

Contributor Profile: The Republic of Slovenia

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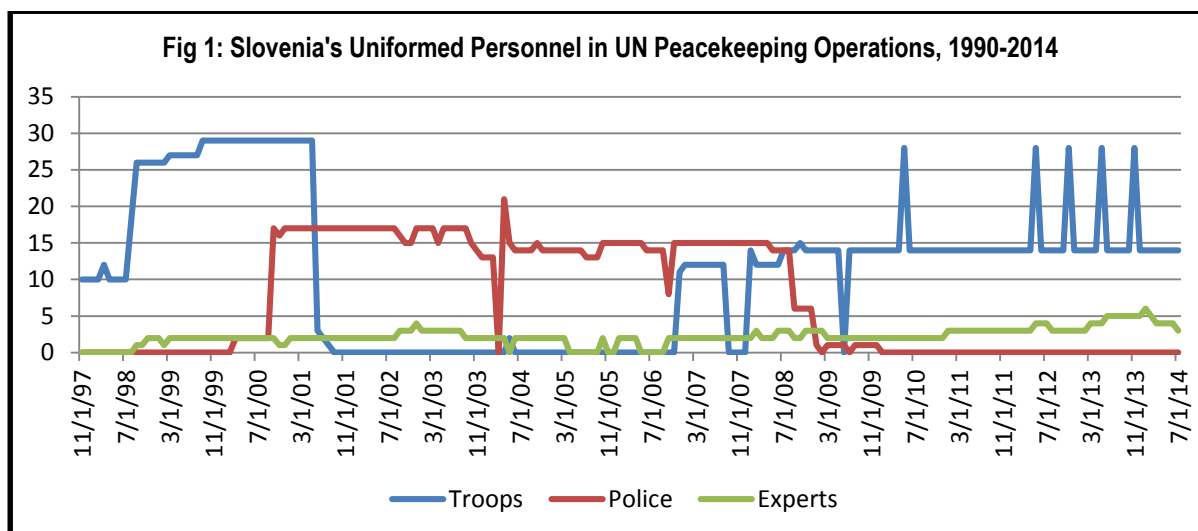
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Active armed forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense budget	UN peacekeepers	UN contribution breakdown	Other significant deployments
Active (March 2014): 7,305 Global rank: 130 th	Multirole helicopters: 8 Medium transport helicopters: 4 Light transport helicopters: 4	2012: US\$396 mil (1.12 % of GDP) 2013: \$357 mil (1.00 % of GDP) 2014: est. \$379 mil	17 (0 female) 31 July 2014 Ranking: 90 th	UNIFIL 14 troops UNTSO 3 military observers	May 2014 <u>Military:</u> KFOR: 309 troops ISAF: 33 troops (April 2014) EU Op. Althea: 9 troops <u>Police:</u> EULEX Kosovo: 7 EUPOL COPPS: 2
Defense spending/troop: US\$59,250 (compared to global average of approximately \$70,000)					

Part 1: Recent trends

Slovenia's participation in international peace operations is limited by its size and capabilities. Nevertheless, it has consistently provided a small number of uniformed peacekeepers beginning in November 1997, when it deployed troops to UNFICYP in Cyprus. In practice, the vast majority of troops deployed are engaged in NATO-led operations (mainly with KFOR in Kosovo and, until 2014, also in ISAF in Afghanistan). Only a small percentage has been deployed in EU- and UN-led operations. Although this holds true for military operations, Slovenian participation in civilian (police) missions is mostly carried out through EU-led operations.² Slovenia follows a policy of prioritizing contributions to missions in southeast Europe and the Balkans, with the largest contingents so far deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and in Kosovo. Altogether, twenty civilian functional specialists were deployed solely to NATO-led operations (i.e. KFOR and ISAF). Additionally, while the number of Slovenian police, soldiers and civilian experts participating in peace operations is quite low, the share of active Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) deployed to various peace operations is rather high (up to 10%).

Since 1997, Slovenia has contributed uniformed personnel to the following UN missions: UNMIK in Kosovo (2), UNSMIS in Syria (1), UNFICYP in Cyprus (194), UNTSO in the West Bank (51), and UNIFIL in Lebanon (220).³ The last two, UNTSO and UNIFIL, are currently the only operations with Slovenian troops. Slovenian police (SP), meanwhile, have participated in UN peace operations since 2000 (UNMISSET, UNMIK). Since 2010, no police personnel have been deployed to a UN peace operation. As for civilian experts, their participation began in 1998 and since then their number has remained low (up to 6 persons).



Part 2: Decision-Making Process

The deployment of Slovenian forces is regulated by the [Strategy for Participation in International Operations and Missions](#), adopted by the government in 2009. A number of other documents provide background for participation in peace operations, including the [Government of the RS Act](#), [Foreign Affairs Act](#), [Defence Act](#), [Secondment of Personnel to International Civilian Missions and International Organizations Act](#), [Police Act](#) and the [Protection Against Natural and Other Disasters Act](#).

The Strategy envisages that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, or the Ministry of the Interior or other ministries or bodies initiate the process for deciding on the country's participation in international operations and missions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the coordination procedure and for the examination of the initiative. The National Security Council Secretariat also plays a role by providing the risk assessment and its own opinion about the peace operation. The aforementioned ministries discuss the initiative at the level of ministers or state secretaries. The harmonized and amended proposal is submitted to the Government for adoption. In the case of military and civilian operations or missions with an executive mandate or in the case of urgent international situations, the government is obliged to inform the Slovenian parliament about Slovenia's participation and make a decision regarding specific contributions only afterwards (although the parliament's position on certain peace operation is not obligatory). This procedure is valid for: 1) new operations; 2) early withdrawal from a peace operation; 3) the adaptation of an existing peace operation (i.e. "significant change of purpose of the mission, decrease or increase of personnel in certain mission"); and 4) change of the lead organization. This procedure is not required in the case of urgent rescue operations and the deployment of rapid reaction forces within the framework of NATO or the EU. In those cases the government accepts the decision promptly. The final decision is always made by the Government, which should take into account the principles set out in the Strategy, national interests, expert recommendations as well as any operational caveats. In addition, the Government is obliged to report to parliament on activities related to peace operations on an annual basis.

Peace operations are financed by the individual ministry that provides the personnel, i.e. Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and in some cases the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The budget for ongoing peace operations is planned annually, while in urgent cases, financial means can be redistributed within the ministry or procured from the national reserve.

Part 3: Rationales for contributing

Political rationales: Slovenia takes the position that international peace and stability must be assured. To that end, it does not matter which organization leads the peace operation in question as long as it is authorized by the UN Security Council. However, Slovenia's preferred channels for participation in peace operations are regional organizations, NATO and the EU in particular. This is because Slovenia's political and public priority lies in its neighborhood of southeast Europe. Nevertheless, the 2009 Strategy for Participation in International Operations and Missions also emphasizes the importance of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean, Asia, and Africa. According to public opinion polls, Slovenian support for peace operations was the strongest in 2001 and 2003 during the process of applying for membership in NATO and EU, which could partially be attributed to the uniformity among the political elites regarding the primacy of national security. Current public opinion analysis shows that the Slovenian public continues to strongly support peace operations of a humanitarian nature, rather than robust (combat) operations, and they also prefer operations located in southeast Europe.⁴

Economic rationales: UN reimbursements are not an important factor in Slovenia's decision to contribute to UN peace operations. Its ability to participate in UN operations is influenced by the country's limited finances as well as the small size of its armed forces and police. Such financial limitations are also taken into consideration in the case of distant peace operations since the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) do not have capabilities to fully support larger units logistically and therefore usually need a partner (e.g. often the Italian Armed Forces). It seems likely that the presence of troops in a certain area stimulates additional deployments or participation in a new peace operation in that area, due to already established logistical networks.

Security rationales: Slovenia's historic cultural and ethnic ties as well as its close proximity to the Balkans have made security in the region a top priority. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior in particular have emphasized security rationales since criminal activities in the neighboring countries have a direct impact on criminal activity in Slovenia.

Institutional rationales: Discussions with Slovenian service members reveal that participation in UN peace operations is perceived as positive. Specifically, it provides an opportunity to gain experience in a new operational field and valuable cross-cultural experience.⁵ They report that due to Slovenia's small size and the corresponding position in the international environment (without any "negative historical baggage"), they have positive interactions with the local population.⁶ Peace operations are also seen as an opportunity for broadening expertise. One example is the country's ambition to participate in a peace operation in the Middle East with a naval component, which would provide valuable experience for the currently inexperienced crew.⁷

Normative rationales: Participation in UN-led peace operations is perceived as an important contribution to international peace and security. The "desire to help the locals" has been identified as strong motivation for the SAF's service members.⁸ Although it seems that the Slovenian public does not differentiate between peace operations led by different organizations, they do find the distance of the peace operation, the level of risk, and the type of operation (from humanitarian to combat), as very important.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: During the process of joining NATO and the EU in the early 2000s, Slovenia prioritized contributions to operations conducted by these regional organizations. Even today, the SAF, as a relatively young institution, is still modernizing and trying to reach NATO standards, a goal which is furthered through cooperation with NATO-led operations.⁹ In addition, the whole defense system went through transformation to conform to NATO standards. Representatives of various ministries emphasize the importance of the legitimization of peace operations by a UN Security Council resolution, regardless of which organization leads the operation. The same opinion can be found among service members, who believe that the legitimacy given by the UN mandate influences the mission's effectiveness.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Slovenia's preference is for further integration with NATO and the EU, two regional organizations which provide peace and security in a region with similar political, economic, cultural, and security interests. This takes priority over contributions to UN missions.

Finances: In times of economic crisis, costs seem to be one of the factors influencing the contribution to peace operations. At present, deployment costs are said to exceed UN reimbursements. The goal of Slovenian foreign policy is to maintain current levels of participation in UN peace operations and eventually to add a naval component. It seems rather unrealistic to expect strengthening of the participation under current conditions.

Difficult domestic politics: Public support for Slovenia's participation in peace operations show a change in opinion in the mid-1990s. After 1997, when the SAF and the police began providing peacekeepers, most Slovenians supported the process. The support was the strongest in 2001 and 2003 during the process of joining NATO and the EU when plenty of information about the benefits of cooperation within both organizations was available. After 2005 there was a decrease in support. In addition, in 2012 opposition to participation was stronger than support for the first time. The longitudinal studies show that there is a lack of interest and knowledge about peace operations among the Slovenian public. They support operations in the region (i.e. southeast Europe) and humanitarian operations; in both cases the support is emotionally motivated. On the other hand, the public is less convinced of the need to participate in other, more distant and perhaps more violent, missions. This could also be attributed to the poor communication between politicians making a decision about participation in certain operation and the public. This suggests Slovenian society has a strong risk aversion and considers a very narrow selection of activities worthy of making sacrifices. This can be attributed to various factors shaping public attitudes towards security matters, including the historical-political dimension of the so-called "prevailing peace syndrome", the socio-demographic dimension (including an aging society and a domestic economic/societal crisis), and the uncertain nature of Slovenian culture.¹⁰

Limited capacities: Slovenia is very limited in terms of the capabilities of its armed forces and the police. In the majority of operations, especially the distant ones, Slovenian forces depend on partners. For instance, it has co-deployed with Italian forces to UNIFIL in Lebanon since 2006. Therefore, the decision-making process is influenced by the willingness of other countries to accept Slovenia as a partner and vice versa. There are several factors influencing the decision about partnership. These include the compatibility of equipment (due to logistics), mastering the relevant *lingua franca* by both partners, previous common operational experience, as well as standardization of procedures (usually among NATO

members). Research conducted among service members of the SAF deployed to UNIFIL showed that the opinions are divided: some believe it would be wise to deploy small and highly professionalized units for specialized tasks attached to another national contingent, while others believe that a unit large enough to take over the area of responsibility should be deployed.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

The main challenge facing Slovenia's involvement with peacekeeping is to maintain the current number of personnel in UN peace operations. Interviews with representatives of the Ministry of International Affairs and Ministry of Defense revealed that participating with new types of capabilities in UN peace operations is Slovenia's long-term ambition. In recent years, however, the Slovenian public has reduced its support for peace operations. It has also expressed a preference for humanitarian operations over robust operations (e.g. anticipated use of weapons) as well as operations in its neighborhood of southeast Europe. The latest public opinion surveys reveal that the ageing of the Slovenian population along with a domestic economic crisis have had a negative impact on popular support for peace operations.¹¹ Communication with the public regarding security issues and the importance of peace operations should be strengthened in order to overcome these challenges to greater participation.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There are no specific opponents or champions of UN-led peace operations within Slovenia. Perhaps the closest might be the Slovenian Association for the UN. There is, however, a generally positive attitude towards the UN as well as political agreement regarding the need to have UN legitimization of each peace operation.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The 2009 Strategy anticipates the following: 1) use of "national advantages;" 2) a geographical dispersion of forces; and 3) specialization in specific niches. First, as mentioned by officials of the Ministry of Defence, the SAF have well-trained and well-equipped special operations forces. However, deployment of those forces is often to high-risk environments, which is not popular with the Slovenian public or among the political elites. Therefore, the future deployment of such forces would probably lead to strong public opposition. Second, there is a pool of trained and NATO-certified civilian functional specialists, from the public as well as private sector and NGOs. So far they have been deployed solely to NATO operations. However, this capacity could be used also in UN-led operations. They already have experience with cooperation in national CIMIC structures as well as international environments (e.g. Italian CIMIC within PRT, political advisors). Furthermore, the pool consists of specialists of various profiles and could be deployed based on needs of a specific peace operation. Third, Slovenia could potentially deploy a component of the nuclear, biological and chemical unit to perform tasks like decontamination, the lab analysis of chemical, biological or radiological samples, transportation of samples, etc. It can be used in peace operations or in cases of natural or other disasters. Fourth, Slovenian police have valuable experience with post-war reconstruction, primarily mentoring police forces and advising on rebuilding institutions. The training of host state police forces has on several occasions taken place in Slovenia. While there were some attempts to establish a special police unit for deployments, this was never realized.

Part 8: Further Reading

[Strategy for Participation in International Operations and Missions](#) (UI RS, n. 19/2010 on 12 March 2010).

[Resolution of Strategy of National Security of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (UI RS, n. 92/07 on 26 March 2010).

[Strategy of participation in peace operations between 2010 and 2015 for the Ministry of Interior](#) (accepted on 30th of March 2010).

[International civilian missions, Slovenian police](#) (accessed 16 June 2014).

[Slovenian Armed Forces in peace operations](#) (accessed 15 June 2014).

Vuga, Janja, "Safety Bubble versus Risk Awareness: Casualty Aversion among the Slovenian Public," *Armed Forces & Society*, 40 (2014): 357-81. First published 7 March 2013 doi:10.1177/0095327X12465814

Vuga, Janja, "Cultural Differences in Multinational Peace Operations: A Slovenian perspective (UNIFIL)," *International Peacekeeping*, 17:4 (2010): 554-565.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from the IISS, *The Military Balance 2014* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2014).

² Malešič, Marjan, Jelušič, Ljubica, Garb, Maja, Vuga, Janja, Kopač, Erik, Juvan, Jelena, *Small, but Smart? The Structural and Functional Professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces* (NOMOS forthcoming).

³ Data provided by the PR office of the Slovenian Armed Forces. Acquired on 10th June, 2014.

⁴ The longitudinal public opinion measurements show that traditionally up to 90 % of population support humanitarian operations, up to 80 % support peacekeeping where weapons can be used solely for self-defense, while merely one fifth of the public support combat operations.

⁵ The discussion took place at the Ministry of Defence of Republic of Slovenia, 10 June 2014; at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Slovenia, 11 June 2014; and at the Ministry of Interior of Republic of Slovenia, 18 June 2014.

⁶ Vuga, Janja, Resteigne, Delphine and Jelušič, Ljubica. *The smaller contingents: Slovenia and Belgium* (Peter Lang, forthcoming).

⁷ Yet again, Slovenia is limited by low number of trained personnel.

⁸ Juvan, Jelena and Vuga, Janja, "What motivates Slovenian Peacekeepers?" *International Peacekeeping*, 18:1 (2011): 554-65.

⁹ The discussion took place at the Ministry of Defence of Republic of Slovenia, on 10th of June 2014

¹⁰ Vuga, Janja, "Safety Bubble versus Risk Awareness: Casualty Aversion among the Slovenian Public," *Armed Forces & Society*, 40 (2014): 357-81. First published 7 March 2013 doi:10.1177/0095327X12465814

¹¹ Ibid.