

# Morning Headlines for Slovenia: Friday, 11 December 2020

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By STA

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## **Janša says EU rule of law compromise "very good"**

BRUSSELS, Belgium - Prime Minister Janez Janša welcomed the rule of law compromise put to EU leaders as "very good". If it gets the green light, it will provide adequate rule of law protection of all EU financial mechanisms as well as the recovery funds, he said on arrival at the EU summit. "I'm very glad we have a compromise proposal on the table regarding an instrument via which rule of law protects European funds, the common European budget and the recovery and resilience fund," he said. The compromise was endorsed by the EU leaders, with Janša saying on Twitter that it was "urgently needed" for fast recovery after the pandemic.

## **Logar and Di Maio for trilateral meeting on exclusive economic zone**

ROME, Italy - The Slovenian and Italian foreign ministers, Anže Logar and Luigi di Maio, discussed plans by Italy and Croatia to declare exclusive economic zones in the Adriatic Sea. They agreed that they would hold a trilateral meeting on the topic with Croatian counterpart Goran Grlić Radman as soon as possible. Logar noted that the area had a specific coastal configuration, and that Slovenia, Italy and Slovenia were connected there so it was in the interest of all three to seek joint solution in an European spirit.

## **Coronavirus restrictions extended for now**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - The bulk of coronavirus restrictions remain in force following the government session on Wednesday but the government may opt for easing should the situation allow on Saturday following consultations with hospital directors and business officials. The only substantive change is that from Saturday only surgical or washable face masks will have to be worn in indoor and outdoor public spaces, as loose fitting coverings such as scarves or bandannas will no longer suffice.

## **Govt endorses seventh draft stimulus package**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - The government endorsed on Wednesday a draft of the seventh stimulus package mitigating the ramifications of the second Covid-19 wave. The draft will be finalised at one of the coming government sessions. It aims to mitigate or tackle the fallout from Covid-19 including in the economy, labour market, social security and healthcare. It includes a proposal to set up a EUR 200 million loan fund to boost new investments in tourism.

## **Germany added to Slovenia's quarantine list**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - The government added Germany to Slovenia's red list of Covid-19 unsafe countries and regions, as well as the whole of the UK and Estonia starting from Saturday, 12 December. Meeting for a weekly session on Thursday, the government also moved Ireland and Iceland from the red to the orange list. Arrivals from countries on the red list face a mandatory ten-day quarantine except if they produce a negative coronavirus test, or if they fall under one of several exceptions. Arrivals from countries on the orange list can enter the country without restrictions.

### **Over 1,800 new coronavirus infections, 49 deaths**

LJUBLJANA - Slovenia registered 1,849 new coronavirus infections on a test positivity rate of 28.8% on Wednesday, as 49 more Covid-19 patients died, taking the death toll from Covid-19 to 1,949. The number of patients hospitalised with Covid-19 decreased to 1,258 and the number of those in intensive care units to 189 even though more patients were admitted than discharged. Slovenia has confirmed 91,922 coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic, of which 20,803 are active infections.

### **ECHR to issue ruling on admissibility of LB case vs Croatia next week**

STRASBOURG, France - The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) will release a ruling on admissibility of a case brought by Slovenia against Croatia over the defunct bank Ljubljanska Banka (LB) on 16 December. The decision, taken on 18 November, will be published in a written form, the court and Slovenia's state attorney said. The inter-state application was lodged by Slovenia in September 2016, with the country arguing that Croatian courts had been systematically preventing LB to recover debts incurred by Croatian banks in the 1990s.

### **Govt amends international protection act**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - The government adopted changes to the international protection act on Wednesday to promote fast and effective procedures. The proposed solutions are also aimed at preventing abuses of the system of international protection, the Interior Ministry, which had drawn up the changes, said. Proposed are sanctions for obstructing the procedure, for not fulfilling the duties of asylum seeker, for violating the rules of accommodation centres, the public law and order, and for criminal offences, and allow for more efficient restricting of people's movement due to absconding risk.

### **Govt gives go-ahead for promotion of chief of general staff**

LJUBLJANA - The government gave its go-ahead to the Defence Ministry's proposal to promote Brigadier General Robert Glavaš, the chief of the general staff, to the rank of major general. Glavaš meets skills-based conditions for the promotion, while he will fully meet the formal requirements on 17 December when two years will have passed since his last promotion in rank. SAF generals and admirals are promoted by the head of state as the commander in chief.

### **DeSUS remains in coalition, will examine cooperation with SMC MPs**

LJUBLJANA - The Pensioners' Party (DeSUS) remains in the government coalition, but will examine the possibility of closer cooperation with the coalition Modern Centre Party's (SMC) deputy group, DeSUS deputy group leader Franc Jurša said after a meeting between the deputy group and new party leader Karl Erjavec. Jurša said a task force was to be set up with the SMC to study the potential for cooperation between the two deputy groups.

### **Slovenian, Croatian home ministers seek to tackle illegal migration**

LJUBLJANA - Interior Minister Aleš Hojs spoke with his Croatian counterpart Davor Božinović via videoconference about preparations for the introduction of the Entry/Exit System (EES) on the Slovenian-Croatian border. He informed Božinović that Slovenia would continue introducing the system on its southern border. They also agreed to look for solutions for preventing illegal crossings of the border by migrants and the implementation of the agreement on the handover of persons who enter the country or reside in the country illegally.

### **Defence ministers of Germany, Portugal, Slovenia discuss EU presidency**

LJUBLJANA - The defence ministers of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia held an online meeting at the initiative of Germany's Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer to exchange views on the German six-month stint at the helm of the European Council and discuss the priorities for next year, when Portugal and Slovenia will take over successively. Kramp-Karrenbauer along with Joao Gomes Cravinho from Portugal and Slovenia's Matej Tonin discussed strategic decisions, cooperation between the EU and NATO, and the importance of transatlantic cooperation.

### **Foreign Ministry backs declaration on journalists' safety**

THE HAGUE, the Netherlands - The Foreign Ministry backed a declaration on the safety of journalists that was adopted on the sidelines of a two-day global media freedom conference hosted by the Netherlands and UNESCO on Wednesday. Addressing the online ministerial, Foreign Ministry State Secretary Stanislav Raščan said journalists had a key role in presenting unbiased information on the current situation, which was why journalists must be ensured safety and proper working environment.

### **Maja Brkan slated for nomination for EU's General Court**

LJUBLJANA - Following consultations with parliamentary deputy groups, President Borut Pahor announced that he would nominate Maja Brkan for Slovenian judge on the General Court of the European Union. Extra consultations are however needed on candidates for the EU Court of Justice. Brkan, an associate professor of EU law at the Maastricht University's Faculty of Law, enjoys more than sufficient support in parliament, the president's office said.

## **Public interest prevails over nature conservation in Mokrice project**

LJUBLJANA - The government decided that the public interest of producing energy from renewable sources prevails over the public interest of nature conservation in the case of the planned Mokrice hydro plant on the Sava river. It has also determined compensatory measures that need to be carried out by the investor. The decision follows what was the first-of-a-kind procedure to allow other public interests to prevail over nature conservation.

## **Contract signed for new communications system for police**

LJUBLJANA - A EUR 15 million contract to build a new Tetra secure communications system for the police and other government agencies was signed in a bid to replace the 17-year old communications system. The contractors - two Slovenian and one Finnish company - have 400 days to set the system up. The new communications system will give the police force the best equipment currently on the market, the Interior Ministry said in a press release.

## **Slovenia receives EUR 8.8m from rescEU mechanism**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - Slovenia has successfully applied to a call published by the European Commission to help countries tackle the coronavirus epidemic. The country will receive EUR 8.8 million from the rescEU mechanism, while another EUR 1.8 million will have to be secured from the budget as part of the project, the government said after getting acquainted with the information Wednesday. The mechanism aims to secure strategic supplies of medical and personal protective equipment.

## **Govt proposes legal basis for platforms like Uber**

BRDO PRI KRANJU - The government on Wednesday approved a proposal to amend the road transport act which introduces legal basis for digital labour platforms, such as Uber. The proposal sets down that drivers via these gig economy companies would need to get a licence. The amendments would also abolish mandatory use of taximeters for taxi drivers, and put taxi services and private car and driver rentals on an equal footing by standardising conditions for using such apps.

## **Renault launches special series for Slovenian market**

NOVO MESTO - French car maker Renault will launch the Renault Clio, Twingo and Twingo Electric, models manufactured at its Novo Mesto assembly plant Revoz, in a special I Feel Slovenia series available only in Slovenia. The fifth generation Clio, city car Twingo and its electric version will be now launched in a version bearing the slogan I Feel Slovenia. The Twingo Electric is the first all-electric Renault made in Slovenia. The model has been manufactured in Novo Mesto since September.

## **Exports up 2.1% in October year-on-year**

LJUBLJANA - Slovenia's exports totalled EUR 3.2 billion in October, up by 2.1% on the same month in 2019. Imports meanwhile fell by 8.5% to EUR 2.9 billion, creating a surplus of EUR 0.2 billion. Data from the Statistics Office also show that Slovenia recorded a drop in trade with EU member states, mainly on the back of a drop in trade with main partners. Exports in the first ten months dropped by 3.2% on the same period in 2019 and imports decreased by 8.9%.

### **Industrial output up 3.1% in a month**

LJUBLJANA - Slovenia's industrial output expanded by 3.1% in October from the month before, but dropped 1.1% on the same month a year ago. In the ten months to the end of October, industrial output was 7.3% below the level a year ago, the Statistics Office reported. Industrial revenue increased for the sixth month running in October, by 3.3% from September, but dropped by 3.1% year-on-year.

### **Retrial ordered in Tušmobil spectrum bribery case**

LJUBLJANA - The Ljubljana Higher Court repealed the acquittal of Tomaž Simonič, the former director of the Agency for Communication Networks and Services, in a case involving wireless spectrum bribery. It ordered a retrial, Delo reported. The court reached the decision after an appeal by the prosecution, which alleged infringement of essential procedural requirements.

### **Pixxelpoint moves online**

NOVA GORICA - This year's Pixxelpoint, an international festival of contemporary new media art, brings a review of Slovenian festivals dedicated to contemporary art practices at the crossroads of art, science and technology. It will be held in Nova Gorica for the 21st year between 10 and 17 December, and due to Covid-19, entirely online. It will feature the International Festival of Computer Art, KIBLIX, the Trbovlje-based Speculum Artium, SONICA, which brings electronic music and transitory art, Lighting Guerilla, and IZIS.