

Slovenia Retail Report Q3 2016

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Abstracts

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BMI View: Household expenditure is forecast to remain stagnant in Slovenia in 2016. External demand has risen as the eurozone recovery remains on a cyclical upswing, but domestic demand in Slovenia has remained weak. This is largely due to the debt overhang that persists in the banking and enterprise sectors of the economy, which is dragging on investment and employment growth. Although real GDP growth over the short term will be quite low and dependent on external demand as a result, this will help to place Slovenia on a more sustainable medium-term growth trajectory. Unemployment remains persistently high in the country and has failed to make a convincing decline. As a result of high unemployment, wage growth has remained persistently weak, further reducing aggregate household consumption in the economy with knock-on effects on retail spending.

Key Views and Developments

Although there have been rumours for some years that Swedish furniture and homewares giant IKEA was to launch in Slovenia, no official confirmation had been made. However in early 2016 the retailer confirmed that it has purchased a space in the BTC shopping area in Ljubljana to build its first store in Slovenia. The company hopes that construction will be complete in 2018.

At the end of 2015, comparison shopping platform Ceneje carried out a survey among 33,000 online shoppers in Slovenia. This found that consumers who purchased at least once per month online had increased by 58% since 2013. Only 16% of all Internet users in the country were found to have had no experience of online shopping. According to the research, there are about 1,500 web retailers in Slovenia.

UK retailer Marks & Spencer has recently announced plans to close 12 stores across five Eastern European countries, a move which will see the retailer leave Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro by May 2016. Marks & Spencer will now focus attention on its presence in other successful Eastern European markets, with particular focus on Poland, Hungary and Romania.

Total household spending will grow steadily from EUR21.6bn to EUR25bn during the period between 2016 and 2020.

The share of households in the USD10,000-plus income bracket will grow slowly to reach 91.2% in 2020, one of the highest figures in the region. A growing middle class will contribute to expanding sales volumes for high-street and mid-range retailers.

Large format stores will experience continued demand contraction as demographic trends encourage a shift to smaller discount stores. Contraction of the key demographic (aged between 20 and 64 years) reduces the need for households to purchase in bulk, creating higher demand for smaller and more convenient stores formats.

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