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Minister Počivalšek attends the Vienna Economic Forum

Ljubljana, 19 November 2018 – Minister Zdravko Počivalšek is attending the 15th Vienna Future Dialogue forum in Vienna today, taking part in a panel discussion on the importance of economic integration for a stronger Europe. The Vienna Economic Forum brings together 14 countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe and is an important SE Europe Platform where decision-makers from economy and politics meet.

At the Forum, Minister Počivalšek touched on the importance of the Western Balkans region and emphasised the importance of cooperation between the countries in this region in the sectors of economy, infrastructure and energy. He added that the region should create favourable conditions for economic growth and increased competitiveness. Only then will it be ready to join the European Union. The Minister said that the Western Balkans was our second most important export market, immediately after Germany, and underlined that the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, in cooperation with the SPIRIT Slovenia Public Agency, Slovenian Tourist Board and the Chamber of Commerce of Industry of Slovenia, was making every effort to nurture relations within the region. He maintains that economic cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans is essential for the stability of the entire EU and successfully integrating the Western Balkans into the union.

The Minister further stated that the Western Balkans had to open outwards, in particular with the help of the nearest neighbours – namely Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Greece, and strive to conclude trade agreements: "I believe that technology, education and the digital economy can easily overcome state borders."

"As you are all no doubt aware, Slovenia is a highly export-oriented country, since our exports stand at 80% of GDP. We generate EUR 43 billion per year through exports, accounting for as much as EUR 35 billion. It is precisely for this reason that Slovenia's key emphasis in supporting the economy is internationalisation. At the same time, our dependence on exports is the reason why we maintain and nurture excellent foreign trade and political relations. We literally invest in bridges between countries and individual regions."