

SLOVENES IN ITALY

Total population	57,888,245 (2004)
Official languages	Italian, German (provincial), French (regional), Slovene (regional)
Minorities	Sardinian(2.2%), Friulian(0.9%), German (0.5%), Occitan (0.3%), Albanian (0.2%), Roma (0.2%), Franco-Provencal and French (0.2%), Ladin (0.1%), Slovene (0.1%), Greek (0.03%), Catalan (0.01%), Croat (0.01%)
Migrants	Moroccan, Albanian, Filipino, Romanian, Tunisian, Yugoslavian, Chinese, Senegalese and other (3.4%)

GENERAL INFORMATION: SLOVENES IN ITALY

SLOVENES IN ITALY - LOCATION AND INHABITANTS:

Slovenes in Italy are settled in 22 communes in 3 provinces of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (Trieste, Gorizia, Udine). The area has been defined by decree of the President of Republic. There are small groups of Slovenes settled outside this area as well.

The number of speakers depend on the definition. The Ministry of Interior in an official publication in the 1990s gave the number 70,000. This number seems quite realistic, if referred to people who speak or at least understand the Slovene language. Those whit Slovene origins are certainly more, those who actively belong to the community are less.

HISTORY:

Slovenes settled in the area about 1450 years ago. Before 1860 the whole community lived in the Austrian-Hungarian empire. In 1865 with referendum the Slovenes, nowadays living in the Province of Udine, passed to Italy. After WWI the whole community passed under Kingdom of Italy and after 1920 they suffered fascist repression. After WWII Slovenes were divided in three provinces.

The Province of Trieste has been occupied by British and American army; it has been declared Free Trieste territory, Slovenes enjoyed quite high level of protection. In 1954 the area passed under Italian administration but Slovenes kept certain level of protection due to the Special Statute annexed to the so-called Memorandum of London.

The Province of Gorizia passed to Italy and Slovenes there got certain rights, namely in education and local authorities of communes where Slovenes were the majority of population.

The Province of Udine stayed in Italy and Slovene minority has not been recognised at all.

The situation changed in 2001 when the Parliament adopted the protection legislation which has not been totally implemented yet.
The regional parliament in 2007 adopted protection legislation as well.

SLOVENES IN ITALY - THE CURRENT SOCIAL SITUATION:

Slovenes are well organised community. This organisation is based on two “umbrella organisations” SKGZ – Slovenska kulturno-gospodarska zveza (Slovene cultural and economic union) and SSO - Svet slovenskih organizacij (Council of Slovene organisations). SKGZ is more left wing oriented, SSO is more catholic and liberal. The organisations have been in competition for long time but nowadays they fully cooperate. There are hundreds of different organisations, dealing with culture, sport, social services, education, economy, agriculture etc. The most important organisations are funded by the State and Region, partially supported by the Republic of Slovenia. Local organisations are based on voluntary work.

EDUCATION:

Slovenes enjoy good educational system. In provinces of Trieste and Gorizia there are Slovene schools from kindergarten to high school included. These are full immersion schools: all subjects are taught through Slovene language. The whole system depends directly on Ministry of education. In province of Udine there is only one bilingual school (Slovene – Italian) from kindergarten to low medium school (up to 14 years).

An international agreement gives Slovenes the possibility to study at universities in Slovenia; the studies are automatically recognised.

There are several Slovene student hostels in Trieste and Gorizia.

There are two private music schools as well.

CULTURE:

Cultural activity is very rich. There is a professional Slovene theatre in Trieste, there are large libraries in Trieste and Gorizia, several publishing houses, and more than one hundred local cultural organisations, based on voluntary work. There are many choirs, non-professional theatre groups, and other activities. There are several museums as well, many well known painters, writers and poets. Among them to be mentioned Boris Pahor, 96 years old, twice candidate for the Nobel prize in literature. Slovene bookshops exist in Trieste and Gorizia.

MEDIA:

There is a Slovene radio station (12 hours daily) and Slovene television channel (approx. 45 minutes daily), part of the national broadcaster RAI.

The Slovene daily newspaper Primorski dnevnik has been published since 1945.

In Gorizia the weekly newspaper Novi Glas is published, while in Cividale – Čedad the weekly Novi Matajur and two-monthly Dom are published.

Political parties publish some publications in Slovene as well.

The agency slov.it gives information on Slovene minority in both Slovene and Italian language.

There is an internet portal Slomedia as well.

ECONOMY:

Slovenian community in Italy is economically strong. There are two Slovene banks, one in Trieste and one in Gorizia, both very active. In Gorizia there is a financial group KB1906 with quite a lot of companies. Slovene companies are organised in the central economic organisation SDGZ – Slovensko deželno gospodarsko združenje (Slovene regional economic union), agricultural activities are linked in the central organisation KZ – Kmečka zveza (Agricultural union).

POLITICS:

Slovenes are divided among several parties. The largest numbers of Slovenes vote for the democratic party (center-left), the Slovene ethnic party Slovenska skupnost (Slovenia union) and the left wing parties. Actually there have been elected one member of parliament - senate (Ms. Tamara Blažina, democratic party) and two members of the Regional council (Mr. Igor Gabrovec, Slovene union, and Mr. Igor Kocijančič, new communist party). There are three Slovene mayors in the Province of Trieste and three Slovene mayors in the province of Gorizia. There are some Slovene mayors in the Province of Udine as well, even if not all of them declare themselves Slovene. Slovenes are represented in the provincial and town councils in Trieste and Gorizia as well.

LINKS ABOUT SLOVENIANS IN ITALY ON THE INTERNET: (most of them in Slovene language only)

Daily newspaper Primorski dnevnik www.primorski.it
News agency slov.it www.slov.it/
Internet portal www.slomedia.it
SKGZ www.skgz.org
SSO www.ssorg.eu
Slovene research institute www.slori.org
EU tourism project www.min-tour.eu
Slovene theatre www.teaterssg.org
Gorizia cultural centres www.kulturnidom.it www.kclbratuz.org
Educational centre www.slovik.org
Central economic organisation www.sdgz.it