest €1.9b through the Operational Programme in accordance with the thematic priorities of the Smart specialisation strategy (RIS3) (€1b on R&D&I, €0.8b on entrepreneurship and €0.05b on human resources).



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