

INDIA-SLOVENIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

General

Slovenia, formerly a part of erstwhile Yugoslavia, attained independence in 1991. In a referendum conducted in December 1990, over 80% Slovenes voted for independence from Yugoslavia. This was followed by a proclamation of independence in June 1991. India recognized Slovenia on May 11, 1992 after the country had proclaimed independence on June 25, 1991. Soon after our recognition, the then Foreign Minister of Slovenia Dr. Dimitrij Rupel visited India on May 18, 1992. Slovenia sought Indian support for membership at the UN and for guest membership of the Non-Aligned Movement. Slovenia was admitted into the UN on May 23, 1992.

Opening of Resident Missions

Slovenia opened its resident mission in New Delhi on August 1, 2002. The Mission was initially headed by Charge d'Affaires. The representation has recently been upgraded to Ambassador level. Mr. Janez Premoze, the first Ambassador of Slovenia to India took over in the middle of September 2009.

India opened its resident Mission in Ljubljana in February 2007. Our first resident Ambassador to Slovenia presented his credentials on March 1, 2007. The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Anand Sharma visited Ljubljana from March 30 to April 1, 2008 and inaugurated the Chancery premises of the newly established resident Mission.

High-level Visits

There have been a number of high level visits between the two countries. In recent years, from the Indian side, Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Slovenia in March 2008. Smt. Preneet Kaur Minister of State for External Affairs visited Slovenia on 30-31 August 2009 to participate in the 'Bled Strategic Forum'. Most recently, President of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Tuerk visited New Delhi in February 2010 for attending the Delhi Sustainable Summit. On the margins of the meeting Dr. Tuerk also had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

India-Slovenia Foreign Office Consultations

Foreign Office Consultations are held at regular intervals. The fifth session of India-Slovenia Foreign Office Consultations took place in Ljubljana on August 28, 2007. The next session of Foreign Office Consultations is scheduled to be hosted by India shortly.

International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE)

The International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE) was established at Ljubljana in 1976. Earlier, a non aligned Centre, ICPE has been seeking to redefine its role with the host country Slovenia now a EU member. The Centre has been imparting international management degrees (MBA) to executives and policy makers from many countries, including several Indian executives and civil servants. During the 49th Council meeting held in Ljubljana in June 2009 it was decided to appoint Dr. Stefan Bogdan

Salej, a Slovene national, as the Director General of ICPE. India assumed the chairmanship of the Governing Council of ICPE.

Bilateral Trade

In 2008, the total bilateral trade in goods amounted to Euro 136.94 million with India enjoying a trade surplus of Euro 38.88 million. Bilateral Trade figures for the eleven month period January to November 2009 show healthy growth in both directions and indicate that India's exports to Slovenia increased by 28% (from Euro 81.39m to Euro 112.45m) while Slovenia's exports to India also rose by almost 50% (from Euro 43.55m to Euro 65.37m) in comparison to the trade figures for the corresponding period in 2008. India participated, for the first time, in September 2009, in the International Trade Fair in Celje.

Science and Technology

Joint Committee of Science and Technology cooperation was established through an agreement in 1993. In working out a fresh state of bilateral projects, India and Slovenia have identified 18 projects each, which have been scrutinized by the respective Departments of Science and Technology. The Officials from India and Slovenia are scheduled to meet in Ljubljana on 22-25 March 2010 to assess and evaluate the proposals and decide about the implementation of the projects that will begin in June/July 2010.

Cultural

There is considerable interest in Slovenia in Indian culture, particularly in study of Sanskrit. An Agreement signed in 1996 provides for regular exchanges in culture, education, etc. A Programme of Action (POA) under this Agreement has finalized and will be signed on 15 March 2010. The Mission has, from time to time, been organizing cultural performances of troupes sponsored by ICCR. Consequent on signing of an MoU between Indian Council of Cultural Relations and the Faculty of Arts University of Ljubljana, a **Hindi Chair** has been set up at the University. Dr. A.P. Mishra, our nominee for the purpose, has taken up his assignment with effect from 16th November 2009.

The Mission has organized, in collaboration with some local co-sponsors, the following three major events during the last one year period

- i. An International Conference on Ayurveda in Portoroz in March 2009
- ii. A Round Table on Mahatma Gandhi in Ljubljana in October 2009
- iii. Tagore Day events including an international symposium on Rabindranath Tagore in Ljubljana in March 2010

Slovene Parliamentary Friendship Group with India

The Slovene Parliament established a 5 member Parliamentary Friendship Group with India on 6th February 2009. A delegation of the Slovene Parliamentary Friendship Group with India led by its Chairman Mr. Josef Jerovsek and comprising two more members of

the Group Mr. Miro Petek and Mr. Matjaz Zanoskar visited India from 24 to 27 November 2009 at the invitation of Government of India.

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