

SLOVENIA

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Slovenia continued to record economic growth in 2002. According to the Bank of Slovenia, GDP grew by about 3.1% in 2002, which well matched the 3% growth achieved in the preceding year. The value of industrial production rose by 5.4 % compared with 2001, of which the mining sector registered a 7.7% increase. Slovenia's minerals output, consisted of modest quantities of coal, natural gas, petroleum and a variety of industrial minerals. The country heavily relied on imports of minerals to meet most industry needs. According to the latest available data for 2001, imports such as mined products of coal and peat, natural gas and petroleum, metal ores and industrial minerals, exceeded exports, in terms of value, by substantial margins. Similarly, imports of basic metals, industrial minerals, and hydrocarbon derivatives substantially exceeded their exports.

Slovenia's metallurgical sector mainly comprised primary aluminum production at Kidričevo (Talum DOO) and three steel mills: Slovenske Železarne, a state-owned holding company that maintained ownership of Acroni Jesenice and Metal Ravne; and Inexa Štore (formerly Jekla Štore), a subsidiary of the Inexa Group of Sweden. In 2002, Slovenia's total output of crude steel rose by about 4% compared with that of 2001. Generally, steel production remained well below capacity, mainly because of the dissolution of the former Yugoslav market and weak global and regional demand for steel.

The major events in the steel industry included an initial approval by the government for the sale of Metal Ravne to Petrol, a Slovenian oil trader. The transaction called for the purchase of an 80% of shares stock of Metal Ravne for about €2.8 million as well as an investment of about €1.6 million in the steel mill. Petrol expected a final decision about its proposed acquisition of Metal Ravne to be made in mid-2003. In 2002, Acroni produced a total of 239,061 t of steel, comprising about 47% cold-rolled strips and sheets, 18% hot-rolled strips and sheets, and 35% quarto plates. Acroni concluded an agreement for a loan worth about €11.5 million to modernise the steel mill's operations and to increase the output of stainless and special steels. FATA Group SpA of the US was to provide a major upgrading of Acroni's continuous decarburisation and coating line for cold-rolled, non oriented silicon steel.

Additionally, Inexa Store reported steel production in 2002 to have amounted to about 100,400 t, or a 5% increase compared with the production level in 2001. Exports amounted to about 45,738 t, representing about 52% of total sales in 2002.

The industrial minerals sector continued to undergo privatisation. In early 2002, French cement producer, Lafarge, acquired a controlling interest in Slovenia's Cementarna Trbovlje cement plant. Trbovlje was the country's

major cement producer with capacities to producer clinker amounting to 322,000 t/y and an annual cement grinding capacity of 777,000 t.

Slovenia: Mineral Production (t) ^{1/2/}				
Commodity	1999	2000	2001	2002
Metals				
Aluminium, ingot, primary and secondary	77,200	83,800	76,632	87,600
Iron and steel, metal:				
Ferroalloys:				
Ferrochromium	560	--	--	--
Ferrosilicocalcium	200	200	100	100
Ferrosilicon	8,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Crude steel	405,000	519,000	462,000	481,000
Lead, refined, secondary	14,100	15,300	15,400	15,400
Industrial Minerals				
Cement '000 t	1,224	1,300	1,300	1,250
Clays:				
Ceramic clay, crude	2,500	2500	2,500	2,000
Kaolin: Crude	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Lime '000 t	150	150	150	150
Pumice	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Quartz, quartzite, glass sand:	210,000	210,000	200,000	200,000
Salt, all sources	5,000	5,000	2,000	2,000
Sand and gravel '000 t	12,419	12,526	11,510	12,000
Stone, excluding quartz and quartzite, crude:^e				
Dimension	104,000	78,000	45,000	50,000
Mineral Fuels and Related Materials				
Coal Brown coal '000 t	758	737	685	700
Lignite '000 t	3,804	3,743	3,448	3,400
Natural gas m ³	5,700	6,800	6,100	6,000
Petroleum, crude	800	600	700	500

^e Estimated.

¹ Table includes data available through June 2003.

² In addition to commodities listed, common clay, coke, and petroleum products also were produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.