

# SLOVENIA

By *Walter G. Steblez*  
United States Geological Survey

Slovenia produces a modest range (and small quantities) of mineral commodities. Although some coal, natural gas, petroleum and a variety of industrial minerals are produced, the country relies heavily on imports of fossil fuels, ferrous and nonferrous ores and metals, and other mining and quarrying products.

Nevertheless, with its well-developed systems of transportation and modern telecommunications, Slovenia has one of the more technically advanced industrial bases of the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Chemicals, telecommunications and electronics, the retail sector, have experienced the highest rates of growth. In 2000, the performance of the country's economy remained positive, with GDP rising by 4.25% compared with 1999. The total value of industrial production rose by 6.2%, and the output and fabrication of metals showed combined gains in excess of 12%. The mining and quarrying share of industrial output, however, declined by 2.7%, as did that of industrial mineral products, which fell 3.6%. A substantial decline of production of processed mineral fuels (primarily coke and petroleum refinery products) was also noted.

With the exception of nonferrous metals, whose value of imports continued to match that of exports, Slovenia depended heavily on imports for almost all mineral commodities. According to the latest available trade data, this dependency increased for most commodity groups in 1999, and net imports of metal ores and

scrap, iron and steel, and gold (non monetary) increased in 1999 by 11.5%, 1.2% and 70%, respectively (measured in US dollars). Net imports of industrial mineral goods rose by about 5.7%. With respect to mineral fuels, the combined net import value of coal, coke and coal briquettes increased by about 63%; but the import value of crude and refined petroleum declined by about 17%, compared with that of 1998.

The government has continued to promote the transition to a market-economy system. Such legislation as the Energy Act was adopted to promote privatisation and stimulate foreign investment in the energy sector. Major activities in the energy sector included a programme of modernisation at the Krsko nuclear power plant, which the

Apparent Production of Mineral Commodities <sup>1 2</sup> (t except where stated)			
Commodity	1998	1999	2000
<b>Metals</b>			
Aluminium, ingot, primary and secondary	73,803	77,200	100,000
Ferrochromium	10,621	560	600
Ferrosilicocalcium	200	200	200
Ferrosilicon	10,000	8,000	9,000
Crude steel from electric furnaces	405,210	405,000	450,000
Semi-manufactures	150,000	100,000	100,000
Lead:			
Lead (Smelter, secondary) <sup>e</sup>	7,000	5,800	6,000
Lead (Refined, secondary)	14,000	15,000 <sup>f</sup>	15,000
<b>Industrial Minerals</b>			
Kaolin (Crude)	10,000	10,000	10,000
Kaolin (Washed) <sup>e</sup>	4,000	4,000	4,000
Salt, all sources	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Mineral Fuels and Related Materials</b>			
Brown coal ('000 t)	827	758	800
Lignite ('000 t)	4,100	3,804	3,900
Natural gas, gross producing (Mm <sup>3</sup> )	12,500	12,500	12,500
Petroleum, crude ('000 t)	900	100	100

<sup>e</sup> Estimated. <sup>f</sup> Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through May 2001.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to commodities listed, common clay also was produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

<sup>3</sup>Reported figure

Slovenian State owns, and operates, jointly with neighbouring Croatia.

In 2000, salient activities in the steel industry included the addition of a new automated quality inspection line at INEXA Store, which was valued US\$1.2 million. Modernisation of the plant's rolling mills also was planned during this period. SZ Jeklo Store doo was privatised in 1999 and acquired by the INEXA Group of Sweden. Additionally, a new forging line was added at the SZ Ravne steel mill, which replaced an older unit to produce bar sections, flat sections, as well as other products, from all grades of steel.

Important activities in the nonferrous metals industry included a planned expansion at Slovenia's aluminium smelter, Kidricevo

Talum doo that would increase production to 155,000 t in 2002. Talum obtained outside financing for the project (a new pot room), amounting to US\$76 million. Talum expects to produce 117,000 t of aluminium in 2001.

Cement, clays, silica products and dimension stone were among the industrial minerals produced in Slovenia. Consumption of cement and other construction materials continued to increase, which, in turn, is expected to lead to higher demand for other industrial minerals, steel and other base metals.

If Slovenia joins the EU, this trend may well accelerate because of the inevitable emphasis on improvements to the country's rail and road infrastructure.