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# SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION





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# I. CONTEXT OF THE SLOVENIAN EU COUNCIL PRESIDENCY

On 01 July, 2021, Slovenia took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time in its history after joining the European Union in 2007. It is unsurprising that the Coronavirus and its consequences have been the central topic of conversation in Europe for the better part of one and a half years now, and although Europe's vaccination rate is steadily increasing, it seems the Slovenians will still need to manage the consequences of the pandemic. In an effort to equip the European Union with the tools it needs to protect the health of its citizens, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to lay the groundwork for deeper cooperation in health policy at a European level. Also, national recovery plans are on the agenda. Europe desperately needs to kickstart its economy in the wake of the pandemic, and in an attempt to accelerate Europe's green and digital transitions, these plans need to be approved and implemented as soon as possible. Along these lines, the key word for the next six months will be "resilience".

The portfolio the Slovenians are inheriting from the outgoing Portuguese Presidency can be labeled as very much "in the

works". For one, the next few months will prove crucial for Europe's digital sector (and beyond) as several, keystone pieces of digital legislation will either be presented soon or continue to be discussed under the supervision of the Slovenians. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden finally made his first trip to the European continent, setting important impulses for the future of the transatlantic relationship. The message from both sides is clear: while conditions for cooperation have improved compared to the past few years, there will be no return to the "status quo" prior to the Trump administration. Both sides intend to look forward and collaborate on very current, pressing topics like a minimum global taxation rate, presenting a united Western front vis-à-vis China, and protecting the rule of law and democratic values. On this last point, internal EU battles also lie ahead, as certain member states are accused of rule of law backsliding, potentially jeopardizing their access to Recovery Fund support measures. Whether economically, digitally, socially, or from a health perspective: the Slovenian Council Presidency will work towards making Europe stronger in the face of new, diverse challenges. ■



## II. FACTS & FIGURES

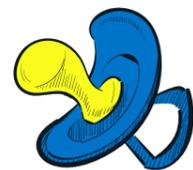
### DEMOGRAPHICS

#### POPULATION<sup>1</sup>



#### LIFE EXPECTANCY<sup>2</sup>

**81.3** YEARS (AVERAGE)



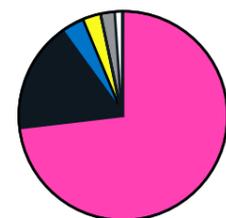
**FERTILITY RATE<sup>3</sup>**  
**1.6** CHILDREN/  
WOMAN

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE<sup>4</sup>

Slovenian



#### RELIGIONS<sup>5</sup>



- Roman Catholic (**73.5%**)
- Atheist, No Religion or Unknown (**17.5%**)
- Islam (**2.4%**)
- Orthodox (**2.3%**)
- Protestant (**0.8%**)
- "other" religions (Judaism, Eastern Religions & other beliefs) (**3.5%**)

### ECONOMY

**48€**  
BILLION  
ANNUAL GDP<sup>6</sup> (2019)

**3.2%** ↑  
GDP GROWTH<sup>6</sup>  
(2019)



**27,436€**  
GDP PER CAPITA<sup>6</sup>  
(2019)

#### TRADE

**40€**  
BILLION  
EXPORTS (2019)

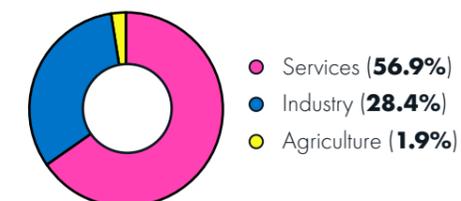
**39€**  
BILLION  
IMPORTS<sup>6</sup> (2019)

#### MAIN TRADING PARTNERS<sup>7</sup> (2019)

Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Croatia, Austria and China



#### ECONOMIC SECTORS<sup>8</sup> (2019)



#### MAIN INDUSTRIAL SECTORS<sup>9</sup> (2019)

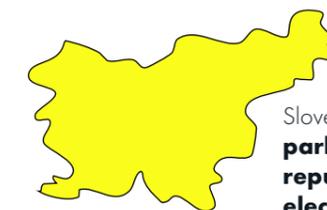
Food and Beverage, Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Automotive Industry, Non-Metallic Mineral Sector, Iron and Steel Sector



#### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE<sup>10</sup>

**3.8%** (2020)

### POLITICAL SYSTEM



Slovenia is a **parliamentary democratic republic with a proportional electoral system.**<sup>11</sup>

The constitution of Slovenia gives the **Slovenian Government** the executive power. The current government is composed of the Prime Minister and 16 Ministers. It directs and coordinates the implementation of state policy, considering the provisions of the Constitution, laws and other general acts of the National Assembly.

The parliament is **bicameral and consists of the National Assembly and the National Council.**

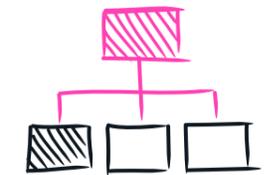
In the National Assembly, there are 90 elected representatives of political parties and representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities. It adopts its rules of procedure and the state budget, ratifies international treaties, and calls referendums. The National Council consists of 40 nominated members, who represent employers, employees, farmers, craftsmen and independent professions, non-commercial activities, and local interests.<sup>11</sup>

#### HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister  
**Janez Janša**

#### EXECUTIVE HEAD OF STATE

President  
**Borut Pahor**



#### KEY POLITICAL PARTIES<sup>12</sup>

- Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)
- List of Marjan Šarec (LMŠ)
- Social Democrats (SD)
- Modern Centre Party (SMC)
- Left (LEVICA)
- New Slovenia – Christian Democrats (NSI)
- Party of Alenka Bratušek (SAB)
- Democratic Pensioners' Party of Slovenia (DESUS)
- Slovenian National Party (SNS)

### CULTURE & SCIENCE



Slovenia is known for the Solkan bridge, the **world's longest stone-arch bridge railway.**

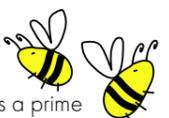
It was built in 1900 and features 4,533 stone blocks that stretch 220 meters.

There are more than **10,000 caves** in Slovenia.



While the Slovenian language is only spoken by 2.3 million people, there are more than **48 different dialects.**<sup>13</sup>

Beekeeping is a prime part of the Slovenian identity. There are **90,000 beekeepers** in a population of 2 million.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>1</sup><https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/Field/index/17>

<sup>2</sup><https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=SI>

<sup>3</sup><https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=SI>

<sup>4</sup>[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-77\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-77_en)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-major-religions-in-slovenia.html>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.destatis.de/Europa/EN/Country/EU-Member-States/Slovenia.html>

<sup>7</sup><https://wits.worldbank.org/countrysnapshot/en/SVN/textview>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/329073/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-slovenia/>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-biggest-industries-in-slovenia.html>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/330256/unemployment-rate-in-slovenia/>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.gov.si/en/topics/political-system/>

<sup>12</sup><http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/slovenia.html>

<sup>13</sup><https://slovenia.si/this-is-slovenia/dialects-enrich-the-slovenian-language/>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/slovenia/articles/slovenia-facts/>



# III. PRIORITIES FOR THE PRESIDENCY

The Slovenian EU Council Presidency will aim to facilitate the EU's recovery and reinforce its resilience, reflect on the future of Europe, strengthen the rule of law and European values, and increase security and stability in the European neighborhood.

Specifically, the Slovenian agenda for the presidency will focus on four main priorities:

## RESILIENCE, RECOVERY AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

Under the priority "The resilience, recovery, and strategic autonomy of the European Union", the presidency will focus on reducing dependence on external players. Strategic autonomy shall be strengthened also by building a European Health Union and improving the capacity to ensure the availability of medicinal products and medical devices, as well as facilitate their research, development, and production. The presidency supports the proposal to establish a Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). To be better equipped for the challenges of the new digital era, cyber resilience will be a priority along with digital service and market regulations. Additionally, Ljubljana will strive for an ethical development of Artificial Intelligence. To accelerate the green and digital transition, the Next Generation EU instrument and the Recovery and Resilience Facility are intended to be implemented effectively. The objectives of the EU to be climate-neutral by 2050 and reducing the greenhouse gases will be transposed into binding European legislation. The Slovenian Presidency will initiate debate on proposals for new own resources and discuss EU fiscal rules. ■

## CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The Slovenian Presidency puts a special emphasis on the Conference on the Future of Europe as it recognizes the need for a comprehensive debate on the common future of the European Union. Special attention will be devoted to the process of discussions on the expectations of citizens on the future of Europe. There will be a close cooperation with the three main EU institutions and it will be ensured that the Council of the EU and the member states have an appropriate role during the conference. The discussion will focus on the aspects of life in Europe today as well as in the future. ■

## THE EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE

Under the priority "A union of the European way of life, the rule of law, and equal criteria for all", the Slovenian Presidency is determined to strengthen the rule of law as one of the common European values. It will lead an annual dialogue on the rule of law situation with the aim of promoting a culture of the rule of law throughout the EU and enable member states to learn from each other's experiences. The presidency strives to show that the rule of law can be further strengthened in full respect of national constitutional systems and traditions. A further goal is to counter the negative demographic trends in the Union. ■

## A CREDIBLE AND SECURE EUROPEAN UNION

Under the priority "A credible and secure European Union, capable of ensuring security and stability in its neighborhood", the presidency strives to strengthen the transatlantic relations. The cooperation with US and NATO is supposed to reinforce the EU's position in the international community and facilitate member states' pursuit of common interests. Special attention will be devoted to the Western Balkan countries by focusing on their economic recovery, green and digital transition, and resilience in the region— also against increasing cyber threats. The presidency will be guided by the principle to build a positive future for young people. Slovenia will host the EU-Western Balkans Summit to further work towards this goal. To strengthen the security of the European Union, the presidency is determined to build a robust Schengen area that is prepared for the challenges ahead. Additionally, there will be negotiations on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. ■



# IV. PROGRAM OF THE PRESIDENCY

Presidency Motto:

**“Together. Resilient Europe.”**

## I. GENERAL AFFAIRS

In the continued response to the COVID-19 crisis, the presidency will focus on the “strategic aspects” the crisis has brought to the stage. Strategic autonomy should mark the EU’s global role by 2040. EU-NATO cooperation and a Joint Cyber Unit are central in fighting hybrid threats. Enlargement and association processes with the Western Balkans are of utmost importance for Slovenia, who strives for positive messages. With the UK, the focus will be on implementing the agreements made. In strengthening the respect for the rule of law, the presidency will work for a convergence of views through impartiality and equal treatment of all member states. To prepare the next EU Strategic Agenda, Slovenia will bundle the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe in the form of recommendations by early 2022. Ljubljana will also focus on the various aspects of the European Democracy Action Plan, for example to strengthen electoral integrity and encourage democratic participation. ■

## II. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, approving all national plans in the Council, and monitoring implementation will be central in this field. Achieving a successful recovery will also be the aim of the implementation of the common fiscal rules, which will allow for a balance between measures to support economic growth and the stability of public finances even after the COVID-19 crisis. The EU budget for 2022 shall be adopted. Regarding financial services, the presidency will continue activities related to the Banking Union. Legislative work will focus on two dossiers that will provide the basis for new EU own resources, namely the dossiers on digital taxation and the carbon border adjustment mechanism. In terms of business relations with third countries, the presidency will promote the simplification and integration of customs and other administrative procedures for companies. ■

## III. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

The presidency aims to further develop a “comprehensive system for migration and asylum management”. A focus is the strategy on the future of Schengen and the amendment of the Europol Regulation to ensure a well-functioning Schengen area, effective police cooperation, and security in the EU. Internal security will be an aspect when discussing the directive on the resilience of critical entities. Efforts in terms of better disaster resilience shall be

made. In addition, the Western Balkans are named as a geographic priority.

The presidency strives to raise awareness for the combat of hate speech and crimes, particularly online. The accession to the European Convention on Human Rights is support and the presidency will emphasize the impact of Artificial Intelligence tools on fundamental rights. It will continue to work on the digitization of justice and its legislative proposals (e-CODEX system, e-evidence). ■

## IV. ENVIRONMENT

The presidency sees the realization of the goals set out in the European Green Deal as the leitmotif of their environment and energy policy. For the environment, this includes, especially, formulating a mandate for the EU at the COP26 to the UNFCCC which can ensure that the EU acts as a united front at the conference and allows the EU to take a leading role in the negotiations. The presidency will lead the debate in the Council on the Fit for 55 package (including the revisions of the EU ETS, CO2-standards for vehicles, and the Effort Sharing Regulation), aimed at adapting the European energy system to the new climate targets, “trying to identify as many outstanding issues as possible and find balanced compromise solutions”. Furthermore, the presidency will seek agreement on a general approach to the European Batteries Regulation and lead a debate in the council on the Waste Shipment Regulation. ■



## V. TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

The European Green Deal entails a strong coordination of the EU's climate and energy policies. This means that several central energy files are now defined equally as environment policy – especially the Fit for 55-package mentioned above. The presidency sees the Renewable Energy Sources Directive (RES), the Energy Efficiency Directive (EE), and the Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) as key new energy files which it is prepared to begin negotiating on. The presidency will prioritize the inter-institutional negotiations on the Trans-European Energy Networks Regulation (TEN-E) while giving consideration to the decarbonization package in the field of gas legislation.

The presidency sees transport as one of the most important sectors in the EU, which has at the same time been severely affected by the pandemic. Sustainable and innovative mobility shall “ensure a functioning internal market and the four freedoms”. This entails working on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive and on the two strategies Refuel Aviation and Refuel Maritime. The presidency is also prepared to commence discussions on the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) proposal scheduled for November, and will give priority to the Trans-European Transport Networks Regulations (TEN-T) including the related proposals to revise the European railway corridors.

The digital transformation is identified as one of the two key elements of the EU's economic renewal (along with the green transition). The presidency plans on giving priority to AI, data and the data economy, and the roaming regulation. The legislative procedures for the Data Governance Act and ePrivacy Regulation will continue, along with deliberations on the eID Reg-

ulation. Due to the increasing importance of cyber resilience, the presidency sees the proposal for a directive on cyber security (NIS 2) as highly important. ■

## VI. COMPETITIVENESS

The Slovenians strive to reach an agreement in the Council on key pieces of legislation for the internal market: the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act. To improve enforcement of internal market rules, findings from the Strategic Report on the Implementation of the Internal Market Action Plan should be applied. Regarding a Corporate Sustainable Reporting Directive, the Slovenians plan on initiating a legislative proposal. Next, to integrate European industry into the green and digital transitions, this presidency will focus on the updated European Industrial Strategy. Important for Ljubljana is the revitalization of the European tourism ecosystem, for which they will promote innovations to restore consumer confidence in tourism in the single market. Regarding research, the Slovenian Presidency seeks to institutionalize research partnerships and develop high-computing research structures through legislative acts and update the European Research Area governance framework. ■

## VII. HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Slovenians will focus on the added value of cooperation at EU level in the development of innovative solutions for resilient health systems. Special attention will be paid to the role of the EU in global health and the European Cancer Plan. EU health agencies should be strengthened, and Ljubljana will kick off the discussion on a legislative proposal to establish a new Health Emergency Response Au-

thority (HERA). In the area of availability and accessibility of medicines, they wish to stimulate discussion on new solutions at EU level. The presidency supports a lifelong approach to aging, especially regarding quality work at all stages of life. Slovenians will continue negotiations on wage transparency and will prepare Council conclusions on the impact of digitization and Artificial Intelligence on gender equality in the labor market. The presidency will continue negotiations on the coordination of social security systems and pay attention to the Western Balkan partners. ■

## VIII. AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

The Slovenian Presidency will promote a socially sustainable transition to sustainable agriculture, food chains, and forest management. Ljubljana's focus will be on guaranteeing food supply and the integrity of food supply chains. Improving farmers' competitiveness and income will be a crucial part. Another priority will be origin labelling to meet changing consumer expectations. The presidency aims to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. For this, the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) will be the main tool. The presidency will include plant products in the negotiations on trade agreements with third countries and start a discussion on animal welfare. It will promote digitization in the veterinary sector. For fisheries, the Slovenian Presidency will push for progress on the Regulation amending Regulation as regards fisheries control. Negotiations will be launched in the field of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with third countries. ■



## IX. EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

A discussion on new ways of learning and teaching, placing digital transformation at the forefront, will take place during the presidency. They will focus on the broader context developing digitization and Artificial Intelligence and ethics in educational processes and thus contribute to the implementation of the Digital Education Action Plan. The central theme regarding youth matters will be the participation of young people. The presidency will transfer support for a green and digital future to the cultural field. They want to prioritize the innovative potential of culture with special emphasis on quality living. The presidency intends to prepare a Council Resolution on the European model of sport and tries to establish the concept of life-long physical activity and will examine the possibilities of revising the 2019 WADA Resolution. ■

## X. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Slovenian Presidency will foster a strong transatlantic cooperation, following the topics discussed at the EU-US Summit, namely in strengthening multilateralism and promoting climate policy. A key focus will be on strengthening the relations with the Western Balkans, also in defense policy and to foster resilience in the region, as well as in the entirety of the EU neighborhood. Slovenia wants to strengthen EU defense policy and military crisis preparedness in cooperation with NATO. In foreign trade, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to support the EU's position in the WTO reform process. Priority will be given to strengthening the partnership with the United States and establishing a fairer, rules-based economic relationship with China. Ongoing negotiations with Mexico and the Mercosur should progress. In humanitarian and development aid, the Slovenian Presidency will draw up a comprehensive approach to water and renew agreements with Africa, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. The presidency will strive for progress in addressing the international public procurement instrument. ■



# V. WHO IS WHO?

**European Council**

<b>Chair</b>	<b>SI Representative</b>
 <p><b>CHARLES MICHEL</b> President of the European Council</p>	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;"><b>Slovenian Democratic Party</b></div>  <p><b>JANEZ JANŠA</b> Prime Minister of Slovenia</p>

## Political Parties:

■ Slovenian Democratic Party

■ Modern Centre Party

■ New Slovenia - Christian Democrats

■ Democratic Pensioners' Party of Slovenia

## Council Configurations:

**AGRIFISH:** Agriculture and Fisheries

**COMPET:** Competitiveness

**ECOFIN:** Economic and Financial Affairs

**ENVI:** Environment

**EPSCO:** Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

**EYCS:** Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

**FAC:** Foreign Affairs

**GAC:** General Affairs

**JHA:** Justice and Home Affairs

**TTE:** Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

**FAC**

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Foreign Affairs and International Relations</b>	<b>Trade</b>
 <p><b>JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES</b> High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy</p>	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;"><b>Slovenian Democratic Party</b></div>  <p><b>ANŽE LOGAR</b> Minister of Foreign Affairs</p>	<div style="background-color: #00a0e3; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;"><b>Modern Centre Party</b></div>  <p><b>ZDRAVKO POČIVALŠEK</b> Minister of Economic Development and Technology</p>



# > WHO IS WHO?

COMPET			AGRIFISH	ENVI
Internal Market/ Industry	Space	Research	Agriculture/ Fisheries	Environment
Modern Centre Party	Slovenian Democratic Party	Modern Centre Party	Democratic Pensioners' Party of Slovenia	Slovenian Democratic Party
				
<b>ZDRAVKO POČIVALŠEK</b>	<b>ANDREJ VIZJAK</b>	<b>SIMONA KUSTEC</b>	<b>JOŽE PODGORŠEK</b>	<b>ANDREJ VIZJAK</b>
<i>Minister of Economic Development and Technology</i>	<i>Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning</i>	<i>Minister of Education, Science and Sports</i>	<i>Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food</i>	<i>Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning</i>

EYCS		ECOFIN	
Education, Youth and Sport	Culture	Finance	Home Affairs
Modern Centre Party	Slovenian Democratic Party	Slovenian Democratic Party	Modern Centre Party
			
<b>SIMONA KUSTEC</b>	<b>VASKO SIMONITI</b>	<b>ANDREJ ŠIRCELJ</b>	<b>ZDRAVKO POČIVALŠEK</b>
<i>Minister of Education, Science and Sports</i>	<i>Minister of Culture</i>	<i>Minister of Finance</i>	<i>Minister of Economic Development and Technology</i>



# > WHO IS WHO?

EPSCO			ENVI	GAC
Social Affairs	Consumer Protection	Health	Environment	Coordination
New Slovenia	Modern Centre Party	Independent	Slovenian Democratic Party	Slovenian Democratic Party
				
<b>JANEZ CIGLER KRALJ</b>	<b>ZDRAVKO POČIVALŠEK</b>	<b>JANEZ POKLUKAR</b>	<b>ANDREJ VIZJAK</b>	<b>GAŠPER DOVŽAN</b>
Minister of Labor, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities	Minister of Economic Development and Technology	Minister of Health	Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning	State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

JHA		TTE		COREPER
Justice	Home Affairs	Transport/Energy	Telecommunications	Ambassador
Modern Centre Party	Slovenian Democratic Party	New Slovenia	Modern Centre Party	
				
<b>LILIJANA KOZLOVIĆ</b>	<b>ALEŠ HOJS</b>	<b>JERNEJ VRTOVEC</b>	<b>BOŠTJAN KORITNIK</b>	<b>IZTOK JARC</b>
Minister of Justice	Minister of the Interior	Minister of Infrastructure	Minister of Public Administration	Permanent Representative





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## FURTHER INFORMATION

### OFFICIAL WEBSITE

[Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)

### EURACTIV

**29 JUNE 2021**

[Slovenia to speed up legislative agenda for key digital files, ambassador says](#)

### EP NEWS

**30 JUNE 2021**

[What Slovenian MEPs expect from their country's presidency](#)

### EURONEWS

**01 JULY 2021**

[Slovenia's Janez Jansa takes over EU Presidency amid fears for rule of law](#)

### POLITICO

**01 JULY 2021**

[A call for vigilance as Slovenia's EU presidency begins](#)

### EURACTIV

**22 JUNE 2021**

[Slovenian FM: EU inaction in Western Balkans "strategically dangerous"](#)

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**UNDERSTANDING POLITICS  
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE**

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POSITIONING**