

**INCLUSION,  
RESPONSIBILITY,  
SECURITY,  
SOLIDARITY,  
KNOWLEDGE**

**FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

**Ljubljana, december 2024**



**REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS**

# INCLUSION, RESPONSIBILITY, SECURITY, SOLIDARITY, KNOWLEDGE; FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Foreign Policy Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Strategy) defines the guidelines for implementing and achieving the objectives of Slovenian foreign policy. Building on the strategies adopted in 1999, 2002, 2010, 2015 and 2021, it is grounded in the Declaration of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (2015), the Resolution on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia (2019) and the Resolution on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic of Slovenia (2017). The Strategy is also consistent with other national strategic documents in the areas mentioned in the text.

Slovenia pursues an independent and autonomous foreign policy in the interests of the country and its citizens, under the general guidelines of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the Foreign Affairs Act. Slovenia acts as a responsible and credible member of the international community and will continue to fulfil the obligations and agreements arising from its membership of international organisations and institutions. It will continue to uphold the values of human rights and freedoms, democracy, the rule of law, international peace and security, and sustainable development.

The Strategy has been updated in response to current international developments and negative trends, which are becoming increasingly unpredictable with the emergence of new actors, new technologies and new challenges. The global multilateral order, based on international law, international organisations and the cooperation and interdependence of actors, faces the challenges of multipolarity and competition. As a consequence, the world is more fragmented with less security, a growing number of global crises and conflicts with a strong geopolitical, geo-economic, environmental and climate dimension, and the emergence of protectionist policies. Humanitarian needs are growing, the development gap is widening, and migration flows are intensifying. This international dynamic calls for an effective response from all actors, including Slovenia.

The Strategy defines Slovenia's role in the international sphere by outlining:

- a) a European dimension, with a particular focus on the functioning in the European Union (EU);
- b) the Euro-Atlantic dimension, with a particular focus on the engagement in NATO and collective security;
- c) a global dimension, which is realised through the participation in the United Nations (UN) and other multilateral forums, and the forging of ties with third countries.

# 1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

## 1.1 INCLUSION for the benefit of all

Slovenian diplomacy will implement the principle of inclusivity in all its activities at both the international and national level by seeking and shaping a broad social and political consensus on foreign policy issues.

To ensure a coherent foreign policy and the pursuit of the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) will strive for cooperation between all stakeholders in the field of international relations in Slovenia and the integration of their activities into a consistent, credible and integrated foreign policy, within the framework of its competences and as per the general guidelines laid down by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. Particular attention will thus be paid to the implementation of foreign policy based on the Constitution and the legislation, which means, first and foremost, that no state body or official may exceed their powers.

Slovenia's foreign policy will focus primarily on issues with potentially far-reaching implications for the interests of Slovenia and the development of the international community. These issues include strengthening the partnership and alliance with the United States of America, continued support and assistance to Ukraine, policy towards the Middle East, relations with China and the future of relations with the Russian Federation.

The Government will hold regular consultations on these and other central foreign policy issues with the National Assembly, which will set out general and long-term orientations to ensure a consistent representation of national interests by holders of state functions or foreign policy stakeholders abroad.

Slovenia will assume an active role in shaping international policy. It will proactively and prudently co-shape the EU's common foreign and security policy, contribute with responsibility and credibility to alliances and international organisations, and advocate progressive solutions with a view to strengthening international standards and norms. It will strive for effective partnerships and alliances capable of finding functional compromises, based on and stemming from shared values and solidarity, to create trust and a fairer world, and to ensure stability and equitable cooperation. Slovenia will follow, participate in and respond to current global trends and developments in an appropriate and timely manner. Slovenia will continue to work for effective multilateralism, transcending divisions, peaceful settlement of disputes, joint solutions to global challenges, constructive dialogue, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and thus securing the future for new generations.

Inclusion also entails systemic measures to strengthen equality policies. Slovenia will advocate the idea of building inclusive, sustainable and democratic societies, and it will further develop it with like-minded countries. Slovenia will further upgrade its foreign policy by firmly pursuing a feminist foreign policy. Through this approach, it will contribute to global social justice, to greater effectiveness in eliminating all forms of discrimination and to mainstreaming women and girl empowerment in Slovenian foreign policy. This is a horizontal priority area for Slovenian diplomacy to be upheld in all relevant activities at the bilateral and multilateral levels, including in development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

## 1.2 RESPONSIBILITY to ensure fair and just global governance

Slovenia will advocate effective multilateral cooperation, based on the sovereign equality of states, the principle of solidarity and respect for international law, drawing on the UN Charter. For Slovenia, multilateral engagement, with the UN at its core, is an essential mechanism for addressing global issues common to humanity, and this applies to all areas of the UN: peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

Through credible and principled multilateral action, Slovenia will promote its interests and values, establish and foster partnerships and disseminate good practices. By doing so, it will raise its international reputation, which is an important element of a country's soft power, influence and visibility.

In a multipolar world, with the growing influence of various non-state actors, such as non-governmental organisations and civil society, multinational companies, technological and financial platforms, as well as non-state armed groups, multilateralism is facing numerous challenges. Therefore, Slovenian diplomacy will make it a priority to strengthen inclusive multilateralism and confidence in the multilateral system.

Slovenia will therefore advocate for reforms that lead to greater efficiency and transparency in the UN, its agencies and other international organisations. In multilateral settings, the focus will be on the priorities set out in this Strategy, which are derived from the UN's fundamental objectives and the orientations of the EU. Slovenia will stand behind national and individual candidacies to international organisations and international bodies, including to enhance its own visibility and reputation in the international community, as well as to ensure the transfer and acquisition of expertise.

Founded on respect for human rights and freedoms, Slovenia will continue to advocate strongly for the protection, promotion, further development and codification of human rights, which are universal, indivisible, inalienable and interdependent. This applies both, to bilateral relations and international and regional organisations, such as the Council of Europe (CoE). Slovenia's priority areas will be the rights of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, individuals and groups in vulnerable situations, gender equality, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and the rights of minorities. Slovenia will continue to advocate for the universal abolition of the death penalty, torture and all forms of discrimination. Special attention will be devoted to the prevention of serious human rights violations and mass atrocities, with continued support for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect principle and human rights education.

Slovenian foreign policy will continue to promote respect for, strengthening, codification, progressive development and enforcement of international law in international relations, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. International law ensures predictability in the actions of States in the international arena, thereby strengthening trust and peace. As enshrined in its Constitution, Slovenia has an overall policy to strengthen mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and to strive for peace in ongoing conflicts and wars, including by supporting the functioning of and respect for international courts and tribunals and the enforcement of their decisions. In the future, particular emphasis will be given to the fight against impunity and the promotion of the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes.

### **1.3 SECURITY at the level of individuals, society and the state**

Founded on shared values, the NATO Alliance is key for ensuring Slovenia's national security and the cornerstone of European security and defence. We live in a rapidly changing world and a dynamic security environment with increasing use of military force, including hybrid, cyber and other levers of force. We face the erosion of multilateralism and the rules-based world order, particularly in the face of Russian aggression against a sovereign state which dismantled the European security architecture. We see increasing authoritarian threats to democracy and growing instability in the Southern neighbourhood and globally. In this context, NATO remains the most effective and best way to guarantee security and defence at the national and European levels.

Slovenia will continue ensuring its security through bilateral and multilateral activities in support of strengthening international peace, security and stability in the neighbourhood, Europe and the world. It will support preventive diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes and mediation, and participate in international military and civilian operations and missions of the UN, the EU, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other multinational frameworks, in line with the UN mandate. Slovenia will uphold arms control regimes, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the peaceful use of nuclear technology, the prohibition of the use of chemical and biological weapons, and effective control of dual-use exports and arms trade.

Slovenia has been a credible and reliable ally, contributing to common security and defence. No country can guarantee its own security by itself. Slovenia is therefore working even harder to fulfil its commitments to develop its defence capabilities and thus contribute to the common defence of allies and EU Member States. Committed to strengthening NATO's cooperation with other international organisations and partner countries, Slovenia supports the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU and their united response to common challenges and threats. While advocating the strengthening of the EU's common foreign and security policy and European defence capabilities, Slovenia also seeks to implement the NATO Strategic Concept and the EU Strategic Compass.

Slovenia will continue to address security issues based on a comprehensive understanding of security, including human security, focused on individuals and social groups.

### **1.4 SOLIDARITY to reduce inequalities**

Slovenia is committed to strengthening solidarity in the international community, following the principles of sustainability, fairness and shared responsibility. The principle of solidarity is also demonstrated through the provision of official development assistance (ODA) and humanitarian aid, as per the foreign policy objectives, priorities and needs. Development cooperation will focus on achieving sustainable development, reducing global inequalities and eradicating poverty, with Slovenia prioritising partnerships that enable long-term and sustainable solutions. In humanitarian action, Slovenia will endeavour to provide a rapid, effective and predictable response to humanitarian needs, respecting fundamental humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. To this end, it will strive for sustainable and predictable funding and increased ODA resources to meet international commitments and ensure compliance with the Resolution on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic of Slovenia.

Taking into account national, regional and global efforts, Slovenia will target its ODA in line with national priority areas and the existing documents governing this area, based on international commitments, notably within the EU and the UN, and the Sustainable Development Goals. An even stronger emphasis will be placed on combined activities in selected geographic areas and thematic areas pursuing the fundamental development cooperation principles of ownership, efficiency, inclusive partnerships and localisation.

In its role as the national coordinator for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs will strengthen government inter-ministerial coordination to ensure coherence in development action and cooperation with national and international experts and partners. Special attention will be devoted to strengthening the capacity of NGOs and other institutions for implementing development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia

The Ministry will promote closer cooperation with the private sector, which can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of development cooperation through innovation, expertise, financial resources and the creation of sustainable jobs. The development of public-private partnerships and dialogue between the State, NGOs and the private sector will be promoted to foster inclusive and long-term sustainable development solutions.

In the light of global trends, Slovenia will pay particular attention to climate change adaptation, food security, digital transformation and the inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women and young people. Development initiatives will be designed using cross-sectoral approaches addressing the interconnectedness of environmental, social and economic challenges.

Slovenia will strengthen cooperation with other EU Member States to ensure a coherent EU external policy in the field of development cooperation, making the best use of the Team Europe approach and branding, underscoring the joint efforts of the EU and its Member States working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



## 2. SLOVENIA IN EUROPE

### 2.1 EUROPEAN COUNTRY

Slovenia is located at the crossroads of Central Europe, the Mediterranean and the Alps. This identity, characterised by cross-border, regional and other connections, as well as human, political, economic, transport, cultural and other ties, is a defining element of Slovenia's European and foreign policy.

Good relations with neighbouring Austria, Croatia, Italy and Hungary remain the cornerstone of a successful foreign policy. For Slovenia, the neighbourhood is an area of dynamic economic cooperation and close cultural, scientific and political ties with minorities and national communities on both sides of the border as an important element of cooperation. The neighbouring countries have shared interests, such as environmental and food issues, the quality of economic, transport and energy links, cultural cooperation and the security and stability of the wider region. While continuing to promote dialogue and good neighbourly relations, Slovenia insists on resolving outstanding issues with its neighbours in full respect of the rules of international law.

Slovenia will strengthen contacts with Slovenian communities in the neighbouring countries and around the world. Continued efforts will be made to ensure that countries with a Slovenian minority fulfil their international legal commitments to protect minority rights. This will also help strengthen the common cultural and linguistic space, which is becoming increasingly economically integrated. In cooperation with the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad and other relevant ministries, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs will continue to pay special attention to the preservation of Slovenian identity, in particular by promoting the use and teaching of the Slovenian language and the strengthening of economic ties with an emphasis on the inclusion and participation of young people.

At the bilateral level, Slovenia will further build on its regular political dialogue and constructive cooperation with all EU Member States, paying particular attention to thematic interest groups for progressive solutions. It will deepen its strategic partnerships with Germany and France, maintaining a close dialogue on current foreign policy issues and European topics, and working towards enhanced cooperation in economic and other areas. These two countries have been the engine of EU integration and Slovenia shares similar views with them on many EU areas.

In addition to strengthening ties with its immediate neighbourhood, Slovenia will continue to develop its political and economic cooperation in Central Europe: with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. Enhanced cooperation with these countries could also be developed in the EU areas and in relation to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership engagement, as well as in the context of various types of crises and protection against natural and other disasters.

For Slovenia's foreign policy, the Western Balkans has been a priority area. Strengthening democracy, increasing political and economic stability, improving the security of the region and resolving outstanding issues from the past, in particular the succession issues of the former SFRY, are in Slovenia's direct national interest. Slovenian diplomacy will therefore continue to actively support and promote the enlargement policy of European and transatlantic integrations. Slovenia will shape its relations with the countries of the region through bilateral cooperation, EU processes, development partnerships, international operations and missions to ensure security and stability, and by participating in regional initiatives such as the Brdo-Brijuni Process and activities in international organisations.

Through EU membership and in bilateral relations, Slovenia will pay special attention to developing cooperation with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, in particular Switzerland as one of the most important economic partners. Slovenia is interested in further building on positive relations with the United Kingdom as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a NATO ally, a member of the G7 and G20 and an important partner for Slovenia in many areas of bilateral cooperation. Good relations with the Holy See will be consolidated further. Slovenia will continue its in-depth dialogue with Turkey, including on the basis of the Strategic Partnership. Slovenia supports new geostrategic initiatives for pan-European dialogue among democracies, such as the European Political Community.

Slovenia advocates an active Mediterranean foreign policy, based on the blue and green economy topics and food and energy security, as well as common geographical features, intercultural dialogue, migration issues and resilience-building. Slovenia will pursue this policy even more intensively in bilateral relations and within the EU Med Group (MED9), the Union for the Mediterranean and in EU policies related to the Southern Neighbourhood. By further strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), Slovenia will actively contribute to the empowerment of young people for the benefit of the whole region.

The Eastern Partnership is an important European regional platform. Slovenia will continue to provide bilateral support in the area of democratic reforms and strengthening the rule of law. Given the European perspective of the countries in this region, Slovenia will further support civil society and free media efforts.

## **2.2 A reliable partner in the EUROPEAN UNION**

Tackling the EU's challenges, such as ensuring economic competitiveness, climate change, migration and enlargement, requires the integration of different areas of work. The MFEA, as the main coordinator of European affairs in Slovenia, will thus further strengthen their inter-ministerial coordination to pursue Slovenia's national interests in the EU through well-prepared positions and coordinated action.

Slovenia will continue to contribute to a strong, united, secure, competitive, inclusive and solidarity-based EU, underpinned by the shared values of democracy as a way of life, human rights and the rule of law, and advocating a society that excludes no one. Slovenia is aware that the world is constantly changing, and so is the EU. It will therefore continue to actively participate in the internal debate on the Union's reforms, including both institutional and budgetary aspects, and will support the further strengthening of citizens' involvement in EU policy-making and the EU's improved responsiveness to external challenges.

Slovenia supports the further strengthening of the EU to achieve a more closely integrated Union that is better equipped to address European and global challenges for the benefit of its citizens. As a responsible member of the Euro area and the Schengen area, Slovenia will work to ensure their full functioning. Through its positions and actions, Slovenia wants to form a core of interconnectedness and progress in the EU, based on the fundamental values of the Union. It is committed to strengthening the EU's internal market, the competitiveness of the European economy and cohesion, the effective management of migration flows, sustainable solutions, energy and food security, and a fair green transition and digital transformation to ensure an open strategic autonomy, responsibility and capacity building, and respect for the principles of solidarity and inclusion. In its efforts, Slovenia will engage with like-minded EU members based on shared interests.

Slovenia supports EU enlargement and the process thereof as a transformational lever and geopolitical tool for strengthening European values, progress and prosperity, and for achieving security and stability throughout Europe. The EU's enlargement policy must be credible, including as a tool for expanding its geostrategic influence. This is why Slovenia is committed to the timely preparation of all parties – both the EU in making the necessary internal changes and the candidates in meeting the conditions. Furthermore, Slovenia supports the opening of EU accession negotiations with other candidate countries, while the Western Balkans remain a priority area for Slovenia's European and foreign policy and development cooperation.

The EU's role as a global player can only be increased and consolidated if the Union is robust, powerful and resilient. The EU has a unique mix of soft power and it needs to translate all its levers into geopolitical power. In addition, it will need to develop hard power and invest in strategic resilience in all areas. This is why Slovenia will support the further strengthening of common policies, their better integration with the EU's external action and the increased effectiveness of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Only a strong and effective EU will be a truly global actor, able to defend its values, enter global value chains and represent and protect the interests of its Member States.

## **2.3 A credible ally and partner in the strategic TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

For Slovenia and Europe, strong transatlantic relations are the strategic security policy foundations, crucial for the effective functioning of NATO's political and security dimension. The transatlantic bond is also strengthened through bilateral relations between allies and via EU-US and EU-Canada relations. The EU and NATO are key strategic partners.

Providing a framework for political, security, defence, military and economic cooperation between the Allies, the transatlantic alliance is especially valuable in today's multipolar world of competition between major players and new and emerging powers. NATO membership represents a pillar of commitment to shared values and brings more security and predictability – alongside joint efforts to promote multilateralism, international law, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights and freedoms. NATO therefore remains a cornerstone of European and Slovenian security and defence.

Slovenia places among its foreign policy priorities developing a good friendship, partnership and alliance with the United States of America, which is of strategic importance. These relations are strengthened through Slovenia's engagement in NATO, the EU and bilateral mechanisms such as the Strategic Dialogue. Within the latter, Slovenia will work to develop new forms of bilateral cooperation, including in the areas of economy, science, technology and innovation.

Canada is another important transatlantic ally, with which relations are based on strategic partnership cooperation, both bilaterally and within the EU and NATO, as well as international organisations and initiatives.

In addition to the EU and NATO, regional organisations such as the OSCE are also important for the stability of the European continent and human security. As a member of these organisations, Slovenia will continue to support dialogue and cooperation, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity, respect for human rights and freedoms, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Slovenia will continue to uphold these values in the event of any renewal of the security-policy architecture.

## 3. SLOVENIA IN THE WORLD: global CHALLENGES

The world faces many challenges that are common to all and that no country can tackle alone. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution is deepening global inequality, accelerating migration pressure, increasing security risks and threatening the quality of life of today's and, above all, future generations. Technological progress is outpacing attempts at regulation, disinformation campaigns are taking on new dimensions, differences between countries are growing, and many new actors with influence are emerging in the international arena. Demographic factors, health threats, environmental pollution, new security risks, global interdependence, the growing development gap and threats to democracy put the survival of humanity at stake.

The fundamental challenge facing the international community is the erosion of multilateralism in an increasingly multipolar world, which is putting increasing pressure on liberal-democratic values and institutional arrangements. Populism and autocratic tendencies are on the rise. Slovenia seeks solutions to national and global security and economic needs within European, transatlantic and other multilateral organisations and groups of like-minded countries, honouring its interests, values and principles, which it will continue to stand for in bilateral relations.

### 3.1 Geographical challenges

The world is becoming increasingly complex, unpredictable and interdependent. The rules-based world order created post-World War II is crumbling. Slovenia condemns any violation of the UN Charter.

One such violation is the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which is a direct threat to European and global security. The Russian Federation bears the responsibility to put an end to the aggression and to withdraw from the territory of a sovereign state. Slovenia will continue to support efforts to achieve a lasting and just peace as soon as possible, one that will be accepted by Ukraine, based on international law and making a clear distinction between aggressor and victim.

Another threat to international peace and security with a direct impact on the European continent is the situation in the Middle East. Slovenia will continue its assistance to the Palestinian people and will work at the bilateral level, within the EU, the UN and in other alliances to promote a two-state solution, which is the only guarantee of peace, security, stability and coexistence for the people of Israel and Palestine and the wider region. Slovenia will also draw attention to Israel's responsibility for ending the war in Gaza and call on Israel to respect the principles of international law and implement relevant UN resolutions.

Other conflicts are also on the rise – no longer confined to less developed parts of the world. Slovenia is aware of the long-term negative consequences of wars and conflicts, which lead to serious violations of human rights and international law and to humanitarian catastrophes. Particular attention should be paid to protracted and frozen conflicts.

Slovenia will work to ensure balanced, reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade and economic relations with China. Our relationship with China must be multi-faceted, as the country is both a partner and a competitor. These relations must therefore be based on balanced cooperation, reciprocity, the fight against climate change under internationally agreed documents and in respect of the rules of international law. Above all, greater resilience must be secured when it comes to the security and cyber challenges emanating from China.

The Asia-Pacific region is the fastest growing region, with economic opportunities on the one hand and increased geopolitical risks on the other, which requires increased attention in Slovenian foreign policy. Slovenia will work to strengthen trade, science and technology cooperation, connectivity, digital partnerships and culture, both bilaterally and through regional organisations, including by increasing its presence in the region.

In Central Asian countries, the MFEA will support the interests of Slovenia and the Slovenian economy by strengthening economic, energy and other forms of cooperation. The Gulf and other countries of the Arab world make for another fast-growing region. Following the national interest, Slovenia will deepen economic and other contacts with these countries to attract new partners in thematic priority areas, to reach new markets and ensure knowledge transfer. Slovenian diplomacy will also promote cooperation in the areas of policy, development, economy, culture, research and other areas with countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

In bilateral relations, Slovenia will focus in particular on key regional leaders, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, the Republic of Korea and Mexico.

In addition to bilateral contacts, multilateral cooperation with the EU's policy partners and in multilateral forums remains important. In this context, Slovenia will seize the already established contacts and existing projects, building on the experience gained during the two terms of non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council and in other multilateral activities. Forging effective partnerships based on shared values and interests, equality and dialogue will be paramount in the future.

Global developments are also shaped by institutional shifts, such as informal multilateral alliances which have a strong influence and potential for expansion (G7, G20, BRICS+), and Slovenia will pay more attention to these trends.

### **3. 2 Thematic challenges**

The world is increasingly unpredictable and faces emerging threats. Some are new, and others are familiar, but when they assume a hybrid form the threat rises to a completely different level. Yet, it is hard to fathom that in 21st century Europe conventional war remains a relevant threat. Terrorism is considered an asymmetric security threat. Security is thus becoming a major challenge and is important for all segments of social life. Foreign policy is confronted with the value of security and the guarantee of human dignity in a wide range of areas, such as military and hybrid threats, environmental and climate security, natural and other disasters, food, human, financial, health, cyber, energy, technology and infrastructure security, and other segments of security, including underwater, in the air, in the High North and the High South, in cyberspace and outer space.

Slovenia provides for its security and contributes to global security through its membership of NATO and the EU, and with bilateral and multilateral activities in support of international peace, security and stability. For Slovenia, international security means the renewal of countries' commitment to peace and security, respect for international commitments, agreements and international law, the protection of human rights and the reduction of disparities. Thus, Slovenia will continue to advocate for international arms control regimes, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. In the face of the growing number of armed conflicts and crises in the world, Slovenia will consistently champion conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution and mediation activities, and will provide support to and participate in international military and civilian operations and missions of the UN, the EU, NATO and the OSCE, as well as in other multinational frameworks, in accordance with the UN mandate.

Migration poses a particular challenge and needs to be properly managed through cooperation between countries of destination, transit and origin. Taking into account the national interest, Slovenia advocates a safe and humane approach to migration and cooperation to ensure sustainable solutions integrating development, resilience and the protection of human rights and dignity. Slovenia is committed to addressing and eliminating the causes of migration, preventing irregular migration, facilitating safe, orderly and responsible migration and mobility of people, effective border management, cooperation in the return and reintegration of migrants, promoting tolerance, and preventing policies of hatred, exploitation and trafficking in human beings.

Food and energy security are becoming increasingly important factors for international peace and security, as they can be both causes and consequences of instability and irregular migration. As tensions in the world increase, these challenges are growing. At the bilateral and EU levels, Slovenia is working towards greater self-sufficiency and strategic diversification of food and energy resources in partner countries. The supply of these resources is becoming part of the resilience concept, which provides the country with a broad security framework, including through joint multilateral efforts, for example in the area of health. The shock of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of strengthening global health, the values of cooperation and solidarity, and the role of timely preparedness for future health crises – from the production chains of medicines and medical equipment to investments in science and research for future challenges. Slovenia will continue to engage at the multilateral level, foster global political will and strengthen partnerships and solidarity.

The EU market remains the most important geographical area for the Slovenian economy. As companies' interest in distant markets grows, so does their interest in economic diplomacy assistance. In line with the interests of the Slovenian economy, the internationalisation ecosystem in Slovenia will be strengthened further along with the presence in those markets that are expected to grow the most. As an export-oriented country, Slovenia has always insisted on international economic cooperation. In this context, the MFEA cooperates with the Ministry responsible for the economy, in particular in promoting the Slovenian economy and tourism, supporting businesses in foreign markets and integrating them into global supply and value chains. In international trade, Slovenia advocates a balanced, fair, predictable and rules-based trade policy with a modernised World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, with an emphasis on sustainability and open markets, as well as on effective synergies and coherent decisions. Through economic diplomacy, the MFEA pursues the economic, financial and development interests of Slovenia and its business entities and ensures the achievements are promoted under Slovenia's brand. In addition, it shares information about the economy, tourism, investment and other opportunities and all-round development in countries with a potential for economic cooperation.

Slovenia will continue to strengthen its role in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which provides policy analyses and recommendations for economic and social progress and is active in finding answers to new challenges. OECD membership offers Slovenia further opportunities to strengthen its relations with the most developed countries and key economic players at the global level.

The focus of Slovenian diplomacy is particularly on supporting a balanced economic and social transition towards a sustainable society, more effective management of the climate crisis, protection of the environment, including water and other natural resources, and the preservation of biodiversity and prevention of degradation of natural ecosystems. Climate change and overexploitation of natural resources endanger economic and social development and pose security challenges. Slovenia will pay special attention to climate diplomacy and activities in the framework of international climate negotiations (COP), underlining the need to prevent the negative effects of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – and thus reaffirming its commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda goals.

In this context, Slovenia was an initiator of the UN resolution on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and will strive to further promote and implement it. The document aims to contribute to a fair and balanced green transition, including for the least developed countries, which are most often affected by the triple planetary crisis.

For several years now, Slovenia has been one of the most active countries in the field of water diplomacy. The MFEA is working to raise awareness of the importance of secure water supplies for peace, sustainable development, the environment and climate action while highlighting the benefits of effective transboundary water cooperation. In its efforts for biodiversity conservation and food security, Slovenia highlights the importance of pollinators and World Bee Day. In this area, it promotes wide international cooperation and knowledge transfer to developing countries, paying particular attention to the empowerment of women and vulnerable social groups.

Slovenia follows digital and technological trends. It advocates a human-centred approach to the use and development of new technologies and digital competencies and free access to the internet and digital tools. Slovenia is committed to closing the digital divide and to the full inclusion of everyone in the digital society. It is active in the protection of human rights in digital and cyberspace and advocates ethical standards and responsible behaviour in the field of artificial intelligence. In this context, the cooperation and promotion of the UNESCO International Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI), hosted by Slovenia, remains important.

To keep pace with current trends, Slovenia needs effective science diplomacy. The need for reliable information and verifiable, evidence-based knowledge is growing along with the rising number of issues that require specialised expertise in foreign policy. Direct support of diplomacy may be assured through science and promoting international cooperation in science, including the exchange of good practices in science-business integration. Slovenia is committed to ethical research and the application of knowledge in all scientific and technical fields. The excellence of Slovenian knowledge, which also contributes to higher added value through its application in the economy, is promoted through the education system, scientific institutions and Slovenia's reputation.

Successful foreign policy uses public diplomacy tools and strategic communication as important levers of a country's soft power to raise its profile in the world. Through public diplomacy, Slovenia not only projects its image, values and activities to the world but also achieves its foreign policy objectives. Effective and credible communication with the public is essential for a better understanding of foreign policy and diplomatic activity, for greater awareness and thus greater preparedness and understanding of global developments. In the current flood of information and disinformation, agile public diplomacy is indispensable.

The branding of Slovenian foreign policy also falls within public diplomacy. The Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) is the most prominent and internationally recognised foreign policy project of Slovenia and Slovenian diplomacy. It has become an important tool of public diplomacy and a regional and international reference point for discussions on topical global issues. The MFEA also strives to enhance the visibility of Slovenian development cooperation and provides support to institutions and organisations that promote Slovenia and its achievements in the world, such as the ITF – Enhancing Human Security (ITF), the Centre for European Perspective (CEP), the Peace Operations and Peacekeeping Training Centre (POTC), the Centre for International Cooperation and Development (CMSR), the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF) and the International Center for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE). To broaden and deepen regional and global partnerships, share knowledge and increase visibility, the MFEA also organises international conferences such as Africa Day, Latin America and Caribbean Days and Slovenian Development Days.

Protecting the interests of Slovenian citizens is one of the key tasks of Slovenian diplomacy. Consular services are among the most important activities of the MFEA and have the most direct impact on Slovenian citizens and businesses in need of these services abroad. The MFEA is particularly dedicated to ensuring greater accessibility of consular services and protection in consular emergencies and crisis situations. In rescuing and protecting Slovenian citizens, the MFEA is facing increasingly complex challenges and global crises that require adapting, including by modernising its approaches and establishing additional mechanisms and resorting to mutual assistance within the EU.

Consular services are also crucial for Slovenian expatriate communities. The work of Slovenian Honorary Consuls abroad is vital for providing consular assistance under established practices and rules. Using their reputation, contacts and knowledge, Honorary Consuls also play a key role in Slovenian economic, cultural, scientific and public diplomacy.

The Slovene language and culture as an essential part of Slovenian identity and our creative power remains a vehicle for connecting Slovenian communities abroad and around the world. Culture is one of the most prominent foreign policy assets, enhancing the international visibility and recognition of a country's creativity, opening doors and connecting the world. International relations in the field of culture and cultural diplomacy are carried out by the MFEA in cooperation with the Ministry responsible for culture, to strengthen international cooperation in the field of culture and the visibility of Slovenian initiatives and positions in the field of culture at EU level and in international organisations. The two ministries work hand in hand to promote the Slovenian language, strengthen the Slovenian cultural and creative sector and showcase the wealth of Slovenian tangible and intangible cultural heritage and creativity abroad. By promoting a participatory approach, culture acts as a social connective tissue, fosters democratic processes and dialogue between cultures, and contributes to economic progress.





## 4. KNOWLEDGE for modern diplomacy

Diplomacy is at the service of national interests, citizens and the state. Diplomacy is not at the service of political parties, businesses and corporations, interest groups and vested interests. In its international relations, the Republic of Slovenia acts as one with all stakeholders behaving in a coherent and coordinated manner. In accordance with the legislation, the MFEA will continue to strive for a coherent Slovenian foreign and European policy among all state and government bodies. Good inter-ministerial cooperation, a fast flow of information and an effective formulation of positions are key to this.

Slovenian foreign policy wants to become even more inclusive. Unity and inclusion strengthen the pursuit of the national interest on important international issues, so having the broadest possible political and social consensus is desirable. On important foreign policy activities, the MFEA will consult with interested professionals, NGOs, political, academic and economic actors and will organise thematic consultations and conferences to this end. To formulate and implement its tasks, the MFEA will continue to use dedicated instruments, such as strategic and expert councils and special envoys. It will also maintain a regular dialogue with civil society and strive to ensure that the public is informed about Slovenia's foreign policy, diplomatic activities and priorities.

Excellence in diplomacy requires continuous training, including that provided by the MFEA Diplomatic Academy in cooperation with other training institutions at home and abroad. Modern and forward-looking diplomacy also requires and uses innovative approaches and ways of working, such as strategic foresight, specialisations and the use of new technologies.

The MFEA will strengthen the career development and professional system of its staff based on performance, skills and competencies, and will regularly recruit qualified staff, especially young people. It will strictly comply with the law and uphold equal opportunities, gender equality and the prohibition of any form of discrimination against employees, implementing a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of violence and harassment in the workplace and striving to create an inclusive, supportive and creative working environment for all to become a socially responsible and family-friendly employer. The MFEA will continue to cooperate with trade unions and professional networking bodies, including at the international level.

The growing interdependence and complexity of the world will require an enhanced response from Slovenian diplomacy. The MFEA will strive to ensure appropriate, stable, targeted and efficient funding for the Ministry and its network of diplomatic missions and consular posts around the world. The State will provide sufficient, stable and predictable long-term human, financial and material resources and infrastructure for the functioning and development of effective Slovenian diplomacy. This includes providing the means to implement all diplomatic tasks and continuously modernise the necessary equipment and assets, in line with the principles of the green transition, investing in staff, expanding the diplomatic network and supporting foreign policy orientations with various contributions based on Slovenia's strategic, security, political, environmental, economic and cultural interests.

## 5. Our RESPONSES

To respond appropriately to the complexity of the world and its many challenges, an integrated approach is needed, effectively merging security issues with other activities and tools of Slovenian foreign policy. In its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, Slovenia is thus determined to engage constructively in bilateral and multilateral frameworks based on the values and principles set out in this document, while strengthening its reputation and visibility, safeguarding national interests and ensuring global competitiveness.

Slovenia will therefore work towards:

### SECURITY, STABILITY AND PEACE

Slovenia will contribute to its national security and defence and to global security through its membership of the UN, the EU and NATO, and via bilateral and multilateral activities in support of strengthening peace and stability in Europe and the world. To this end, Slovenia will continue to support the deepening, enlargement and increased global role of the EU and will act as a credible NATO Ally. It will be an active member of the international community, including through its efforts within the UN. In a rapidly changing security environment, it will pay particular attention to traditional and newer security challenges such as wars and crisis hotspots, terrorism and violent extremism, organised crime, cyber and hybrid threats, environmental degradation, threats to biodiversity, food, water and climate security, nuclear security, and the misuse of artificial intelligence and other new technologies.

Slovenia will advocate and ensure continued support for Ukraine bilaterally and in international organisations for as long as necessary, both in ending the war and building a just peace, and through long-term comprehensive engagement in its reconstruction, including its European and Euro-Atlantic perspective. Slovenia will continue to assist the Palestinian people and will continue to work bilaterally, within the EU and the UN, and in other international alliances, to promote the two-state solution as the only guarantee of peace, security, stability and coexistence for the people of Israel and Palestine and the wider Middle East. Slovenia will also remain alert to and respond appropriately to other international crises and conflicts by upholding international law, human rights and freedoms, the values of democracy and the rule of law as the guiding principles.

### EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Economic diplomacy remains a Slovenian foreign policy priority. Slovenia will pay particular attention to new economic areas and opportunities, such as new and advanced technologies, food and energy security, including strategic diversification of energy sources, cybersecurity, a fair green transition, including the digital transition, the circular economy, space technologies, and the health and defence industries. Ensuring Slovenia's integration into global value chains will also be a priority. One of the most important tasks of economic diplomacy will be to strengthen Slovenia's strategic transport and logistics position, most notably through the Port of Koper and the European Transport Corridors and by improving connectivity, including with the establishment of new air connections. The economic diplomacy ecosystem will be strengthened through the work of the Internationalisation Council and other relevant stakeholders.

## **BALANCED GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION**

In its water, climate and digital diplomacy, Slovenia will pay particular attention to water and climate security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the green energy and digital transition. At the same time, it will draw attention to the interlinkages with topics such as human rights, the elimination of inequalities, development and education, and the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls and vulnerable social groups. As a reliable partner in the international community, Slovenia will work to secure funding for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, technology transfer and capacity and resilience building. It will continue to support drought risk management policies and seek synergies between desertification and climate change adaptation policies. Slovenia will consolidate its position as one of the most active countries in water diplomacy and in raising awareness of the importance of protecting bees and other pollinators in the efforts for preserving biodiversity and the efficient use of natural resources. It will pursue a human-centred approach to the development, use and access to new technologies, in particular with a view to narrowing the development gap.

## **PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER RESILIENCE**

Slovenia will build and strengthen effective partnerships based on common interests, mutual respect and equal dialogue. This broadening of partnerships in the international community enhances Slovenia's resilience and security, and enables the country to attune with current trends and co-shape the future. It will also build on its credibility in the international community through partnerships with developing and the least developed countries, in a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility.

## **TRANSPARENCY AND BRANDING OF SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY**

Global visibility is an important investment, as a country's reputation in the world is an important element of its power. Slovenia will strive to provide quality information on its foreign policy and diplomatic activities and priority areas, establishing a framework of approaches for strategic transparency through public diplomacy. The MFEA and its partners will further strengthen the BSF to consolidate the international brand with increased visibility, prominence and influence, moving from the organisation of the annual high-level event to the BSF platform – a conceptual think tank that operates throughout the year.

## **CARING FOR SLOVENIAN CITIZENS AND SLOVENIANS OUTSIDE SLOVENIA**

Among MFEA activities, consular services have the most direct impact on Slovenian citizens. The Ministry will regularly build on its excellence in this area, including through modern technological solutions. In addition, it will help Slovenian citizens living outside Slovenia in neighbouring and other countries to strengthen ties with their home country through linguistic, cultural, scientific and other forms of cooperation.

## **EXCELLENCE IN SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY**

In its foreign policy actions, Slovenia will firmly advocate the values it has achieved and for a sustainable way of life. This will require enhanced activities and expertise in trend-shaping, quality strategic planning and foresight, and effective international networking. The MFEA will strive to continuously update its tools and design dedicated instruments, to facilitate an inclusive, supportive and creative working environment and to invest adequately in human resources.

## SLOVENIA WILL:

contribute credibly to international security through its UN, EU and NATO memberships, and through bilateral and multilateral efforts to support the promotion of peace, stability and the Sustainable Development Goals.

forge international partnerships for greater resilience in support of the values on which it was founded, through an inclusive, responsible and solidarity-based foreign policy, in full respect of international law.

strengthen international development cooperation to promote sustainable development and reduce inequalities – with a focus on supporting the least developed countries and vulnerable groups. It will respond effectively to humanitarian crises caused by conflict, climate change or natural disasters.

consolidate its strategic position through economic diplomacy, promote the green transition and ensure the security of supply through predictable value chains.

increase the international efforts for a fair and balanced green and digital transition, including through active digital, climate, environment and water diplomacy.

keep attending to Slovenian citizens and members of Slovenian communities in the neighbouring countries and around the world, including by continuously modernising consular services.

step up public diplomacy activities to better inform the public, raise public awareness and increase its visibility in the world.

ensure the quality and development of Slovenian diplomacy by investing in knowledge and an effective and credible system for representing the country in the world.

