

SLOVENIA: A GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

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Geography in Slovenia is closely linked to the transformation and development of the Slovene language into a literary language, especially after 1848 with the emergence of the clearly expressed goal of forming an independent nation and the desire for a separate nation-state. This Slovene hope was joyfully realized in 1991. The foundations of an independent Slovene geography thus reach back to the period when for centuries the territory of today's Slovenia had been part of the Habsburg Empire and later of Austria-Hungary. At Slovenska Matica (Slovene Literary Society), the most important Slovene organization before World War I, geography was always given a special place. In 1853, the first map was published that presented Slovene territory using Slovene place names exclusively (Peter Kozler, 1824–1879). Between 1869 and 1877, a series of maps of the world was published that comprised the first atlas in the Slovene language. In parallel, many regional geographical treatises and monographs about Slovene territory were also published.

An important leap for Slovene geography was the establishment of the Geographical Institute (1919) at the newly founded University of Ljubljana. In 1922, Geographical Society was founded, which later grew into the Association of Geographical Societies of Slovenia (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/agss/>). In 1925, the Association began to publish the professional journal *Geografski vestnik* (*Geographical Bulletin*), and later, in 1954, *Geografski obzornik* (*Geographic Horizon*). The first major cartography work after 1945 was done by Ivan Selan (1902–1981) working in cooperation with Valter Bohinc (1898–1984) and France Planina (1901–1992). Roman Savnik (1902–1987) was the editor and one of the most important contributors to the four extensive volumes of *Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* (*Lexicon of Place Names of Slovenia*), the first of which was published in 1968 and the last in 1980. Anton Melik (1890–1966), however, was the primary figure in modern Slovene geography and along with a large number of treatises also wrote thirty-one books, the most important of which are *Slovenija* (1935), a general geographical monograph, and four regional monographs: *Slovenski alpski svet* (*Slovenia's Alpine World*, 1954), *Štajerska s Prekmurjem in Mežiška dolina* (*Štajerska with Prekmurje and the Mežiška Valley*, 1957), *Posavska Slovenija* (*Posavje Region of Slovenia*, 1959), and *Slovensko Primorje* (*The Slovene Littoral*, 1960). Melik won recognition as a scientist, university professor, editor, rector of the University of Ljubljana, and academician. He was among the founders of the Geographical Museum of Slovenia (1946) and the Geographical Institute and Cartography Institute of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (1948), which today are united in the Anton Melik Geographical Institute (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/gi/>). Svetozar Ilešič (1907–1985) and Ivan Gams (b. 1923) also contributed significantly to Slovene geography.

The first modern Slovene general geographical atlas, *Veliki atlas sveta* (*Great Atlas of the World*), was published in 1972. It was followed by *Timesov atlas sveta* (*The Times Atlas of the World*) in 1990, *Veliki družinski atlas* (*Great Family Atlas*) in 1992, and *Atlas sveta 2000* (*Atlas of the World 2000*) in 1997. The work of the newest generation of geographers is reflected in many recent books such as the revised *Krajevni leksikon Slovenije* (*Lexicon of Place Names of Slovenia*, 1995), *Slovenija – pokrajine in ljudje* (*Slovenia – Regions and People*, 1998), *Geografski atlas Slovenije* (*Geographical Atlas of Slovenia*, 1998), *Nacionalni atlas Slovenije* (*National Atlas of Slovenia*, 2001), and others. Numerous articles on specific geographical phenomena in Slovenia also appear in the biannual journal *Acta Geographica Slovenica* (*Geografski zbornik*).

Established by the government of Slovenia in 1986, the Slovene Governmental Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names (<http://www.gov.si/kszi/index.htm>) is active in Slovenia and is represented in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

The Slovenian National Geographical Committee, which links all the Slovene geographical institutions, plays an active role under the auspices of the Association of Geographical Societies of Slovenia. In preparing this publication, the committee decided to make it a joint project and therefore collected short articles on current geographical issues and research by members of various institutions. A list follows of the participating institutions with the names of their members who contributed to this publication. A large part of geographical research work in Slovenia is done by members of the **Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/gi/>) in Ljubljana (Gabrovec, Hrvatín, Josipovič, Kladnik, Nared, Orožen Adamič, Peršolja, Perko, Petek, Ravbar, Urbanc); the **Karst Research Institute of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/izrkl/>) in Postojna (Zupan Hajna); the **Department of Geography, University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts** (<http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/geo/>) in Ljubljana (Černe, Kušar, Ogrin, Repe, Plut, Vintar Mally, Zupančič); the **Department of Geography** (<http://www.geografija.com/>), **University of Maribor Faculty of Education** (Horvat, Vovk); the **Department of Geography** (<http://www.fhs-kp.si/>), **University of Koper Faculty of Humanities** (Bufon, Gosar); and the **Agricultural Institute of Slovenia** (<http://www.kis.si/index-en.html>; Cunder).