MUNICIPALITY OF MARIBOR
BASIC INFORMATION

Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia. It is the regional centre of the Podravska region, covering more than one tenth of the Slovene territory (2.170 km2). On January 1 2017, the population of the municipality of Maribor stood at 111,079 (54,317 men and 56,762 women), of which 25,579 were aged 15-34 years, while the city of Maribor had a population of 94,876 (46,301 men and 47,575 women), of which 22,409 were aged 15-34 years (Statistical Office of Slovenia).

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, the loss of the market added additional strain to the already declining economy of the city, based on textiles and heavy industry. The city saw a record unemployment rate of nearly 25%. The economic situation of Maribor worsened again with the onset of the global economic crisis combined with the European sovereign-debt crisis. The registered unemployment rate (August 2017) reached 13.9%, a decline from 16.1% in January 2017. The average unemployment rate, as of 2017, stands at 14.8%.

Maribor’s labour migration index of 149.5 is one of the highest in the country, indicating the city's importance for the Podravska region - which shared a similar deindustrialization process. In comparison with other regions in Slovenia, the Podravska region encompasses 41 municipalities and 16% of the Slovene population (data from 2015). The share of people aged 0-14 was among the lowest in the Podravska region at 13.5% (Maribor 11.8%); it was lower only in the Pomurska region. In 2015, a nationwide decrease in growth in the target group aged 0-14 was recorded, amounting to -1.7 per 1,000 population, and net migration was -0.8 per 1,000 population (Maribor -1.04). The share of children born to unmarried mothers was among the highest (69.6%). The share of deaths under 65 years of age was the third highest in the country (Maribor 17.4%). The share of the population aged 25-64 years with tertiary education was below the Slovenian average (Maribor 21.8%). The registered unemployment rate (Maribor 17.3%) was higher than the national average (12.3%). The region generated 13% of the national GDP, but GDP per capita was the fifth lowest in the country. The region had slightly fewer than 26,000 enterprises (Maribor 10,969), with on average 4.6 persons employed per enterprise (Maribor 5.7), which is slightly higher than the national average.

There were 423 dwellings per 1,000 population, with 7% of housing units completed after 2005, indicating that the Podravska region has a relatively high share of new housing units.

The share of buildings completed after 2005 was higher only in the Osrednjeslovenska and Obalno-kraška regions, according to the Statistical Office.

In 1994, Maribor became a city municipality; its status established by the Local Self-Government Act adopted in 1993. This brought Maribor additional competencies regarding development.

Maribor hosts many important institutions and organizations that are of regional importance in scientific, cultural, health, industrial and other fields. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska, and a branch of the Chamber of Crafts and Small Businesses of Slovenia are active in Maribor. Maribor is also a seat of the Maribor Administrative Unit, which is the territorial office of the state administration. This office, subordinated to the line ministry, is responsible for deciding on administrative matters in the first instance. As there are no regional administrative structures in place, many of the state institutional branches (e.g. the Administrative Unit, the National Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia *Zavod za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije*, the Social Care Centre Maribor, the Police Directorate, the Financial Office, the Surveying and Mapping Authority) also cover several neighbouring municipalities.

In 1975, the University of Maribor (public university) was established. Today it consists of 17 faculties, which offer undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. Currently, 185 programmes are available for study at the University of Maribor. The university employs around 1,800 staff and boasts 15,000 students. This makes it the second biggest university in the country, after the University of Ljubljana.

Maribor is the seat of a district court, a regional court and one of the four appellate courts or higher courts (*Višje sodišče*). It also hosts one of four regional units of the state prosecutor's general office. The University Medical Centre (UKC Maribor) is a regional hospital that employs approximately 2,800 staff members, of whom 450 are physicians, and 1,300 healthcare workers. The National Post Office headquarters is located in Maribor and the Maribor Development Agency is supportive of many municipalities in the region.

In the city, public museums, galleries, libraries, opera, ballet and theatre provide cultural services to the wider public along with several radio and TV stations. Maribor is the seat of the archbishops, with several Roman Catholic churches and is an important centre for other major monotheistic religions, featuring a Serbian Orthodox church, a Muslim prayer room, an Evangelical church and a synagogue. Maribor also has a vibrant civil society that actively provides many services - from humanitarian relief to co-working.

At the heart of the Podravska region, Maribor is an economic, cultural and educational centre. However, due to the unstable developmental and economic conditions of the last

few decades, Maribor is still somewhat lacking in social and economic vitality. Maribor's development can be divided into several periods: the Yugoslav era of growth (rapid industrialization process), the economic decline of the 1980s (last period of the socialist economy), severe deindustrialization in the 1990s (ownership and privatization processes), an optimistic period at the start of the new millennium (economic growth in the time of European Union (EU) accession), and the financial crisis since 2009.

Between 2002 and 2015, the population increased in 21 out of 38 Maribor communities. Depopulation is common in residential areas built in the 1960s and 1970s (i.e. Novi Tabor, Jugomont housing estate, the eastern part of Nova Vas, Greenwich). A generation of young adults moved out these working-class flats (average 45–55 m2), leaving an older and inactive generation behind. On average, there are less than two people per flat living in such areas.

The strongest industrial activity is still in the fields of metal, food, and wood processing, in car parts' manufacturing and energy production. A much-anticipated foreign car industry investment was finally announced in 2017. It generated a lot of social discussion and media debate, and drew attention to the need for new development and jobs in Maribor - although the development itself will be in the neighboring municipality of Hoče-Fram.

Public and private universities in Maribor are another pull factor for migration, attracting both domestic and foreign students. The University of Maribor annually enrolls around 800 foreign students, 90% of them through the EU Erasmus exchange program. Less than half of domestic students, however, choose to participate in student exchanges abroad, leaving researchers to ponder as to why more home students fail to take advantage of such an opportunity (especially considering that local youth policies are supportive of youth mobility).

Maribor is getting old, with 20.1% of the population over 65 years old. The ageing index in 2015 reached 180 (in Ljubljana at same time it was 129; the national average was 121). On the other hand, following a negative annual growth rate in employment (2009–2013), resulting in high emigration, a more positive trend is emerging.

Nonetheless, long periods of decline and stagnation have deeply affected the city, resulting in different opinions and discourses about its future development (from those advocating moderate centralism for the country to more separatist voices). Moreover, without clear signs of recovery, young people will feel increasingly inclined to emigrate. There is also concern that the huge number of people, who have found employment in the last decade in neighboring Austria, may constitute a social time bomb.