

# An update on developments regarding civic space in the EU and an overview of the possibilities for human rights defenders to enter EU territory

Slovenia

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# 1. Civic space developments in 2022

## 1.1. Protesters required to pay for policing costs

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Area   | Safe space & protection                                  |
| Topic  | Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) |
| Impact | Major  |

In late 2021, the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) ordered the State Attorney's Office (*Državno odvetništvo*) to start recovering from protesters the costs of policing certain unregistered protests they attended. In particular, the Office has issued a series of payment orders targeted one of the faces of the so-called "Friday cycling protests". From April 2020 until April 2022, these informal anti-government protests against its role in weakening democratic standards in the country were a regular feature of public life in Slovenia. Only in March 2022, for example, this activist and protester received a request to pay € 34,340.56 for costs of policing of a 2020 protest. This protest was marked by protesters sitting on the Republic Square and reading out the Constitution in protest against restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the context of the pandemic. Subsequently, the police forcibly removed protesters from the square, as they failed to leave it voluntarily. The State Attorney's Office threatened a lawsuit if the protester in question failed to pay this amount. In total, they were charged with more than € 40,000 for policing costs. According to data collected by Amnesty International, the State Attorney's Office processed 28 claims amounting to € 269,778.48 by mid-March 2022. Concerned by these developments, the organisation called on the Slovenian authorities to withdraw such claims and to guarantee people's right to peaceful assembly.<sup>1</sup> In April 2022, the Legal network for the protection of democracy, an initiative providing legal support to individuals and organisations involved in legal proceedings due to non-violent public action, also addressed these developments. According to the Legal network, these cases are examples of SLAPPs, and are aimed to silence and financially exhaust activists and civil society as a whole, amongst others. Consequently, the initiative also called the

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International (2022), '[Slovenia: Withdraw Claims for Protesters to Cover Costs Associated with Policing Assemblies](#)', public release, 16 March 2022.

government to withdraw the lawsuits and claims against protesters.<sup>2</sup> In May 2022, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights also raised concerns over the developments in Slovenia and requested the financial and administrative harassment of civil society activists be stopped. Amongst others, the Commissioner warned that, “Demanding that peaceful demonstrators reimburse the costs for policing unregistered public assemblies is clearly incompatible with both Slovenia’s international human rights obligations with regard to the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, and with Slovenia’s Public Assembly Act, which makes a clear difference in this respect between organised events and public assemblies.”<sup>3</sup> Only after the 2022 parliamentary election and the subsequent change of government, the orders adopted by the former government in late 2021 regarding the preparation and filing lawsuits for reimbursement of police costs at unregistered public gatherings had been revoked, reported the Ministry of the Interior in June 2022. According to the ministry, earlier in 2022, the State Attorney’s Office had already warned the ministry that the court might interpret the lawsuits filed for the recovery of policing costs as an impermissible interference with the rights to freedom of expression and association, as enshrined in the ECHR and national constitution. The State Attorney’s Office consequently recommended the ministry dropping the lawsuits. The ministry, however, had failed to act on these recommendations until the arrival of the new leadership.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Pravna mreža za varstvo demokracije (2022), [‘Poziv Vladi RS, da umakne vloženi tožbi in zahtevke za vračilo stroškov mirnih shodov’](#), public release, 4 April 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (2022), [‘Slovenia: lawsuits and fines against peaceful demonstrators should be dropped’](#), public release, 25 May 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Slovenia, Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) (2022), [‘Preklicani sklepi za povrnitev stroškov policije na shodih’](#), public release, 9 June 2022.

## 1.2. Promoting unfavourable attitudes towards the civil sector

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Area   | Safe space & protection  |
| Topic  | Intimidation / negative narrative / smear campaigns / disinformation campaigns |
| Impact | Major  |

As in the past, the Slovenian Democratic Party (*Slovenska demokratska stranka*) and its leader were among the major proponents of negative attitudes towards non-governmental organisations in 2022. They were in power until early June, subsequently becoming the major opposition party. In February, for example, the party launched the so-called ‘2022 consultations with voters’. A close-ended questionnaire, which was at the time available on the party’s website,<sup>5</sup> was also sent to numerous Slovenian households.<sup>6</sup> Rather than impartially measuring the public opinion, the questionnaire seemed to spread the party line on specific issues. It included suggestive questions and responses. One example relating to non-governmental organisations and suggesting that funding non-governmental organisations was opposite to funding the right projects was as follows: ‘The government negotiated more than € 10.5 billion of European funds for investments and other projects in the country. The funds will be used for the renovation and construction of schools, kindergartens, hospitals, apartments, nursery homes, roads and sports facilities, for the construction and renovation of water supply systems, for flood protection and many other projects. I believe that: a) funds are invested in the right projects; b) we should allocate more money to non-governmental organisations.’ According to the party, 90 % of respondents opted for the first response.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Slovenian Democratic Party (*Slovenska demokratska stranka*). At the time, the questionnaire was available on [www.sds.si/posvet2022](http://www.sds.si/posvet2022).

<sup>6</sup> Volk, L. (2022), ‘Vprašalnik SDS, ki straši pred skupnostjo LGBT+’, *mladina.si*, 11 February 2022.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Slovenian Democratic Party on [www.sds.si/posvet-volivci-2022](http://www.sds.si/posvet-volivci-2022).

Also in February, the party leader and then Prime Minister posted on Twitter a list with the number of civil organisations and initiatives which joined together in an informal network to promote better voter turnout in the upcoming elections in Slovenia (please see the next section), disparaging their work and asking: ‘Does anyone know of any national achievements of any of the recipients of your money listed below?’ The tweet prompted further comments depicting the NGO sector as e.g. pumping taxpayers’ money and being parasitic.<sup>8</sup> The list included a number of organisations working in different fields, such as environmental organisations and organisations working with vulnerable groups, including with victims of gender-based violence. One of the latter organisations, for example, had earlier received the State Medal for merits for systematic, professional and committed assistance to victims of violence.<sup>9</sup>

In July 2022, for example, during the largest wildfires in the history of independent Slovenia, which captured the Karst area, a party member and MP blamed in a tweet 8 March Institute (*Inštitut 8. marec*) and the rest of civil society for initiating last year a successful referendum in which the voters rejected amendments to the Water Act (*Zakon o vodah*). According to the civil society organisations, these amendments threatened the safety of Slovenian waters. In particular, amended provisions allowing for construction of public use infrastructure (e.g. inns, business and administrative facilities, shops) on water land and coastal areas could hamper public access to water and could increase the risk of contamination of surface and groundwater and, consequently, of drinking water.<sup>10</sup> The MP stated that referendum rejection of amendments prevented the building of simple infrastructure (e.g. water tanks), including in the Karst area, implying that civil society is to be blamed for the lack of infrastructure which would be of help in fighting wildfires.<sup>11</sup> The party leader and previous PM also responded to the colleague’s tweet and added that “pests from Metelkova 6” (i.e. the address where a number of NGOs are housed) and in mainstream media should receive credit for this.<sup>12</sup> In another tweet, the head of the party claimed that left-wing governments have allocated more money in 10 years to useless NGOs at

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<sup>8</sup> For more information, see the former Prime Minister’s twitter account on [https://twitter.com/JJansaSDS/status/1493628220733898756?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/JJansaSDS/status/1493628220733898756?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw).

<sup>9</sup> Smajila, B. M. (2022), ‘[Nevladniki odgovarjajo Janši: Država nas nujno potrebuje](#)’, *N1 SLO*, 17 February 2022.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see web page of the Movement for drinking water (*Gibanje za pitno vodo*), a coalition of NGOs campaigning in the referendum, on <https://zapitnovodo.si/strokovni-argumenti/>.

<sup>11</sup> For more information, see the MP’s twitter account on <https://twitter.com/andrejhoivik/status/1550009509673852929>.

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see the former Prime Minister’s twitter account on <https://twitter.com/jjansasds/status/1550021484415942658>.

Metelkova 6 than it would be needed for purchasing two new Canadair firefighting planes.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.3. CSOs encourage voter turnout

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Area   | Participation and cooperation with authorities |
| Topic  | Public participation (citizen participation)   |
| Impact | Major  |

In autumn 2021, an informal coalition of Slovenian CSOs entitled The People's voice (*Glas ljudstva*) was set up. The coalition currently involves 112 civil society organisations and initiatives. It emerged in the context of the 2022 super election year, when parliamentary, presidential and local elections were taking place in Slovenia. The coalition intended to address some key issues relating to political participation, namely lower voter turnout from election to election, lack of substantial debates important for development of Slovenian society and for its residents in the pre-election period, as well as people's exclusion from the process of political decision-making. The coalition's aim was to place a substantive discussion on a democratic, green and just society at the centre of the pre-election period and to achieve a record voter turnout. To this end, the coalition, for example, drafted 138 demands divided into 11 different substantive sections, and handed them over to political parties participating in the parliamentary election. The parties were asked to provide responses and state their position on the relevant issues. Based on these responses, an online tool, the so-called Automated Election Machine (*Volitvomat*) was developed, allowing voters to inspect who they most agree with in terms of their views and beliefs. To encourage voter turnout, the initiative further organised a traveling festival of democracy entitled 'We will decide: Let's go vote'. Throughout Slovenia, discussions with residents on the importance of democracy and a green and fair future were held. During these events, the importance of electoral participation was particularly stressed. The coalition also organised a live debate between representatives of political parties participating in the parliamentary election

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<sup>13</sup> For more information, see the former Prime Minister's twitter account on <https://twitter.com/jjansasds/status/1550068663927148545>.

in the historic Republic Square in Ljubljana.<sup>14</sup> On 24 April 2022, the day of the parliamentary election, 70.79 % of eligible voters paid visit to polling stations,<sup>15</sup> a turnout not recorded since the 2000 parliamentary election. For example, the turnout in 2018 and 2014 elections was 52.64 and 51.73 %, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For more information, see the web page of the People's voice on <https://glas-ljudstva.si/pogosta-vprasanja/>.

<sup>15</sup> Slovenia, [The Record establishing the result of the election of deputies to the National Assembly](#) (*Zapisnik o ugotoviti izida volitev poslancev v Državni zbor*), 7 May 2022.

<sup>16</sup> For more information, see the web pages of the National Election Commission (*Državna volilna komisija*) on [www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumenti/volitve/drzavni\\_zbor\\_2018/011dyenp.pdf](http://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenti/volitve/drzavni_zbor_2018/011dyenp.pdf) and [www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dokumenti/volitve/drzavni\\_zbor\\_2014/Porocilo-o-izidu---predcasne-volitve-v-DZ-2014--anonimizirano.pdf](http://www.dvk-rs.si/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenti/volitve/drzavni_zbor_2014/Porocilo-o-izidu---predcasne-volitve-v-DZ-2014--anonimizirano.pdf).



## 2. Promising practice in 2022

### 2.1. Facts and figures

The Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS), an umbrella NGO, compiles for transparency reasons the statistical data on the operation of the NGO sector in Slovenia and publishes them on its website in the Facts and figures (*Dejstva in številke*) section. The organisation publishes data on e.g. number of NGOs, number of their employees, their revenues and the amount of funding from the state and local authorities and its allocation. The most recent data show the following, amongst others:

- there were 27,566 NGOs registered in Slovenia on 1 December 2022, 23,475 associations (*društva*), 3,832 (private) institutes (*(zasebni) zavodi*) and 259 foundations (*fundacije*);
- in 2021, their revenues amounted to slightly more than € 1 billion, with 89.38 % of organisations with less than € 50,000 in revenues;
- 1.24 % of Slovenian active population was employed with the NGOs in 2021, with the percentage generally increasing over years, but still very low, compared to the situation abroad;
- in 2020, public funding represented 46.54 % of the revenues in the NGO sector, with funding on the rise since 2017, and for the first time exceeding the share from 2010, which at the time was 40.01 %;
- in 2021, state ministries funded the NGO sector and NGO projects with € 252.296.173,46, representing a considerable increase compared to 2020 when state ministries allocated € 180.965.938,31 to the sector. In 2021, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities was the top donor providing 60.75 % of all funds allocated to the sector by state ministries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For more information, see the Facts and figures (*Dejstva in številke*) section on the web page of the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (*Center za informiranje, sodelovanje in razvoj nevladnih organizacij*, CNVOS) on [www.cnvos.si/nvo-sektor-dejstva-stevilke/](http://www.cnvos.si/nvo-sektor-dejstva-stevilke/).

## 2.2. Violation meter

The National Assembly adopted in 2009 the Resolution on Legislative Regulation (*Resolucija o normativni dejavnosti*) to strengthen the quality standards of drafting laws and regulation. To improve the quality of regulations drafting, the resolution lays down minimum standards for public consultations, including allocation of a minimum of 30 to 60 days for public consultation.<sup>18</sup> This provision was later incorporated in the Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Poslovnik Vlade Republike Slovenije*).<sup>19</sup> The Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (*Center za informiranje, sodelovanje in razvoj nevladnih organizacij, CNVOS*), an umbrella NGO, set up a violation meter (*števec kršitev*), a tool to monitor how often provisions related to public consultations are breached. The meter covers all regulations for which the resolution sets a minimum time for public consultations, as well as all other acts for which such consultations are laid down in the government rules of procedure. Since taking office on 1 June 2022 until 19 December 2022, the current government failed to observe the relevant provisions regarding public consultations in 62 % of the cases. The former government, in office from 13 March 2020 until 1 June 2022, failed to meet this obligation in 70 % of the cases.<sup>20</sup> The latter represents the second highest number of violations of the mentioned provisions by a single government since the organisation has set up this tool in February 2012.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Slovenia, [The Resolution on legislative regulation](#) (*Resolucija o normativni dejavnosti*), 19 November 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Slovenia, [The Rules of procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Poslovnik Vlade Republike Slovenije*), 10 May 2001, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>20</sup> For more information, see web page of the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs on [www.cnvos.si/stevec-krsitev/](http://www.cnvos.si/stevec-krsitev/).

<sup>21</sup> For more information, see web page of the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs on [www.cnvos.si/nvo-vseved/stevec-krsitev/arhiv-prejsnjih-vlad/](http://www.cnvos.si/nvo-vseved/stevec-krsitev/arhiv-prejsnjih-vlad/).

## 2.3. Legal network for the protection of democracy

In early 2021, four NGOs, Amnesty International Slovenia (*Amnesty International Slovenija*), Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Environment (*Pravni center za varstvo človekovih pravic in okolja – PIC*; formerly Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs (*Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij – PIC*)), Today is a new day (*Danes je nov dan*) and Institute for Culture of Diversity Open (*Zavod za kulturo raznolikosti Open*) jointly set up the Legal network for the protection of democracy (*Pravna mreža za varstvo demokracije*), financed by the EEA and Norway Grants. The initiative provides support for the use of legal means to challenge procedures and practices that are illegal, unconstitutional and undemocratic (e.g. disproportionately high fines for public engagement, criminal and damages actions to intimidate and limit criticism, pressure on the media and civil society, threats and punishment of public servants who choose to speak out). In 2022, the network continued with its activities. In the first six months of 2022, amongst others, the network provided legal assistance to 275 individuals, mostly relating to measures to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic, persecution of public gatherings, as well as fulfilment of other human rights and freedoms. In this period, based on the network's requests for legal protection, the courts and the police halted misdemeanour proceedings in 18 cases, exempting individuals concerned from paying fines. In the same period, the network lodged seven initiatives with the national oversight bodies, including with the Human Rights Ombudsman (*Varuh človekovih pravic*) and the national equality body, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*). On the basis of the network's appeals to the government, the Ministry of the Interior stopped the procedures in which individuals who participated in informal gatherings were required to pay the costs of police protection. Relating to these cases, the network repeatedly pointed out that such lawsuits were aimed at financial exhaustion and the silencing of activists and civil society. Based on a monitoring mechanism set up in 2021, the network completed monitoring of 17 protests in the first four months of 2022. In June 2022, on the basis of draft amendments produced by the network in collaboration with other legal experts, the National Assembly adopted amendments to the Communicable Diseases Act (*Zakon*

o nalezljivih boleznih). In 2022, the network received European Citizen's Prize awarded by the European Parliament.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.4. Parlameter

Parlameter is an online tool developed to provide for transparency of the work of the parliament. It collects and analyses voting data, transcripts of sessions, as well as other information regarding activities of MPs and parliamentary groups, such as parliamentary initiatives and questions in the parliament. The tool is a source of organised data open to the general public as well as specific audiences, such as journalists, allowing them to follow activities of MPs and the parliament in an easy-to-follow manner. Available features include e.g. sharing any content anywhere on the internet, interactive results of voting events, voting comparator, email alerts, as well as AI detection of unexpected voting behaviour. In addition to the national parliament, the tool is also available for monitoring work of some local authorities in Slovenia and foreign parliaments.<sup>24</sup> Today is a new day, Institute for other studies (*Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja*), the NGO which developed the tool, is focused on providing digital support regarding political participation, transparency and public oversight.<sup>25</sup> In 2022, in the first year of the award's existence in Slovenia, the organisation received Embassy Tulip, an award given to human rights defenders by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Slovenia. In particular, Today is a new day received the award for their creative and innovative projects enabling citizens to hold their elected representatives accountable, as well as for enabling activities of other Slovenian civil society actors by providing technological platforms for these activities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For more information, see the web page of the Legal network for the protection of democracy on <https://pravna-mreza.si/dosezki/>. For the European Citizen's Prize see [Meet the 2022 European Citizens Prize winners | EEA Grants](#)

<sup>24</sup> For more information, see the web page of Today is a new day on <https://danesjenovdan.si/en/tools> and web pages on <https://parlameter.si/> and <https://parlameter.org/>.

<sup>25</sup> For more information, see the web page of Today is a new day on <https://danesjenovdan.si/en/about>.

<sup>26</sup> For more information, see the Facebook page of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Slovenia on [www.facebook.com/DutchEmbassySlovenia/](http://www.facebook.com/DutchEmbassySlovenia/).

## 2.5. Fund for the development of non-governmental organisations

Since 31 December 2020, personal income taxpayers can give 1 % of their income tax for publicly beneficial purposes, including to non-governmental organisations recognised as being in the public interest in a specific field of life.<sup>27</sup> Since 2007 until late 2020, personal income taxpayers could give 0.5 % of their personal income tax for such purposes. By 2018, however, if taxpayers failed to make donations, the relevant percentage of their taxes was not allocated for publicly beneficial purposes and remained in the state budget. To counter this, the Act on Non-governmental Organisations (*Zakon o nevladnih organizacijah*) was passed in 2018. The law provides the legal basis for setting up the Fund for the development of non-governmental organisations (*Sklad za razvoj nevladnih organizacij*).<sup>28</sup> According to the law, the fund shall provide resources for projects and programmes of horizontal networks and regional hubs providing the support environment and promoting the development of non-governmental organisations, as well as projects and programmes of non-governmental organisations and other persons implementing measures aimed at the development of individual fields and promoting the development of non-governmental organisations and the development of the support environment for non-governmental organisations. The sources of financing for the fund shall include personal income tax assets not earmarked for publicly beneficial purposes by individual personal income taxpayers, that is - if taxpayers failed to make donations, the relevant percentage of their taxes shall now go to the fund. In 2022, for example, the Ministry of Public Administration (*Ministrstvo za javno upravo*) published a public call for co-financing from the fund the projects selected in calls funded from the EU budget or the budget of the EFTA Financial Mechanism Office.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Slovenia, [The Personal income tax act](#) (*Zakon o dohodnini*), 26 October 2006, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>28</sup> Slovenia, [The Act on non-governmental organisations](#) (*Zakon o nevladnih organizacijah*), 20 March 2018.

<sup>29</sup> For more information, see the government web page on [www.gov.si/zbirke/javne-objave/javni-poziv-za-let-2022-24-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-nvo/](http://www.gov.si/zbirke/javne-objave/javni-poziv-za-let-2022-24-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-nvo/).



## 3. Visa for human rights defenders

### 3.1. Entry and stay for human rights defenders (HRDs) at risk

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Dedicated visa scheme for HRDs at risk available in your country                         | No  |
| Other type of visa or alternative legal entitlement or derogation clause applied to HRDs | Yes |

In Slovenia, the legislation does not provide for a specific visa or alternative legal scheme allowing entry and stay for human rights defenders. There is also no specific definition applying to this group of persons.<sup>30</sup>

Since there is no relevant definition, decision-making on the issuance of a visa in such cases might be very challenging, reports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve*). Hypothetically, in these cases the individual would very likely be required to submit evidence of their previous activities, which show public defence of human rights or public warning of human rights violations in the home country, as well as evidence of concrete risk or persecution they are exposed to due to such activities. In any case, the actual purpose of the trip or the entry of a human rights defender into Slovenia shall be considered. In the event that there are no doubts regarding the short-term intended stay, such a person would be referred to arrange a short stay visa. With a view to the Visa Code, the issuance of a visa with limited territorial validity is also possible if it is necessary on humanitarian grounds, for reasons of national interest or because of international obligations to derogate from general rules. In a given case, the existence of humanitarian reasons would be sought in the mentioned evidence of the individual's past activities relating to public defence of human rights or public warning of human rights violations in the home country, as well as evidence of persecution or

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<sup>30</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve*) upon request (email, 21 December 2022). Information was provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) upon request (email, 4 January 2023).

concrete risks to which they are exposed to due to such activities.<sup>31</sup> As of yet, however, no such a visa with limited territorial validity has been issued by Slovenian authorities to human rights defenders.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, such individuals might be considered under other legal provisions, provided that they meet the set conditions. According to the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*), one example includes the international protection (i.e. asylum) legislation. With a view to legislation governing the issuance of residence permits, the issuance of a temporary residence permit to an individual due to the interest of the Republic of Slovenia could be potentially considered, provided that the government, on the proposal of the relevant ministry or other state body, issues a decision that the issuance of a temporary residence permit to a foreigner (and their family members) is in the country's interest.<sup>33</sup> Ljubljana participation in the ICORN (International Cities of Refuge Network), which provides shelters to writers at risk, some of whom are human rights advocates, is an example where such residence permits are issued. On the proposal of the Ministry of Culture (*Ministrstvo za kulturo*), the government adopts a decision on the existence of the public interest for the issuance of a temporary residence permit for the period of up to five years, as per Article 51, Paragraph 3 of the Aliens Act (*Zakon o tujcih*).<sup>34</sup> Since 2011, when the Municipality of Ljubljana joined the network, six writers at risk have been granted this permit. The municipality provides for housing and the related costs. In line with the accession agreement, the host city also accommodates writers' family members. The municipality in cooperation with the Ljubljana City Library (*Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana*) provides the writer with a monthly stipend. Health insurance tends to be a major issue, as ICORN residents are not entitled to basic health insurance, and commercial insurance for foreigners needs to be obtained. This type of insurance provides for a more limited access to healthcare services. To address partially this issue, the writers enrol to Slovenian language courses, and for the duration of these courses, they are included in the basic healthcare insurance scheme under Art. 15, Para. 1, point 14 of the Healthcare and Health Insurance Act (*Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju*).<sup>35</sup> Amongst others, writers have the right to open a bank account, to work and have free access to public transportation. The municipality

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<sup>31</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve*) upon request (email, 21 December 2022).

<sup>32</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve*) upon request (regular mail, response dated 15 February 2023).

<sup>33</sup> Information was provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*) upon request (email, 4 January 2023).

<sup>34</sup> Slovenia, [The Aliens Act](#) (*Zakon o tujcih*), 15 June 2011, and subsequent modifications.

<sup>35</sup> Slovenia, [The Healthcare and health insurance act](#) (*Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju*), 12 February 1992, and subsequent modifications.



closely cooperates with the Slovenian PEN Centre (*Slovenski center PEN*), which coordinates the arrival of writers, acquisition of relevant permits, and provides for writers' inclusion into city cultural life.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Information was provided by the Municipality of Ljubljana, Department of Culture (*Mestna občina Ljubljana, Oddelek za kulturo*) upon request (email, 17 February 2023).