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Educational Facilities in Slovenia

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EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN SLOVENIA

Some statistics

- Country population: 1 967 million
- Area: 20 273 km²
- Elementary schools: 811
- Secondary schools: 136
- Post-secondary vocational schools: 37
- Institutions for higher education: 47 higher schools
- Universities: 3

Since gaining independence in 1991, one of Slovenia's priorities has been to invest in education. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has been widely reforming its education system and investing its limited resources in the construction of buildings and their equipment for all levels of education. The government is working to overcome the problems it has encountered.

Among Slovenia's aims are providing quality facilities that are functional and flexible; are safe for pupils and teachers; are not overly expensive; dispose of appropriate funding for building, operating and maintaining infrastructure; and reduce energy consumption.

When planning school facilities, the government is working to give more attention to functionality and flexibility of use. The strict territorial lines that divide secondary and post-secondary schools need to be erased (the majority of vocational schools are located on secondary-school premises). And the school should be perceived increasingly as a cultural, information and sports centre for the local community. Facilities such as libraries, equipment for information and communication technologies, and spaces for exhibitions, performances and recreation should be shared. School buildings should be used after school hours and at weekends.



Elementary school in Ptuj



In the last few years, the problem Slovenia encountered most frequently in educational building is ensuring the highest quality of air with a minimum investment and low operating costs: how to provide maintenance and monitoring of heating systems as well as compulsory ventilation and cooling at minimal costs. This is challenging because good air quality can be ensured only by the built-in installation equipment of the highest quality (and therefore the most expensive) and adequately financed operation and maintenance of the facilities. Without the proper investment, this technology can have damaging effects on the health of students and staff.

A second, though no less crucial problem, is a constantly undersized education budget. Much effort goes into searching for additional resources to invest in and maintain the country's educational infrastructure.



Faculty of Law in Ljubljana

In 2003 Slovenia is working on two projects:

- a public call for tender to grant a concession for building and operating a student residence hall, in an attempt to attract private capital;
- a public call for tender for investment in energy savings in educational facilities (performance contracting). With the help of resources from outside the budget, the aim is to lower energy consumption as well as reduce future operating expenses.

The last ten years have seen extensive investment in Slovenia's educational facilities. The central government has built or renovated 205 buildings for different levels of education ranging from elementary to university level, for a total spending of nearly EUR 300 million coming mainly from the ministry's budget. An additional 290 schools have been newly built or renovated through co-financing by local authorities and the ministry.

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