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# ANNUAL REPORT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN 2023



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**EMN**  
European Migration Network  
Európska migračná sieť



# Annual Report on Migration and Asylum in the Slovak Republic in 2023

Report of the National Contact Point  
of the European Migration Network for the Slovak Republic

July 2024  
Bratislava



Funded by  
the European Union



This report was prepared within the European Migration Network (EMN), which provides up-to-date, objective, reliable, and comparable information on migration and asylum to support policymaking in the European Union (EU) and EMN Member States. The EMN Slovakia is funded by the EU and the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

EMN activities are focused on topics related to migration of third-country nationals. The activities are implemented through National Contact Points for EMN Member States (EU Member States except Denmark) and EMN Observer States (Norway, Georgia, The Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Montenegro, Armenia, and Serbia) in coordination with the European Commission, specifically the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME).

The report was elaborated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the coordinator of the EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic (EMN Slovakia). The EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic comprises the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Police Force Presidium, Migration Office, Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior), the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (Department of International Relations and European Affairs), the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (Section of Social Statistics and Demography) and the IOM Slovakia.

This publication was produced with the financial assistance of the EU. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the EU. Equally, the opinions presented herein do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Government of the Slovak Republic or of the IOM.

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## Preface

This report contains information on the most important changes, developments, and activities related to migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2023. It is the only publication in the Slovak Republic which annually maps all dimensions of third-country nationals' migration.

This report is a part of the EMN Synthesis Report with the same focus, which is prepared at the EU level and summarizes findings from national reports compiled by EMN Member States on the basis of common specifications. The report also serves as a basis for the preparation of the Annual Report of the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) on the asylum situation in the EU for the year 2023, the EMN report on Children in Migration, and the EMN Country Factsheets on developments in individual EU Member States for the year 2023.

The Synthesis Report and the individual reports by EMN Member States are available in English on the European Commission's website [www.ec.europa.eu/emn](http://www.ec.europa.eu/emn). The report for the Slovak Republic is published in Slovak and English. Both versions are available on the EMN Slovakia's website [www.emn.sk](http://www.emn.sk).

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## List of Abbreviations and References

**AMIF** – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund  
**ARM** – EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum  
**AVR** – assisted voluntary return(s)  
**AVRR** – Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme  
**BBFP PF P** – Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Police Force Presidium (Úrad hraničnej a cudzineckej polície Prezídia Policajného zboru)  
**BMVI** – Border Management and Visa Instrument  
**CCF** – Centre for Children and Families  
**CEAS** – Common European Asylum System  
**Coll.** – Collection of Laws  
**COLSAF/Central Office of Labour** – Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny)  
**CQC** – Central Query Console  
**CVEK** – Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture (Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry)  
**DFEA MIO** – Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior (Odbor zahraničných vecí a európskych záležitostí Kancelárie ministra vnútra SR)  
**DIREA** – Department of International Relations and European Affairs of the MLSAF (Odbor medzinárodných vzťahov a európskych záležitostí MPSVR SR)  
**DSCRO MI** – Department of State Citizenship and Registry Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (OSO SVS MV SR)  
**EC** – European Commission/Community  
**EEA** – European Economic Area  
**EMN** – European Migration Network  
**EMN Slovakia** – EMN National Contact Point in the Slovak Republic  
**EU** – European Union  
**EU MS** – European Union Member State(s)  
**EUAA** – European Union Agency for Asylum  
**Eurostat** – Statistical Office of the European Union  
**FAD EPS MI** – Foreign Aid Department of the European Programmes Section of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Odbor zahraničnej pomoci Sekcie európskych programov Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky)  
**Frontex** – European Border and Coast Guard Agency  
**GRETA** – Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings  
**HRL** – Human Rights League  
**IC MI/Information Centre** – Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Informačné centrum na boj proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi a prevenciu kriminality Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky)  
**IOM** – International Organization for Migration  
**ISF** – Internal Security Fund  
**MEKOMIC** – Inter-Ministerial Expert Committee for Labour Migration and Foreigners' Integra-

tion in the Slovak Republic (Medzirezortná expertná komisia pre oblasť pracovnej migrácie a integrácie cudzincov v Slovenskej republike)  
**MESRY/Ministry of Education** – Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Youth of the Slovak Republic (Ministertsvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a mládeže Slovenskej republiky)  
**MFEA/Ministry of Foreign Affairs** – Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí a európskych záležitostí Slovenskej republiky)  
**MH/Ministry of Health** – Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky)  
**MI/Ministry of Interior** – Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky)  
**MIC IOM** – IOM Migration Information Centre (Migračné informačné centrum IOM)  
**MIO** – Office of the Minister of Interior  
**MJ/Ministry of Justice** – Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo spravodlivosti Slovenskej republiky)  
**MLSAF/Ministry of Labour** – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky)  
**MO MI/Migration Office** – Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Migračný úrad Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky)  
**NCP** – National Contact Point  
**NP** – national project  
**NUCIM BBFP PF P** – National Unit to Combat Irregular Migration of the Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police of the Police Force Presidium (Národná jednotka boja proti nelegálnej migrácii Úradu hraničnej a cudzineckej polície Prezídia Policajného zboru)  
**NVIS** – National Visa Information System  
**Offices(s) of Labour** – Office(s) of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Úrad(y) práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny)  
**OPHR** – Operational Programme Human Resources  
**o. z./OZ** – civic association (občianske združenie)  
**PAS MI** – Public Administration Section of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (Sekcia verejnej správy Ministerstva vnútra Slovenskej republiky)  
**PDCF(s)** – Police Detention Centre(s) for Foreigners (útvar(y) policajného zaistenia pre cudzincov)  
**PF** – Police Force (policajný zbor)  
**PF P** – Police Force Presidium (Prezídium Policajného zboru)  
**RCMS** – Readmission Case Management System  
**SAIDC** – Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (Slovenská agentúra pre medzinárodnú rozvojovú spoluprácu)  
**SK** – the Slovak Republic  
**SO/Statistical Office** – Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky)  
**SPCSG** – socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship (sociálno-právna ochrana detí a sociálna kuratela)



**TCN(s)** – third-country national(s)  
**UAM(s)** – unaccompanied minor(s)  
**UK/United Kingdom** – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
**UN** – United Nations  
**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
**UNICEF** – United Nations Children’s Fund  
**USA** – United States of America  
**VIS** – Visa Information System (Vízový informačný systém)  
**V4** – Visegrad Group  
**WHO** – World Health Organization

**Symbols** (not valid for Table 9 in Annex: National Statistics):

(:) – data is not available

(-) – did not occur

## Methodology and Terms

### Methodology and Elaboration

This report has been compiled on the basis of common specifications prepared by EMN Member States and the European Commission. Common specifications for all EMN Member and Observer States enable the comparability of national reports and their subsequent use for the European-wide EMN annual report and other outputs at the EU level.

The report has Part 1, which is prepared for the European Commission and is not publicly available, and Part 2, which as a publication serves the needs of the Member States. The publication is based on Part 1, while the text is adjusted to national needs (e.g. in Slovakia, the text is extended by other national activities, with a special focus on EU-funded projects). The report also includes national statistics, including those which are not collected at the EU level (through Eurostat or Frontex).

In terms of methodology, the report is based on secondary research and has a descriptive nature. The authors of the report used available expert publications, statistics, legislation, Slovakia’s policy documents, internet sources and media monitoring<sup>1</sup>. Reference documents and information obtained from the following state administration bodies were a significant source of information: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (namely BBFP PF P, MO MI, DFEA MIO, Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the MI, FAD EPS MI, PAS MI), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family (indirectly through MLSAF), Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (indirectly through DFEA MIO), General Prosecutor’s Office of the Slovak Republic (indirectly through DFEA MIO), Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and the IOM Slovakia. Materials, publications and websites of other state, European, international and non-governmental institutions also represent important sources of information. The report also refers to relevant EMN publications and activities conducted in 2023.

Media releases were also used as sources of information. The text therefore contains links to media references to migration topics and activities carried out by public administration, the non-governmental sector and international organisations.

The report was elaborated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Slovakia as the coordinator of the EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic (EMN Slovakia). The report was reviewed by experts from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. The report was approved by Department of Foreign and European Affairs of the Office of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>1</sup> The IOM as the coordinator of the EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic has been carrying out weekly media monitoring of migration and international protection issues since 2012. The media monitoring is used for preparing EMN publications.

## Terms and Definitions

The terms used in this report largely correspond to the definitions in the *EMN Migration and Asylum Glossary*.<sup>2</sup> If it was not possible to use the Glossary, the terms are used in compliance with national or EU legislation (regulations, directives).

Special attention should be paid to the term *foreigner*, which under the Slovak legislation, namely Art 2(2) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners<sup>3</sup> means anybody who is not a citizen of the Slovak Republic. According to the EMN Migration and Asylum Glossary, a foreigner in the EU context is a person who is not a national of an EU Member State, and, in the global context, a person who is not a national (native or citizen) of a given state<sup>4</sup>. Slovak legislation, however, denotes a foreigner who is not a national of an EU Member State as a *third-country national*.<sup>5</sup> In this report, the term foreigner is therefore used mainly in texts and statistics which are related to or are kept in compliance with national legislation. In such a case, the term foreigner corresponds with the definition under Art 2 (2) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners, and not with the definition in the EMN Migration and Asylum Glossary.

The report also uses the term *migrant*. Unlike the definition in the EMN Migration and Asylum Glossary,<sup>6</sup> in this text it is used as a synonym for foreigner or third-country national.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, the report uses terms such as *people fleeing the war in Ukraine*, many of whom have applied for temporary protection and some for asylum. The Temporary Protection Directive<sup>7</sup> was transposed into the national legislation of the Slovak Republic in the process of adopting the Asylum Act in 2002. The term *temporary protection* has not been transposed literally and the name *temporary refuge* (*dočasné útočisko*) has instead been adopted. They are therefore presented as synonymous in the report. Those who have obtained the status of temporary protection holder are called “*odídenec*” by Slovak legislation. In this report they are referred to as temporary protection holders.

In this report, the terms *irregular* and *illegal* are considered synonyms and their use depends on the specific context. Slovak legislation uses the term *illegal*. Similarly, the terms *(state) citizenship* and *nationality* are also used as synonyms in this report.

<sup>2</sup> EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary 10.0 (2024). European Migration Network. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/alien\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/alien_en), last accessed on 8 May 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to some acts.

<sup>4</sup> EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary 10.0 (2024). European Migration Network. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/alien\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/alien_en), last accessed on 4 April 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Under Art. 2(4) of the Act on Residence of Foreigners, a third-country national is anybody who is not a national of the Slovak Republic or an EU national. Stateless persons are also third-country nationals.

<sup>6</sup> According to the EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, a migrant is defined as follows: “In the global context, a person who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate.” Source: Asylum and Migration Glossary 10.0 – a Tool for Better Comparability (2024). European Migration Network. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en), last accessed on 2 May 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Directive 2001/55/EC of 20.7.2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof

## Summary

This report summarises information on the most important changes, development and activities related to migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2023. It is the only publication in the Slovak Republic which annually maps all the dimensions of third-country nationals migration, including those related to the EU’s policies and legislation. The report also describes legal migration, international protection, minors and other vulnerable groups, integration and inclusion, citizenship and the situation of stateless persons, border control and management, visa practices, irregular migration including smuggling, human trafficking, returns and readmissions, as well as migration and development cooperation. One chapter deals specifically with the effects of the war in Ukraine on the migration situation, policies and measures adopted by the Slovak Republic. The Annex to this report includes selected statistics related to the above-mentioned areas.

### Overarching and Crosscutting Changes to National Migration and Asylum Systems

In 2023, the main changes concerning migration legislation, policies and measures were mainly related to the impact of the war in Ukraine, attracting and retaining foreign labour and foreign students and the education of children of foreigners. The situation connected with the arrival of irregular migrants transiting along the Western Balkans route also had a significant impact on the management of migration in the Slovak Republic. The impact was felt most intensively in the southern districts of the country, including the town of Veľký Krtíš, where a makeshift camp was established by the state. There were no major organisational or institutional developments in key state administration areas in the Slovak Republic in 2023 concerning migration and international protection.

The validity of all residence permits, employment permits and confirmations of the possibility to fill a vacancy was extended until the expiry of two months from the revocation of the emergency situation declared in the Slovak Republic in connection with the COVID -19 disease pandemic in 2020 and the war in Ukraine in 2022 also in 2023. The revocation of the emergency situation declared in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic on 15 September 2023 had an impact on the eligibility of foreigners to reside in the territory of the Slovak Republic, as since 2020 and during the emergency situation, certain groups of foreigners could stay in the country even without valid residence permits.

In 2023 in public discourse, politicians in the Slovak Republic focused primarily on the historic increase of irregular migration into the country and this topic resonated strongly even in the campaigns of a majority of political parties before the early parliamentary elections.

The caretaker cabinet led by Prime Minister Ľudovít Ódor governed the country since May 2023 until the early parliamentary elections on 30 September 2023. The caretaker government’s medium-term priorities included helping the weak, retaining and attracting talent (the government prepared analysis entitled a *Magnet for Talent*), using the EU funds efficiently and combating disinformation that had impacted the field of international migration.



The early parliamentary elections saw the victory of the SMER-SD party led by Robert Fico. The party formed the government for the next four-year period and Robert Fico became the country's Prime Minister for the fourth time. The coalition of three political parties SMER-SD, HLAS-SD and the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská národná strana, SNS*) adopted the *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027* entitled "*Better, more peaceful and safer living*" on 13 November 2023. The Manifesto emphasises measures in the field of legal migration (adoption of clear rules for obtaining work permits for foreigners, elimination of existing obstacles to the recognition of their qualifications and removal of other administrative barriers); the availability of digital services for foreigners in English, in addition to the official language; the introduction of compulsory school attendance for children of foreigners and the improvement of conditions for the education of adult foreigners, including the teaching of the Slovak language, assistance in the recognition of their professional qualifications and their protection from abuse on the labour market. On the other hand, the Manifesto speaks out strongly against the uncontrolled mass migration from other continents, which the government wants to combat by adopting various measures.

## Legal Migration

### Foreigners in the Slovak Republic – Statistics and trends

The number of foreigners from EU and non-EU countries in Slovakia grew in the last five years to 311 406 (5.74% of the population), with a two percent jump<sup>8</sup> in 2022 resulting mainly from the forced displacement of people due to the war in Ukraine. However, despite this increase, Slovakia still and in the long-term ranks among the European countries with the lowest number of foreigners (5.13% of the population in 2022, 3.08% in 2021 and only 2.75% of the population in 2020). Meanwhile, the population of the Slovak Republic decreased by over 4 000 people year-on-year to 5 424 687 inhabitants as of the end of 2023. Thus, the population of the Slovak Republic has been decreasing for the third consecutive year, whereas previously it had been growing for 75 years.

In 2023, of 311 406 foreigners with authorised residence in the Slovak Republic more than three quarters (82.18%) came from non-EU countries. Third-country nationals thus comprised 4.72% of the entire Slovak population in 2023. Traditionally, the most numerous non-EU nationalities comprised Ukrainian (176 522), Serbian (19 045), Vietnamese (9 082) and Russian (8 434). The Slovak Republic saw an increase in the number of foreigners from Georgia (5 217) in 2023, who mainly declared entrepreneurship as the purpose of their stay. Most of the non-EU nationals (more than one third) lived in the Bratislava region in 2023. In June 2023, the Vietnamese community became the 14th officially recognized national minority in the Slovak Republic.<sup>9</sup>

The most numerous group of foreigners in Slovakia are Ukrainian nationals. Before the war in Ukraine, Ukrainians constituted one third (56 480 people) of the total number of foreigners in the Slovak Republic. By the end of 2022, their number tripled to 156 881 and in 2023 their number increased only slightly to 176 522, which means that Ukrainians currently constitute more than half of all foreigners living in Slovakia, including EU citizens (56% in 2022 and 56.7% in 2023).

<sup>8</sup> The number of foreigners living in the Slovak Republic before the war in Ukraine was 167 519, after the war the number was 278 595.

<sup>9</sup> The 14 officially recognised national minorities in Slovakia in 2023 were the Hungarian, Roma, Czech, Moravian, Rusyn, Polish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, German, Jewish, Croatian, Russian and Vietnamese minority.

The dominating purpose for migration to the Slovak Republic in the long term is labour and doing business. Since the Slovak Republic's EU accession, the number of foreign workers has increased more than 30-fold, from 3 351 in 2004 to 100 583 foreign workers at the end of 2023, of which 68 691 were from non-EU countries. At the end of 2023, there was 1 foreign worker for every 26 Slovak workers, compared to a higher ratio of 28:1 in 2022.<sup>10</sup> As of the end of 2023, a total of 100 583 foreigners were employed in the Slovak Republic, of which 68 691 were from non-EU countries, mainly from Ukraine (39 307), Serbia (9 681), India (3 211), Georgia (1 640) and Russia (1 430). About one third of foreigners worked in the Bratislava region, followed by the Trnava and Nitra regions. The year-on-year increase in the number of foreigners from non-EU countries working in Slovakia has been more than 10 000 since 2016. The pandemic years 2020 and 2021 broke this trend, yet the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022 increased the number of employed foreigners by almost 20 000. In 2023, the number of foreign workers in the Slovak Republic increased by almost 12 000, half of whom were citizens of Ukraine. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, increased demand from employers in the Slovak Republic for the foreign workforce could be observed in the long term, including from non-EU countries, and this trend has resumed after the pandemic.<sup>11</sup>

### Policies and legislation

The priority for the Slovak Republic in 2023 was to fill the labour shortage in the country. To this end, the Slovak Republic continued to simplify administrative procedures for third-country nationals who are already working or plan to work or study in the Slovak Republic. According to the *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027 of October 2023*, "in order to address the availability of labour in objectively scarce professions, [the Slovak Republic] will adopt clear rules for obtaining work permits for foreigners, removing existing obstacles in the process of the recognition of qualifications and other administrative barriers."

In addition to the fast-track procedures introduced for the national visas for the employment of non-EU nationals, which were introduced already in 2022, two more government regulations were approved in 2023 proving the interest of the Slovak Republic to grant national visa to other selected groups of non-EU nationals:

- effective from 6 April 2023, in the occupations of bus drivers – 150 national visas, and heavy goods vehicle and lorry drivers (domestic and international transport) – 5 000 national visas in 2023, and
- effective from 3 October 2023, in the selected occupations of the field of industry – 2 000 national visas per calendar year.

Effective as of 1 January 2023, a third-country national who has been granted temporary residence for the purpose of family reunification may be employed in the Slovak Republic after 9 (previously 12) months of their continuous stay in the Slovak Republic. This change also simplifies the conditions of entry to the labour market for these people.

<sup>10</sup> In 2023, the total number of employees in the Slovak Republic increased by 6 000 persons (by 0.2%) to 2 610 000. Source: [https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail/14663c63-2f14-4b37-9d7a-3369ac06818c!/ut/p/z1/tVJLU8MgGPwtHnlfCk0UG-0o33Y0tpa23JxSKRNbBNigon110scl874PMgFmNndb5cFS7zGMld1uIM2Nbk6uPtGhnfxBmz7\\_UAA9KcExpOLxeVocN4ZLrt49RHAl-dnML4RV8P5hAZAu1h-z7\\_FEss4t4VN8MZEIUpQtUdpvkVqbz1wB1Nmzk2da1QVpaqPHtSVtnu3BzQMSRwS1NkGFNGIMN-S7ZwoREvZUDCEPeNzKF3F6jze\\_Qq9-ytvGgS-WAMeXb5DBUlwomwLw6bALYzFaznvXhIAG74BvNDbOA\\_vSQ8Dwqk51g5d5-zIHvPhjxBH-gyU-tuNrTh8dHKVw3Jrf62eL1f5Tj5nTK2WC2cwmUTVppg9e\\_oroMaZT5TZz54DPOgDDGaYf2wi4hrbDI8KdcK3utSl\\_1S675xYW1SnHnjQNI2\\_M2Z30H5sMg8-oySmcsE\\_InGRLTNOjmi\\_nZ0RKqMjeZnqITh5BSjRFBkl/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail/14663c63-2f14-4b37-9d7a-3369ac06818c!/ut/p/z1/tVJLU8MgGPwtHnlfCk0UG-0o33Y0tpa23JxSKRNbBNigon110scl874PMgFmNndb5cFS7zGMld1uIM2Nbk6uPtGhnfxBmz7_UAA9KcExpOLxeVocN4ZLrt49RHAl-dnML4RV8P5hAZAu1h-z7_FEss4t4VN8MZEIUpQtUdpvkVqbz1wB1Nmzk2da1QVpaqPHtSVtnu3BzQMSRwS1NkGFNGIMN-S7ZwoREvZUDCEPeNzKF3F6jze_Qq9-ytvGgS-WAMeXb5DBUlwomwLw6bALYzFaznvXhIAG74BvNDbOA_vSQ8Dwqk51g5d5-zIHvPhjxBH-gyU-tuNrTh8dHKVw3Jrf62eL1f5Tj5nTK2WC2cwmUTVppg9e_oroMaZT5TZz54DPOgDDGaYf2wi4hrbDI8KdcK3utSl_1S675xYW1SnHnjQNI2_M2Z30H5sMg8-oySmcsE_InGRLTNOjmi_nZ0RKqMjeZnqITh5BSjRFBkl/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/) (last accessed on 17 July 2024).

<sup>11</sup> Source: Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum. Slovak Republic for the years 2019 – 2022. European Migration Network, IOM, Bratislava.

In 2023, the Slovak Republic adopted the *National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2030 – Slovakia that trusts itself*, which contains two measures that concern foreigners:

- Promoting international mobility of researchers, which aims to attract foreign researchers to Slovakia through short- and long-term support for international mobility schemes in the academic environment in the form of scholarships, aiming to foster international cooperation between organisations from the academic as well as non-academic environment.
- Promoting the socio-cultural integration of foreign university students, which should make it possible to retain the already attracted highly qualified talent for longer periods of time.

The Slovak Republic launched the first year of the scholarship scheme for talented scholarship holders from abroad for the academic year 2023/2024 in 2023: <https://scholarships.portalvs.sk/> and simplified the process of recognition of professional traineeships completed abroad with the amended *Act No.422/2015 on recognition of education documents and on recognition of professional qualifications*.

In 2023, an amendment to the Act on Residence of Foreigners was prepared and submitted for inter-ministerial comment procedure and, at the end of the year, the amendment to the Act No. 145/1995 Coll. on Administrative Charges (last changed in 2010) was approved, which, effective from April 2024, adjusted the administrative charges for applications for residence permit, visa, business and other areas relevant for foreigners in Slovakia.

#### Information for foreigners and innovative legal migration pathways

In 2023, information to third-country nationals was provided by state institutions (and, in case of beneficiaries of temporary protection (temporary protection holders), also by some self-governmental authorities), international organisations and civic sector organisations. In addition to the capital, these were offering their services through their branch offices also in various regions of the Slovak Republic. The Foreign Police Departments continued to be the main source of information on the options and conditions of the legal migration in 2023. For illustration purposes, a total of 94 224 clients who had booked their appointments through the electronic system were processed at the Foreign Police Departments in 2023, compared to 74 318 clients in 2022. In addition to the Foreign Police Departments, temporary protection holders were also provided relevant information and other services by the so-called transit centres, which were established by the state in several locations across Slovakia following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. In 2023, such transit centres were still operating in Bratislava, Michalovce (closed on 1 July 2023) and in Košice.

In 2023, the Slovak Republic has been selected to implement the new pilot refugee labour mobility programme along with four other European countries: Italy, Spain, France and Germany. This extended project, called DT4E 2.0, is an extension and a follow-up of the successful Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E) programme, which was implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2023 and enabled refugee labour mobility in Belgium, Ireland and Portugal.

The Slovak Republic continued to support youth labour mobility also in 2023 through the framework of the so-called 'working holidays'. Based on the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Canada on Youth Mobility*, a reciprocity quota of 350 participants was agreed, who could submit their applications for 2024 (the quota remained the same as in 2022 and 2023).

## International Protection

The low number of asylum applications and asylums granted trend has not changed in the last five years in the Slovak Republic. Of a total of 416 applications (377 of which were first applications and 39 were repeated applications), 31 applications were submitted by people who had fled to the Slovak Republic from Ukraine. People fleeing from Ukraine used the temporary protection status. The most numerous groups of asylum seekers in 2023 were the nationals of Türkiye (136), Bangladesh (61), Ukraine (32), Morocco (28) and Afghanistan (24). Fifteen asylum applications were submitted by unaccompanied minors, predominantly from Türkiye and Afghanistan. In 2023, the Slovak Republic granted asylum to a total of 37 persons, mostly from Afghanistan, but also from Russia and Cuba. In the same period of time, the Slovak Republic granted subsidiary protection to 43 persons, most of whom were from Afghanistan and Ukraine (similarly to the previous years). The Slovak Republic did not resettle or relocate any persons in need of international protection into or through its territory. The Slovak Republic did not resettle or relocate any persons in need of international protection into or through its territory in 2023.

In 2023, two amendments to the Act on Asylum entered into force, which, inter alia, repealed provisions that allowed granting of asylum for the purpose of family reunification or granting of subsidiary protection to be denied based on a dissenting opinion of the intelligence services, as these provisions had been deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic. The aim of these amendments was to provide asylum seekers with sufficient guarantees of the possibility to have the decision issued by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic reviewed and of a fair trial in the administrative justice system.

Since 1 January 2023, the provision of healthcare for asylum seekers, temporary protection holders and persons involved in the assisted return programme is covered by the largest health insurance company, whose costs will be subsequently reimbursed by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (previously, the provision and reimbursement of urgent healthcare for applicants who were not covered by public insurance was the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior). This change is not an extension of the scope of entitlement, but rather an administrative change in the reimbursement implementation system, which is to the benefit of the persons concerned and also to the benefit of health care providers.

The Slovak Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to use the study visits to exchange know-how in the area of asylum, which they began in 2021.

## Temporary Protection and Other Measures in Response to Persons Fleeing the War in Ukraine

The number of people arriving from Ukraine was stabilised in 2023. A total number of persons who have entered the Slovak Republic from Ukraine in 2023 was 112 897 fewer than during 2022, since the beginning of the war on 24 February 2022. The number of people who applied for temporary protection in the Slovak Republic in 2023 is more than 100 000 less compared to 2022. The Slovak Republic registered a total of 114 152 foreigners with a valid tolerated stay granted for the purpose of temporary protection.

A number of measures introduced in 2023 which concern persons granted temporary protection, were mainly building on the measures already adopted in 2022.

The updated *Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency situation related to the mass arrival of people from Ukraine into the territory of the Slovak Republic for the period July – December 2023* was adopted.

The provision of temporary protection has been automatically extended until 4 March 2024, in line with the Council Decision 2022/382. In the light of the decreasing number of temporary protection applicants arriving from Ukraine and the decrease in the number of temporary protection applications, the large-capacity centres were gradually being closed during 2023.

The allowances for the accommodation for beneficiaries of temporary protection remained in force in 2023.

Health care provision for beneficiaries of temporary protection in 2023 was modified in a sense that the scope of health care provided to them is almost the same as public health insurance coverage.

The Slovak Republic provided counselling and assistance to temporary protection holders in the areas of labour market integration, social assistance and also provided support or inclusion activities for pupils and students in schools through several national projects in 2023. Assistance was also provided to beneficiaries of temporary protection with disabilities or unaccompanied minors.

Cooperation also continued with local and regional self-governments and non-profit sector, which continued to be an important element in the integration efforts aimed at beneficiaries of temporary protection in 2023.

### Minors and Other Vulnerable Groups

There were no significant developments in relation to measures, legislation or policies concerning unaccompanied minors in the Slovak Republic in 2023.

The number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) placed in SPCSG facilities in the Slovak Republic decreased, which represents the first decline after 5 years of growth. As a continuing trend, the vast majority of UAMs (95%) leave the facilities. The number of UAMs seeking asylum remains low (6% of all newly placed UAMs).

### Integration and Inclusion of Migrants

There were no developments in relation to legislation concerning integration in the Slovak Republic in 2023.

The *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023 – 2027* as one of its short terms priorities includes, by means of the change in School Act, consideration of the introduction of compulsory school attendance for children of foreigners and the improvement of conditions for the education of adult foreigners who use services and receive benefits financed from the public funds in the Slovak Republic. This will include the possibility for foreigners to study Slovak as a second language.

In 2023, Minister of Education approved the new *State Educational Programme for Primary Education*, which for the first time includes the educational standards for teaching Slovak as a second foreign language.

An important part of the measures to support the integration of third-country nationals in 2023 were projects and activities implemented by various organisations active in the field of migration in the Slovak Republic (e.g. IOM, Slovak Humanitarian Council, Mareena, Human Rights League, etc.). They focused, for example, on the provision of counselling, language courses or awareness-raising activities on migration. Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture (*Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry, CVEK*) and EMN Slovakia continued to engage in research activities, too. All these organisations also responded to the needs of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine with a number of activities, which constituted an integral part of their work in 2023 (see Chapter 5).

### Citizenship and Statelessness

In the period of the last five years, the number of third-country nationals who have been granted citizenship in the Slovak Republic has been continually growing. Between 2018 and 2022, state citizenship was granted to approximately 400 – 600 third-country nationals annually. In 2023, this number increased to 909. Similarly to previous years, most new citizens of the Slovak Republic came from Serbia and Ukraine, and, to a lesser extent, from the USA, the United Kingdom and Russia. In 2023, 22 beneficiaries of international protection became the new citizens of the Slovak Republic.

In 2023, there were no developments concerning the Act on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic, which was last amended in April 2022. The Slovak Republic did not adopt any legislative measures concerning stateless persons.

### Borders, Visas, and Schengen

There were no developments concerning legislation or policies related to border management in 2023. The Slovak Government temporarily reinstated internal border controls at various times during 2023 in accordance with the Schengen Borders Code and with the Act on Residence of Foreigners, as a result of the increased irregular migration at the Slovak - Hungarian border.

In 2023, the number of issued Schengen visas increased slightly, but the number did not attain the level from the pre-pandemic era. On the contrary, the upward trend in the issuance of national visas continued due to the fact that the list of categories of persons to whom a national visa is issued was extended to include manual occupations in selected industries, in addition to highly skilled workers, bus and lorry drivers.

### Irregular Migration

Irregular migration in the Slovak Republic reached a historical level in 2023. This was due to an increase in transit irregular migration via Western Balkans route, as 2023 was a record year in this respect. With 46 259 migrants, secondary transit migration accounted for as much as 97.2% of the total irregular migration and, at the same time, it represented a huge burden in terms of migration management.



In this context, there was an intense intelligence exchange between the Slovak Republic and neighbouring EU Member States at the level of both the analytical and operational units in 2023. Intensive exchange of information took place also at the EU level. In relation to combating smuggling, the Slovak Republic continued intensive international police and judicial cooperation with Europol and Eurojust agencies.

A temporary measure was adopted under which district and regional criminal service officers of the Police Force could be deployed to assist the competent BBFP PF P departments.

### Trafficking in Human Beings

Sexual and labour exploitation has remained the most frequent purpose of trafficking in the last five years. The number of foreigners who were identified as human trafficking victims in the Slovak Republic is very low in the long term, with three foreigners identified as victims of trafficking in 2023, one of them formally. The Slovak Republic filed charges against 18 persons and convicted 18 persons of committing this crime in 2023.

In October 2023, the Slovak Republic approved the *National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2024 – 2028*, which also concerns migration and foreigners as cross-cutting topics.

The Slovak Republic prepared and published the *Analysis of Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation* in 2023, with the aim to help to determine the dividing line between the issue of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation poor working conditions.

Effective as of 1 February 2023, the information centres for victims of crime were included in the organisational structure of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic in order to provide systemic services for victims of crime, including trafficking in human beings' victims. The Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention was abolished and, as of 1 December 2023, it was incorporated as a department under the Crime Prevention Department (CPD) of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. The CPD was separated from the Office of the Minister of Interior and established as a separate department of the Ministry of Interior within the scope of authority of the 1st State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, who also acts as the National Coordinator in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.

### Return and Readmission

There were no legislative or policy changes concerning returns in 2023. The only significant event in this respect was the revocation of the emergency situation declared in connection with COVID-19, when return decisions began to be issued to certain groups of third-country nationals who had not been able to leave the Slovak Republic within the specified time limit. The Slovak Republic continued to use services of Frontex in the execution of returns.

As concerns assisted voluntary returns, the target group continued to include even third-country nationals coming from Ukraine and staying in the Slovak Republic legally, who could benefit from the services of the programme. In spite of this, there was a decrease in assisted voluntary returns mainly due to the fact that the AMIF-funded assisted voluntary return project ended and the Slovak Republic carried out returns also through Frontex.

In 2023, the decline in forced returns continued, mainly as a result of the war in Ukraine.

### Migration and Development

The Slovak Republic did not adopt any policies or legislation with the specific aim of integrating the development aspect of migration into the country's sectoral policies in the last five years. According to World Bank data, remittances (cash contributions) sent by migrants living in the Slovak Republic to support their families and communities in other countries around the world in 2023 amounted to almost half a billion Euro, or 539 169 834 USD. This is the highest volume of such remittances in the last five years. In the period 2020 – 2022, this amount declined most likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Slovak Republic reaffirmed its interest and aimed its activities and funding in the area of development and humanitarian aid to address global forced and/or irregular migration, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and climate change; and to provide support to the most vulnerable groups through various development cooperation instruments (e.g. grant projects, material humanitarian aid, financial contributions or asylum system development in transit countries).

*Focus of Bilateral Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2023* identified the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian military invasion in Ukraine and other neighbouring countries as one of the biggest challenges. Therefore, the main recipient of the official humanitarian assistance of the Slovak Republic in 2023 was Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in February 2022, the value of assistance amounted to almost € 16 million, of which the sum of seven million Euro was donated in 2023.

In 2023, the validity of the *Medium-Term Development Cooperation Strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2019-2023* was extended by one year and the new medium-term strategy will be submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic for approval in the course of 2024. The Act on Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic has not been amended.

The Slovak Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to share know-how in the field of asylum and the functioning of the asylum system, an activity which they established in 2021 and expanded to include support for the targeted study of topics applicable in migration practice.



## Introduction

The *Annual Report on Migration and Asylum* (ARM) informs about the most important changes, developments, and activities related to migration and international protection in Slovakia in 2023, while focusing on third-country nationals.<sup>12</sup> It serves as a basis for the European-wide EMN Annual Report,<sup>13</sup> which since 2015, fully replaced the European Commission's Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum. . It also serves as a source of information for the *Annual Report of the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) on the asylum situation in the EU for the year 2023*<sup>14</sup>, *EMN report on Children in Migration*<sup>15</sup> and the *EMN Country Factsheets*<sup>16</sup> on developments in individual EU MS for the year 2023.

The report describes changes, developments and activities related to the legislative, institutional, political and practical aspects of migration and international protection in Slovakia from 1 January 2023 until 31 December 2023. The described developments have been set into the context of the EU's policies and legislation. The Report consists of 12 thematic chapters focused on the following areas: overarching and crosscutting changes to national migration and asylum systems, legal migration, international protection, temporary protection and other measures in

response to persons fleeing the war in Ukraine, minors and other vulnerable groups, integration, citizenship and stateless persons, visa practice, border control and management, irregular migration including migrant smuggling, human trafficking, returns and readmissions, migration and development. The Annex to this report includes selected statistics, including those not collected at the EU level through Eurostat or Frontex, as well as a Bibliography.

The chapter *Overarching and Crosscutting Changes to National Migration and Asylum Systems* provides a general picture of what shaped migration policies and legislation in Slovakia in 2023. This overview describes the framework political, legislative and institutional developments, (inter-) ministerial cooperation, discussions related to measures and policymaking, media discussions, as well as the wider social context that influenced different areas of migration, including international protection. This chapter contains a list of research on migration conducted in Slovakia in that year.

The chapter *Legal Migration* describes the policies, legislation, measures and activities concerning the admission and residence of different groups of migrants, satisfying labour market needs or prevention of social dumping. The chapter is also devoted to migration and mobility management and to provision of information to migrants from non-EU countries on routes to and conditions of legal migration.

The chapter *International Protection* contains information on asylum system in the Slovak Republic, on the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), institutional and legislative changes, national and European jurisprudence, intra-EU relocations and resettlement, and other activities.

The cross-cutting chapter *Temporary Protection and Other Measures in Response to Persons Fleeing the War in Ukraine* focuses on how the Slovak Republic reacted to the sudden influx of refugees from Ukraine and how it addressed the initial integration of persons who registered for temporary protection. The chapter contains relevant policies and legislation and describes how the Temporary Protection Directive has been specifically implemented in Slovakia (provision of temporary protection, registration and granting of documents to displaced persons, their access to the labour market, accommodation, healthcare, including mental health, social support, education). In addition, it deals with areas not related to the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive, family reunification, unaccompanied minors, returns, the provision of information by state institutions to displaced persons and cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations.

The chapter *Minors and Other Vulnerable Groups* addresses mainly policies, legislation, measures and activities related to admission of and care for minor migrants from non-EU countries as well as measures in the area of services provisions to other vulnerable groups.

The chapter *Integration and Inclusion of Migrants* focuses on socioeconomic integration measures for third-country nationals and beneficiaries of international protection. It also describes activities related to awareness-raising about migration and non-discrimination, as well as to integration at the local level and the civic participation of foreigners.

The chapter *Citizenship and Statelessness* is concerned with policies and measures related to the acquisition of citizenship and stateless persons in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>12</sup> The general structure of the political and legal system related to migration and international protection in Slovakia is described in the EMN's Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in the Slovak Republic, 2024, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/738-organizacia-migracnej-a-azylovej-politiky-prehľad-2024.html>, last accessed on 10 July 2024.

<sup>13</sup> European Migration Network (EMN), Annual Report on Migration and Asylum, 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-annual-reports\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-annual-reports_en), last accessed on 10 July 2024.

<sup>14</sup> EUAA, Asylum Report, 2024, <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-knowledge/asylum-report>, last accessed on 10 July 2024.

<sup>15</sup> EMN, Publications, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/665-deti-v-migracii-2021.html>, last accessed on 10 July 2024.

<sup>16</sup> European Migration Network (EMN), EMN Country Factsheets, 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/country-factsheets\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/country-factsheets_en), last accessed on 10 July 2024.



The chapter *Borders, Visas, and Schengen* provides information about external border control and management, visa policies and measures aimed at cooperation with non-EU countries in border control and management.

The chapter *Irregular Migration* includes information on the misuse of legal migration channels, policies and measures against facilitation of irregular migration (smuggling), as well as on the monitoring and identification of migration routes.

The chapter *Trafficking in Human Beings* informs about the policies, legislation, international monitoring, national projects, campaigns and other activities, as well as cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels in this area, national projects, campaigns and other activities, as well as cooperation in this field at bilateral and multilateral level concerning foreigners from non-EU countries directly or secondarily.

The chapter *Return and Readmission* follows up on the chapter on irregular migration and includes information about forced returns and readmissions as well as (assisted) voluntary returns and reintegration of migrants in the country of return.

The chapter *Migration and Development* provides an overview of activities and measures to include migration into development and other sectoral policies of the country, as well as basic information on remittances sent by migrants from the Slovak Republic. The chapter also informs about most significant bilateral and multilateral cooperation or assistance in transit EU countries and non-EU countries.

The Annex *National Statistics* summarises selected statistics for the Slovak Republic on migration, international protection and integration in 2023, including those which are not collected at the EU level through Eurostat<sup>17</sup> or the Frontex agency<sup>18</sup>. The Annex presents statistics on the numbers of foreigners including those employed, issued residence permits and visas, children of foreigners in the education system, obtained citizenships, cases of irregular migration and detained third-country nationals, smuggled persons with tolerated stays and residence permits to them, smugglers, returns and reintegration, numbers related to various aspects of international protection and temporary protection, relocations and resettlements, unaccompanied minors, victims of human trafficking from non-EU countries with reflection periods and residence permits granted to them, as well as number of traffickers who were prosecuted and sentenced for this crime.

<sup>17</sup> Eurostat, Migration and migrant population statistics, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics), last accessed on 10 July 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Frontex, Publications, <http://frontex.europa.eu/publications/>, last accessed on 10 July 2024.



## Overarching and Crosscutting Changes to National Migration and Asylum Systems

### 2.1. Migration Management System, Legislation and Migration Policies

#### Emergency situations declared in the Slovak Republic and migration management priorities

On 15 September 2023, the emergency situation which was declared in connection with the Level II threat to public health due to COVID-19 in March 2020, was revoked.<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> The changing situation connected with the spread of COVID-19 did not require a further duration of the emergency situation. Another factor contributing to the revocation was the irregular migration increase at the time and the fact that, until the emergency situation was revoked, migrants who had been expelled from Slovakia were not obliged to leave Slovakia within the time period stipulated in the decision on administrative expulsion.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Validity of the provisions of Section 131i of the Act on Residence of Foreigners has expired. Two months after the revocation of the emergency situation selected transitional provisions of the Labour Code (Act No 311/2001 Coll.) regulating the working conditions of employees during the emergency situation differently from the generally applicable provisions (e.g. the possibility to order work from home) ceased to be valid.

<sup>20</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF and BBFP PF P.

<sup>21</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

The emergency situation allowed foreigners to remain in the territory of the Slovak Republic beyond the validity of their visa or visa-free stay, allowed for the automatic extension of residence permits, suspended the obligation to prove a certain minimum income/profit when applying for renewal of a residence permit for the purpose of business and also suspended a number of deadlines, especially those concerning reporting obligations.<sup>22</sup>

Foreigners whose authorised stay ended due to the revocation of the emergency situation declared in connection with the COVID-19 disease (Section 131i of the Act on Residence of Foreigners) had to leave the territory of the Slovak Republic no later than on the last day of their authorised stay. The revocation of the emergency situation made it possible for the administrative expulsion decisions to be executed again. Moreover, the expiry of the provisions stipulated in the Section 131i of the Act on Residence of Foreigners made it impossible to proceed with the decision on the application, in particular in the renewal of temporary residence for the purpose of business procedure, where it paragraph 11 of the relevant section could not be applied.<sup>23</sup>

In 2023, the priority for the Slovak Republic was to fill the labour shortage, which has been the focus of the country's strategic documents in the long term. The war in Ukraine continued to have an impact on the management of migration in the Slovak Republic in 2023 and the emergency situation (crisis situation) declared on 26 February 2022 continued to be in force throughout the year 2023.<sup>24</sup> The situation connected with the arrival of irregular migrants transiting along the Western Balkans route also had a significant impact on the management of migration in the Slovak Republic. In 2023, the impact was felt most intensively in the southern districts of the country, including the town of Veľký Krtíš, where a makeshift camp was established by the state (see chapter 10.3).<sup>25</sup> The camp was established as neither the reception centres nor the Foreign Police departments had sufficient capacities to carry out the processes connected with the irregular migrants' stay on the territory of the Slovak Republic.<sup>26</sup>

### Strategic documents and institutional coverage

Even in 2023, policies and measures related to migration and international protection of third-country nationals remained primarily within the scope of authority of three ministries: the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic acts as the managing body of Internal Affairs Funds for the programming period of 2021-2027<sup>27</sup>, which include Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)<sup>28</sup>, Internal Security Fund (ISF)<sup>29</sup> and the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)<sup>30</sup>. It also acts a competent authority for the Internal Affairs Funds for the programming period of 2014-2020. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Slovak Republic became a beneficiary

of the emergency financial assistance (EMAS) from the AMIF and the BMVI, which continued in 2023.<sup>31</sup>

Strategic documents which were in force in 2023 are:

- *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic: Perspective until the Year 2025* (2021), for which action plans have been developed (e.g. the Action Plan of the Ministry of Health<sup>32</sup> and the publicly available Action Plan of the Ministry of Labour<sup>33</sup>);
- *Recovery Plan: Component 10: Attracting and Retaining Talents and Component 9: More Efficient Management and Strengthening of R&D&I Funding* (2021);
- *Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic* (2014);
- *Strategy on the Labour Mobility of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic* (2018);
- *Economic Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2030* (2018);
- *National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for years 2023 to 2026* (2022), laying grounds for the establishment of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the European Integrated Border Management in 2022 (see Chapter 9);
- *National Strategy for Human Rights Protection and Promotion of the Slovak Republic* (2015);
- *Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2019-2023*;
- *National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2024 – 2028* (2023).

Legal framework of third-country nationals' migration from non-EU countries into the Slovak Republic and the conditions of their residence, work or international protection are governed primarily by the following acts:

- Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners, which, inter alia, governs the entry of foreigners, their residence, basic rights and obligations and expulsion;
- Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services, which regulates the employment of foreigners;
- Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum, which, inter alia, governs the asylum procedure and temporary protection.

Other laws related to the migration of third-country nationals are concerned, for example, with recognition of professional qualifications, granting of citizenship, illegal work and employment, health care, administrative charges etc. In 2023, the Act on Asylum, the Act on Employment Services and the Act on Administrative Charges were amended (see the following chapters).

31 European Migration Network (EMN), Organisation of Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2024, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/738-organizacia-migracnej-a-azylovej-politiky-prehľad-2024.html>, last accessed on 6 May 2024.

32 The Migration Policy Action Plan of the MH od 2022 includes the following tasks:

- Legislative change to the form of proof for eligibility for urgent medical care and reimbursement for such care for asylum seekers,
- Preparation of a Public Healthcare Early Response Plan applicable in the event of a migration wave and the establishment of a national co-ordination mechanism for migrant healthcare in cooperation with EUROHEALTHNET (<https://eurohealthnet.eu/about-us/membership/>, last accessed on 6 May 2024) and LANCET Migration European Hub (<https://migrationhealth.org/regional-hubs/europe/about-us/>, last accessed on 6 May 2024), where the MH is represented, and
- Implementation of training strategies for the development and strengthening of health services sensitive to the needs of foreign nationals seeking international protection / foreign nationals granted international protection / migrants.

33 The Action Plan of the Migration Policy in the the domain of the MLSAF, perspective until 2025 of 2022 (<https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/sk/uvodna-stranka/informacie-cudzincov/dokumenty/akcny-plan-mpsvr-sr-k-migracnej-politike-sr-st.pdf>, last accessed on 6 May 2024) includes the following tasks:

- in the area of legal migration a) implementation of legislative changes to facilitate access of skilled and highly qualified workforce from third countries to the Slovak labour market in accordance with the economic interests of the Slovak Republic, b) execution of checks and preventive action in the area of violation of the prohibition of illegal employment of foreigners, as well as the continuation of cooperation of the involved state agencies,
- in the area of integration, support for foreigners at local and regional levels, in particular by cooperating with local actors in the utilisation of EU funds and other alternative extra-budgetary sources,
- in the area of combating trafficking in human beings, support for the cooperation of relevant national and international institutions in identifying and addressing cases of trafficking in human beings, including those with minor victims.

22 Information provided by IOM Slovakia and BBFP PF P.

23 Information provided by IOM Slovakia and BBFP PF P.

24 Information provided by the MFEA.

25 Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

26 Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

27 By the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 329 of 27 May 2020.

28 AMIF projects are aimed at provision of services to target groups including asylum seekers, third-country nationals who have been granted international protection or irregular migrants. The most frequently provided services include social and psychological counselling, integration counselling, Slovak language courses, basic material assistance and complementary healthcare.

29 Projects aimed at financing activities within the scope of authority of the Border and Foreign Police, primarily concerning forced returns and external border protection. In the past, these have included e.g. projects aimed at reimbursing expenses related to the forced returns execution; vocational and language training for Border and Foreign Police officers; and material and technical support for Border and Foreign Police units.

30 The projects proposed under the scope of BMVI are aimed at supporting effective European integrated border management at the external European borders through the purchase of a helicopter and through the information systems support.

Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Slovak Republic has adopted a number of laws known as *Lex Ukraine*, which remained in force in 2023 and which govern the legal status and inclusion of people coming to the Slovak Republic from Ukraine (e.g. the granting of temporary protection even without an EU Council decision, the provision of an allowance for accommodating refugees, social measures such as the provision of material need benefits, child allowance, the organisation of groups for children, previous education recognition, healthcare provision or access to the labour market).

The *Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency situation for the period from October 2022 to March 2023* (2022) has been updated in view of the ongoing need, its validity lasting until the end of 2023 under the title *The Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency context of the mass arrival of people from Ukraine into the territory of the Slovak Republic caused by the escalation of the armed conflict in the territory of Ukraine for the period July - December 2023* (2023) (see Chapter 5.2).

At the international level, the *Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan January – December 2023*<sup>34</sup> (January 2023) was developed, coordinated by UNHCR. The document was developed and implemented in cooperation with other UN agencies, the Slovak Republic and the non-profit organisations operating in the country (see Chapter 5.5).<sup>35</sup>

## 2.2. Political Development and (Inter)ministerial Cooperation

In 2023 in public space, politicians in the Slovak Republic focused primarily on the historic increase of irregular migration into the country and this topic resonated strongly even in the campaigns of a majority of political parties before the early parliamentary elections. Particularly active in stressing the securitization of migration were the political parties which spoke of migration as a threat to the domestic population also in 2015 and 2016. Among the leaders of anti-immigration rhetoric were the political parties such as Direction – Social Democracy (*Smer-SD*), Voice – Social Democracy (*Hlas-SD*), We Are Family (*SME RODINA*) and the extremist parties Republic (*Republika*) and People's Party Our Slovakia (*ĽSNS*).<sup>36</sup>

Other political discourse topics included integration of temporary protection holders in the Slovak Republic and the ongoing debate on the forthcoming EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and on the management of the EU's external borders.<sup>37</sup>

For the first time in its history, the Slovak Republic had a caretaker cabinet headed by Prime Minister Ľudovít Ódor, which led the country until the early parliamentary elections on 30 September 2023.<sup>38</sup> The caretaker government's medium-term priorities included helping the weak, retaining and attracting talent (the government prepared analysis entitled a *Magnet for Talent*), using the EU funds efficiently and combating disinformation that had impacted the field of international migration.<sup>39</sup>

34 UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97958>, last accessed on 6 May 2024.

35 European Migration Network (EMN), Organisation of Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2024, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/738-organizacia-migracnej-a-azylovej-politiky-prehľad-2024.html>, last accessed on 6 May 2024.

36 Štefančík, R. Sekuritizácia medzinárodnej migrácie pred parlamentnými voľbami 2023 [Securitization of international migration before the 2023 parliamentary election] (2023), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376513188\\_Sekuritizacia\\_medzinarodnej\\_migracie\\_pred\\_parlamentnymi\\_voľbami\\_2023](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376513188_Sekuritizacia_medzinarodnej_migracie_pred_parlamentnymi_voľbami_2023), last accessed on 6 May 2024).

37 Unsorted IOM media monitoring 2023.

38 SME Daily, <https://domov.sme.sk/t/9381/uradnicka-vlada>, last accessed on 18 July 2024.

39 SME Daily, <https://domov.sme.sk/c/23180955/programove-vyhlasenie-vlady-ludovit-odor.html>, last accessed on 18 July 2024.

The early parliamentary elections saw the victory of the SMER-SD party led by Robert Fico. The party formed the government for the next four-year period and Robert Fico became the country's Prime Minister for the fourth time. The coalition of three political parties SMER-SD, HLAS-SD and the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská národná strana, SNS*) adopted the *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027* entitled "*Better, more peaceful and safer living*" on 13 November 2023. The Manifesto emphasises measures in the field of legal migration (adoption of clear rules for obtaining work permits for foreigners, elimination of existing obstacles to the recognition of their qualifications and removal of other administrative barriers); the availability of digital services for foreigners in English, in addition to the official language; the introduction of compulsory school attendance for children of foreigners and the improvement of conditions for the education of adult foreigners, including the teaching of the Slovak language, assistance in the recognition of their professional qualifications and their protection from abuse on the labour market. On the other hand, the Manifesto speaks out strongly against the uncontrolled mass migration from other continents, which the government wants to combat by adopting various measures.<sup>40</sup>

### (Inter)ministerial cooperation and coordination

In 2023, no significant organisational or institutional changes were made to the key state administration departments related to migration, including international protection, in the Slovak Republic.<sup>41</sup> The Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic was transferred from the Office of the Minister of Interior to the 1st State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, who also acts as the National Coordinator in the field of combating trafficking in human beings, with the previously independently operating Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention incorporated under the Department as of 1 December 2023 (see Chapter 11.2).

In the area of migration and integration, close cooperation between the relevant ministries and institutions continued. In addition to direct cooperation between relevant ministries and institutions, cooperation also took place through:

- *Steering Committee for Migration and Integration of Foreigners*, which was restructured and transformed into the *Steering Committee for Migration, Integration and Inclusion of Foreigners*<sup>42</sup> in 2022, partly as a consequence of the war in Ukraine. In addition to the governmental, international and non-governmental partners, social partners (including the Federation of Slovak Industrial and Transport Associations)<sup>43</sup> were also involved. The primary aim was to

40 Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027, <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Dynamic/DocumentPreview.aspx?DocID=535376>, last accessed on 18 July 2024.

41 European Migration Network (EMN), Organisation of Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2024, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/738-organizacia-migracnej-a-azylovej-politiky-prehľad-2024.html>, last accessed on 6 May 2024.

42 Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 16 November 2022, <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/20511/1>, last accessed on 6 May 2024.

43 New permanent members of the Steering Committee: Director of the Institute for Administrative and Security Analysis of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Director-General of the Office of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Director of the Department of Crisis Management and Security of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Director of the Department of International Relations and European Affairs of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Director-General of Section for Housing Policy of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, Director-General of the Office of the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, and Director-General of the Office of the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic. The following are no longer permanent members of the Steering Committee: Director-General of the Section of Legislation and External Relations of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Director-General of the Section of International Relations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Director-General of the Section of Public Diplomacy and Services to Citizens of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The new ad hoc members of the Steering Committee shall be the delegated representatives of the following: Ministry of Foreign and European



remove obsolete provisions in the Statute, update the list of permanent and ad-hoc members and nominate their representatives, and to facilitate the flexible establishment of expert working groups depending on the situation in question.

A total of 3 Steering Committee meetings were held in 2022: on 16 March, 20 June and 21 December. The Committee was used as a platform for information sharing and discussion on issues related to the provision of temporary protection. In the context of integration of temporary protection holders in Slovakia, the areas addressed included, e.g., education of temporary protection holders' children, provision of healthcare, and housing - provision of housing allowance. The participants were also informed about the possibility of using funds from the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan (Component 10, which addresses integration of foreigners in Slovakia), as well as about the current situation in the MI's asylum facility in Gabčíkovo, with the aim to coordinate the provision of services to satisfy the needs of the persons accommodated in the facility.<sup>44</sup>

- *Inter-Ministerial Expert Committee for Labour Migration and Foreigners' Integration (MEKOMIC)*<sup>45</sup> which did not meet in 2023, though the MLSAF (via DIREA) continuously communicated with the Committee members via emails, sharing news and relevant information.<sup>46</sup>
- *Crisis Management Section of the MI*, which prepared the *Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency context of the mass arrival of people from Ukraine into the territory of the Slovak Republic caused by the escalation of the armed conflict in the territory of Ukraine*, the update of which for the period July - December 2023 was approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 28 June 2023.<sup>47</sup> Currently, the Contingency Plan is continuously reviewed on the basis of the scenarios foreseen by the European Commission.<sup>48</sup>
- *EMN National Contact Point*<sup>49</sup> in the Slovak Republic<sup>50</sup> which implemented various activities

Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Development of the Civil Society, Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, Department for United Nations and International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Legal Aid Centre, International Organization for Migration (IOM), non-governmental and non-profit organizations active in the field of migration, integration and inclusion of foreigners, academia, scientific and research organizations active in the field of migration, integration and inclusion of foreigners (inclusion of foreigners was added among the thematic fields), Federation of Industrial Associations and Transportation, and the Slovak Chamber of Trades. Delegated representatives of the following institutions are no longer the ad hoc members: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>44</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>45</sup> MEKOMIC is a coordination body of the MLSAF for migration and integration policy issues and also an advisory body of the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. MEKOMIC comprises experts from (central) state administration bodies implementing integration policy objectives and measures. Interdepartmental and non-governmental organisations are invited to MEKOMIC meetings as necessary.

<sup>46</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>47</sup> The Contingency Plan aims to ensure safe and dignified entry and stay for Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals on the territory of the Slovak Republic, to provide access to material, legal, psychosocial and medical support for temporary protection holders and to ensure special attention and protection for persons with specific needs, etc. The Contingency Plan maps the processes undergone by persons fleeing a war conflict, as well as the necessary assistance that shall be provided to them since their crossing the border to the end of their emergency accommodation. The Contingency Plan introduced new institutes, such as first contact points located in the immediate vicinity of border crossings, which provide basic services and where refugees are triaged according to their needs and interests; or transit centres providing emergency accommodation. If a person does not plan to stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic, their transportation outside of the Slovak Republic is handled by the so called infopoints. If a person decides to stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic, they will be referred from the first contact point to a transit centre where they will receive comprehensive services before their further transit (medical care, psychological care, temporary protection application, hot meals, material humanitarian aid, veterinary care, emergency accommodation (for the maximum of 24 hours). Emergency accommodation is secured by the Crisis Management Departments of the District offices in accordance with and under the supervision of the Crisis Management Section of the MI.

<sup>48</sup> European Migration Network (EMN), Organisation of Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2024, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/723-organizacia-migracnej-a-azylovej-politiky-prehľad-2023.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>49</sup> The European Migration Network (EMN) provides up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and international protection to support policymaking in the EU and its member states. The EMN conducts their activities by means of National Contact Points in all EU MS, except Denmark, and in the EMN Observer Countries in coordination with the EC's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs. The EMN's activities focus on topics related to the third-country nationals' migration.

<sup>50</sup> The EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic (EMN Slovakia) comprises representatives of the MI, MLSAF, SO and IOM Slovakia,

in 2023, including the preparation of publications,<sup>51</sup> the submission of and responding to ad-hoc queries and the organisation of the Educational Seminar on Migration and other expert meetings.<sup>52</sup> These activities concerned the migration of third-country nationals and were meant mainly for policy-makers, public administration representatives, research institutions, academia and the non-governmental sector.<sup>53</sup>

- *Steering Committee for the Implementation of the European Integrated Border Management*, which was established at the end of 2022 to coordinate the implementation of the tasks contained in the relevant national strategy for the years 2023 to 2026. The Steering Committee is composed of entities involved in the implementation of the objectives of the National Strategy of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic and the Office for Personal Data Protection of the Slovak Republic.<sup>54</sup>

To implement the Regional Response Plan, UNHCR established several thematic working groups and sub-groups in the Slovak Republic in 2022. Even in 2023, these included representatives of state institutions and non-governmental and international organisations, such as: *Refugee Coordination Forum*, *Refugee Coordination Forum – East*, *Protection and Inclusion Working Group* (with following sub-groups: *Anti-Trafficking Task Force*, *Child Protection Sub-Working Group* and *Inclusion Sub-Working Group*), *Cash Working Group*, *Health Working Group* (with *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support MHPSS Sub-Working Group*), *Information Management Working Group*, and the *Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force*.<sup>55</sup>

## 2.3. Public Opinion and Migration in Media

Since 2015, the media in Slovakia have been covering international migration more extensively and actively communicating about it.<sup>56</sup> Major media events of 2023 related to the topic of migration and foreigners included the war in Ukraine and the related mass displacement of the population, including the foreign nationals residing in Ukraine; the integration of temporary protection holders in Slovakia; as well as the passage of irregular migrants across the territory of the Slovak Republic after crossing the Slovak – Hungarian border and the campaign ahead of the parliamentary elections.<sup>57</sup>

Eurobarometer survey from autumn of 2023 showed that almost seven out of ten (69%) respondents in the Slovak Republic support the idea of a common European policy on migration and 68% support the idea of a common European asylum system. At the same time, three quarters of respondents (75%) are in favour of strengthening the EU's external borders and increasing the number of European Border and Coast Guard officers.<sup>58</sup>

acting as its coordinator since 2009.

<sup>51</sup> EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic, Publication, <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>52</sup> EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic, Events, <https://www.emn.sk/sk/podujatia-emn.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>53</sup> EMN National Contact Point for the Slovak Republic, [www.emn.sk](http://www.emn.sk), last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>54</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10785>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>56</sup> European Migration Network (EMN), Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum. Slovak Republic for the years 2015 – 2022, <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocné-spravy-emn-o-migrácii-a-azyle.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Unsorted IOM media monitoring 2023.

<sup>58</sup> European Commission's Representation in the Slovak Republic, News, [https://slovakia.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/s-buducnostou-slovenska-mimo-eu-nesuhlasi-sedem-z-desiatich-opytanych-slovakov-sloveniek-2023-12-15\\_sk](https://slovakia.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/s-buducnostou-slovenska-mimo-eu-nesuhlasi-sedem-z-desiatich-opytanych-slovakov-sloveniek-2023-12-15_sk), last accessed on 17 July 2024.

Even in 2023, the topic of migration and migrants ranked among the targets of disinformation and hoaxes. Similarly to 2022, the main topics included the war in Ukraine and people fleeing the war, and the situation of irregular migrants transiting through the territory of the Slovak Republic.<sup>59</sup> A Globsec comparative survey conducted in eight Central and Eastern European countries<sup>60</sup> found that the Slovak Republic ranks among the countries which are least resilient to domestic and foreign disinformation and that 69% of Slovaks surveyed believe that refugees from Ukraine are being helped at the expense of people living in the Slovak Republic.<sup>61</sup> The autumn 2023 Eurobarometer survey found that just over half (54%) of the Slovak public thinks that Slovak media provide credible information that is not subject to political or commercial pressure.

## 2.4. Research and Statistics Concerning International Migration in the Slovak Republic

The research focus in the field of migration of third-country nationals was on several areas in 2023. Research publications and other short outputs included (in alphabetical order):

- Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2022, Slovak Republic (EMN Slovakia: <https://emn.sk/en/publications/emn-annual-reports-on-migration/item/731-annual-report-on-migration-and-asylum-2022.html>)
- Integrácia žiadateľov o medzinárodnú ochranu na trh práce – príspevok SR [*The integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market – contribution of the Slovak Republic*] (EMN Slovakia: <https://emn.sk/en/publications/emn-studies-and-policy-briefs/item/734-integration-of-applicants-for-international-protection-in-the-labour-market.html>)
- Magnet pre talent [*A Magnet for Talent*] (Výskumná a inovačná autorita VAIA <https://vaia.gov.sk/sk/2023/09/14/slovensko-magnet-pre-talent/>)
- Odídenci z Ukrajiny na slovenskom pracovnom trhu rok od vypuknutia vojny [*Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine on the Slovak Labour Market One Year after the Outbreak of the War*] (Social Policy Institute of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic <https://institutsocialnejpolitiky.sk/analyticke-komentare/index.html>, in Slovak)
- Organizácia systému migrácie a azylu v Slovenskej republike 2024 [*Organisation of Migration and Asylum Policies in the Slovak Republic 2024*] (EMN Slovakia: <https://emn.sk/en/publications/emn-studies-and-policy-briefs/item/739-organisation-of-migration-and-asylum-policies-overview-2024.html>)
- Osem prieskumov medzi vysídlenými ľuďmi z Ukrajiny na Slovensku na rôzne témy – Displacement Data Analysis on TCNs [*Eight surveys conducted among temporary protection holders from Ukraine in the Slovak Republic - Displacement Data Analysis on TCNs*] (IOM Slovakia: <https://dtm.iom.int/slovakia>)
- Pracovním migrantom z Ukrajiny sa na Slovensku darí lepšie ako odídencom [*Labour migrants from Ukraine are better off than temporary protection holders in Slovakia*] (Social Policy Institute of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic: [https://institutsocialnejpolitiky.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Veselkova\\_Habel\\_2023\\_Pracovnym\\_migrantom\\_z\\_UA\\_sa\\_na\\_SK\\_dari\\_lepsie\\_ako\\_odidencom-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1cU6dwVtdok\\_hzFB-vElpOlfaM-8GRxyIMRejJvksqn1NAOrG-oDTKcUJA](https://institutsocialnejpolitiky.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Veselkova_Habel_2023_Pracovnym_migrantom_z_UA_sa_na_SK_dari_lepsie_ako_odidencom-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1cU6dwVtdok_hzFB-vElpOlfaM-8GRxyIMRejJvksqn1NAOrG-oDTKcUJA), in Slovak)

59 Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

60 BG, CZ, HU, LV, LT, PL, RO, SK.

61 Globsec, Publications, <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/publications/globsec-trends-2024-CEE-brave-new-region>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

- Prieskum potrieb odídencom na Slovensku – Slovakia: MSNA Multi-Sector Needs Assessment 2023 (UNHCR: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105616>)
- Sekuritizácia medzinárodnej migrácie pred parlamentnými voľbami 2023 [*Securitization of international migration before the 2023 parliamentary election*] (Radoslav Štefančík: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376513188\\_Sekuritizacia\\_medzinarodnej\\_migracie\\_pred\\_parlamentnymi\\_voľbami\\_2023](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376513188_Sekuritizacia_medzinarodnej_migracie_pred_parlamentnymi_voľbami_2023), in Slovak)
- Situačné analýzy prvého roka pomoci ľuďom z Ukrajiny v slovenských mestách [*Situation analyses of the first year of assistance to people from Ukraine in Slovak cities*] (Mareena: <https://mareena.sk/materialy-na-stiahnutie>, in Slovak)
- Skúsenosti s implementáciou smernice o dočasnej ochrane: výzvy a príklady dobrej praxe v roku 2023 – príspevok SR [*The Application of the Temporary Protection Directive: Challenges and Good Practices in 2023 – contribution of the Slovak Republic*] (EMN Slovakia: <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/studie-a-policy-briefy-emn/item/743-skusenosti-s-implementaciou-smernice-o-docasnej-ochrane-vyzvy-a-priklady-dobrej-praxe-v-roku-2023.html>)
- Sprievodca integráciou ľudí na úteku a cudzincov v mestách (Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture, CVEK: <https://cvek.sk/sprievodca-integraciou-ludi-na-uteku-a-cudzincov-v-mestach-2/> in Slovak)

In 2023, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic published the following publications including statistics on foreign migration:

- *My v číslach: Zahraničné sťahovanie 2022* [*Our Numbers: Foreign Migration 2022*] is a publication providing basic information on foreign migration in the Slovak Republic according to European indicators. In particular, the publication provides an overview of the numbers and flows of migrants and information on the numbers of foreigners who had been granted Slovak citizenship and people who have lost their Slovak citizenship. The publication includes tables, charts, maps and explanatory notes. Part A contains data for the current reference year 2022, Part B provides a 10-year time series.
- Štatistika v súvislostiach: *Hlavné trendy vývoja migrácie v SR 2022* [*Statistics in Context: Main Development Trends in Migration in the Slovak Republic in 2022*] series. The publication deals with the analysis of migration in the Slovak Republic, assessing this demographic process based on selected data on migration in terms of the past and current developments. The publication also includes regional and international comparisons.

In 2023, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic continued to process data from the Population and Housing Census 2021 in the form of analytical publications. The following publications were published in the *Statistics in Context* edition:

- *Národná analytická správa* [*National Analytical Report*], which provides a comprehensive analytical overview of the population of the Slovak Republic and its housing conditions. It is an innovative product in several respects: in addition to the description of the concept and an overview of the state and development of the population, houses, flats and households, the publication also contains thematic analyses concerning, e.g., types of residence, residents in non-conventional dwellings, ethnicity, religiosity, foreigners in the Slovak Republic, inhabitants living abroad, socio-economic status, labour mobility and homelessness.
- *Rodinné správanie populácie Slovenska* [*Family behaviour in the Slovak population*] is a cross-sectional analytical publication describing current characteristics of family behaviour and its changes. Innovations in the Population and Housing Census 2021 allowed for a more compre-



hensive statistical perspective on family issues. In the first chapters, the publication describes the factors influencing family behaviour and the evolution of family structures over the last six decades, based on the Population and Housing Censuses data since 1961. The later chapters detail family structures, as of 1 January 2021, in terms of their types and in relation to nationality, religion, citizenship, education, occupation, etc of the relevant individuals.<sup>62</sup>

This report uses selected results of some of the mentioned research publications in its chapters.

# 03

## Legal Migration

### 3.1. Statistics and Trends

The population of the Slovak Republic at the end of 2023 was 5 424 687, which represents a year-on-year decrease of more than 4 000 inhabitants. The population of the Slovak Republic has thus been decreasing for a third consecutive year, whereas it had been growing for 75 years before that. The data provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SO) show a sharp decline in the number of births in the last two years. Even though the number of immigrants still exceeded the number of emigrants from the country, it failed to eliminate the natural population decline.<sup>63</sup>

The number of foreigners from both EU and non-EU countries residing in Slovakia has grown to 311 406 people (5.74% of the population) in the last five years, while the year 2022 saw an increase by two percent<sup>64</sup> caused mainly by the forced displacement due to the war in Ukraine. However, despite this increase, Slovakia still and in the long term ranks among the European

<sup>63</sup> Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Produkty, [https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail/c32baab7-0239-4fff-9a56-d51baf992374/lut/p/z1/tZPNuOmwFIWfxmV6Lwk\\_yRLQArZWC2LbbJxQwWIFamFQ397U6cKNtC7MJsnMO-Te5X05AwhJkrfryWXVIU6tXvV9J-3HuRNzzDBfRmzKMriFJLPTHNEgtWHwL\\_MANTWeKyKeBhZEbprGYM4YuA\\_nTz70HipEzi43JfB5MDPPox1-Gi-f5BwRy-P4PIEGu627XbWDVZK3akHZLyrogattdoF40-0rT6OuctLu96j8vsG\\_zbqvnNaOZUpIDkDJBzKloiFCWTZ4s11OFEJQ55qH8bl0-weos9eIUbzIM6xpkmVWj93U1whEiM6nggpncRtu2BNP15SDR1DkKxskddYUZ-Jfx7Rije5\\_yZGpTDOwTAjSOgqFMnGpjFjZVDkm7hZUG4vwKx-HBg0Zf5O6T14Zlelfkj7\\_Ab2TBy\\_QfKl7c36eqgNHwXf3Sw\\_l-k6HPo\\_sa\\_edYdqG5zKN3A8izrkrTtOLskyTxVcwwvRkJFr1vwAQOHrs/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail/c32baab7-0239-4fff-9a56-d51baf992374/lut/p/z1/tZPNuOmwFIWfxmV6Lwk_yRLQArZWC2LbbJxQwWIFamFQ397U6cKNtC7MJsnMO-Te5X05AwhJkrfryWXVIU6tXvV9J-3HuRNzzDBfRmzKMriFJLPTHNEgtWHwL_MANTWeKyKeBhZEbprGYM4YuA_nTz70HipEzi43JfB5MDPPox1-Gi-f5BwRy-P4PIEGu627XbWDVZK3akHZLyrogattdoF40-0rT6OuctLu96j8vsG_zbqvnNaOZUpIDkDJBzKloiFCWTZ4s11OFEJQ55qH8bl0-weos9eIUbzIM6xpkmVWj93U1whEiM6nggpncRtu2BNP15SDR1DkKxskddYUZ-Jfx7Rije5_yZGpTDOwTAjSOgqFMnGpjFjZVDkm7hZUG4vwKx-HBg0Zf5O6T14Zlelfkj7_Ab2TBy_QfKl7c36eqgNHwXf3Sw_l-k6HPo_sa_edYdqG5zKN3A8izrkrTtOLskyTxVcwwvRkJFr1vwAQOHrs/dz/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/), last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>64</sup> Before the war in Ukraine, the number of foreigners living in the Slovak Republic was 167 519, after the outbreak of the war it was 278 595 foreigners as of the end of 2022 and 311 406 foreigners as of the end of 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Information provided by the SO.

countries with the lowest number of foreigners (5.13% in 2022, 3.08% in 2021 and only 2.75% of the population in 2020).

In 2023, of 311 406 foreigners with authorised residence in the Slovak Republic more than three quarters (82.18%) came from non-EU countries. Third-country nationals thus comprised 4.72% of entire Slovak population in 2023. Traditionally, the most numerous non-EU nationalities comprised Ukrainian (176 522), Serbian (19 045), Vietnamese (9 082) and Russian (8 434). The Slovak Republic saw an increase in the number of foreigners from Georgia (5 217) in 2023 (see Table 1), who mainly declared doing business as the purpose of their stay. Most of the non-EU countries nationals (over one third) lived in the Bratislava region also in 2023 (see Table 2). In June 2023, based on the resolution of the Slovak Government the Vietnamese community became the 14th officially recognized national minority in the Slovak Republic.<sup>65 66</sup>

The most numerous group of foreigners in Slovakia are Ukrainian nationals. Before the war in Ukraine, Ukrainians constituted one third (56 480 people) of the total number of foreigners in the Slovak Republic. By the end of 2022, their number tripled to 156 881 and in 2023 their number increased only slightly to 176 522, which means that Ukrainians currently constitute more than half of all foreigners living in Slovakia, including EU citizens (56% in 2022 and 56.7% in 2023).

The dominating purpose for migration to the Slovak Republic in the long term is labour and doing business. Since Slovakia's EU accession, the number of foreign workers has increased more than 30-fold, from 3 351 in 2004 to 100 583 foreign workers at the end of 2023, of which 68 691 were from non-EU countries. At the end of 2023, there was 1 foreign worker for every 26 Slovak workers, compared to a higher ratio of 28:1 in 2022.<sup>67</sup>

The workers from non-EU countries were mostly from Ukraine (39 307), Serbia (9 681), India (3 211), Georgia (1 640) and Russia (1 430) (see Table 4). About one third of foreigners worked in the Bratislava region, followed by the Trnava and Nitra regions. The year-on-year increase in the number of foreigners from non-EU countries working in Slovakia has been more than 10 000 since 2016. The pandemic years 2020 and 2021 broke this trend, yet the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022 increased the number of employed foreigners by almost 20 000. In 2023, the number of foreign workers in the Slovak Republic increased by almost 12 000, half of whom were citizens of Ukraine. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, increased demand from employers in the Slovak Republic for the foreign workforce could be observed for several years, including from non-EU countries, and this trend has resumed after the pandemic.<sup>68</sup>

65 The 14 officially recognised national minorities in Slovakia in 2023 were the Hungarian, Roma, Czech, Moravian, Rusyn, Polish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, German, Jewish, Croatian, Russian and Vietnamese minority.

66 Vietnamci sú 14. oficiálne uznanou národnostnou menšinou v SR [The Vietnamese are the 14th officially recognised national minority in Slovakia], <https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/vietnamci-su-14-oficialne-uznanou-na/719704-clanok.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

67 In 2023, the total number of employees in the Slovak Republic increased by 6 000 persons (by 0.2%) to 2 610 000 persons, Statistical Office, Produkty [Products], [https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf\\_sprava\\_detail/14663c63-2f14-4b37-9d7a-3369ac06818c/!ut/p/z1/tVJLU8MgGPwtHnlfCk0UG-0o33Y0tpa23JxSKRNbBNigon110scL874PMgFmNndb5cF57zGMld1uIM2Nbk6uPtGhnfxBmZ7\\_UAA9KcExpOLxeVocN4ZLrt49RHAL-dnML4RV8P5hAZAu1h-z7\\_FEss4t4VN8MZEIUpQtUdpvkVqzb1wB1Nmzk2da1QVpaqPHtSVt-nu3BzQMSRwS1NkGFNGIMNS7ZwoREvZUDCEPeNzKF3F6jze\\_Qq9-ytvGgS-WAMeXb5DBUlwomwLw6bALYzFaznvXhIag74BvNDbOA\\_vSQ8D-wqk51g5d5-zIHvPhjxBHgyU-tuNrTh8dHKVw3Jrf62eL1f5Tj5nTK2WC2cwmUTVppg9e\\_oroMaZT5TZz54DPOgDDGaYf2wi4hrbDII8KdcKm3utSI\\_1S675xYW1SnHjQNI2\\_M2Z30H5sMg8-oySmcsE\\_InGRLTNOjmi\\_nZORkqMjeZnqITh5BSjRFBkl/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/products/informationmessages/inf_sprava_detail/14663c63-2f14-4b37-9d7a-3369ac06818c/!ut/p/z1/tVJLU8MgGPwtHnlfCk0UG-0o33Y0tpa23JxSKRNbBNigon110scL874PMgFmNndb5cF57zGMld1uIM2Nbk6uPtGhnfxBmZ7_UAA9KcExpOLxeVocN4ZLrt49RHAL-dnML4RV8P5hAZAu1h-z7_FEss4t4VN8MZEIUpQtUdpvkVqzb1wB1Nmzk2da1QVpaqPHtSVt-nu3BzQMSRwS1NkGFNGIMNS7ZwoREvZUDCEPeNzKF3F6jze_Qq9-ytvGgS-WAMeXb5DBUlwomwLw6bALYzFaznvXhIag74BvNDbOA_vSQ8D-wqk51g5d5-zIHvPhjxBHgyU-tuNrTh8dHKVw3Jrf62eL1f5Tj5nTK2WC2cwmUTVppg9e_oroMaZT5TZz54DPOgDDGaYf2wi4hrbDII8KdcKm3utSI_1S675xYW1SnHjQNI2_M2Z30H5sMg8-oySmcsE_InGRLTNOjmi_nZORkqMjeZnqITh5BSjRFBkl/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/), last accessed on 17 July 2024.

68 European Migration Network (EMN), Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum. Slovak Republic for the years 2019 – 2022, <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocné-spravy-emn-o-migrácii-a-azyle.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

In terms of first residence permits, there was a twofold decrease in the number of authorised tolerated stays in 2023, compared to the previous year 2022, particularly as concerns Ukrainian nationals applying for the purpose of temporary protection. Compared to 2022, approximately the same number of first residence permits was issued in 2023 (28 802 permits, excluding tolerated stays (29 434), of which 29 308 were issued for the purpose of temporary protection). In 2022, 27 577 first permits were issued, excluding tolerated stays (104 390), of which 104 297 were issued for the purpose of temporary protection. In the year 2020, which was influenced by the pandemic, 18 251 first permits were issued, which represents a 7% decrease compared to 2019, when the number was 28 836.<sup>69</sup> Even in 2023, most first permits were issued for the purpose of paid activities (20 003), the rest were family reasons (3 863), education and study (4 212), and other reasons including tolerated residence (30 158) (see Table 3). Entrepreneurship again comprised the highest proportion of the paid activities (52%) which was slightly lower than in 2022 (64%). In 2023, this group of labour migrants was dominated by the Ukrainians, followed by the Serbs, Georgians, Vietnamese and Macedonians. This confirms the continuation of the increasing trend of first residence permits issued for the purpose of entrepreneurship which started in 2019 (in 2019 the year-on-year increase was 64%). In 2020, only one year-on-year increase was recorded among all the purposes – first residence permits for the purpose of entrepreneurship, by 14%. In 2021, the year-on-year increase in the number of first residence permits for the purpose of entrepreneurship was as high as 180%. To compare, the Slovak Republic issued 20 989 first time residence permits in 2018.<sup>70</sup> The number of illegally employed third-country nationals in 2023 was comparable to the numbers in the two years prior (see Chapter 10.1).

### Foreigners Employed in the Slovak Republic in 2019 – 2023

	As of 31 December 2019	As of 31 December 2020	As of 31 December 2021	As of 31 December 2022	As of 31 December 2023	Most numerous nationalities – all foreigners 2023	Most numerous nationalities – third-country nationals 2023
EU/EEA citizens	32 114	29 937	29 595	31 122 (of which females: 9 138)	31 892 (of which females: 9 319)	1. Ukraine (39 307) 2. Serbia (9 681) 3. Romania (7 068) 4. Czech Republic (6 530) 5. Hungary (5 977)	1. Ukraine (39 307) 2. Serbia (9 681) 3. India (3 211) 4. Georgia (1 640) 5. Russia (1 430)
Third-country nationals	46 184	39 075	37 593	56 876 (of which females: 24 016)	68 691 (of which females: 28 881)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 298</b>	<b>69 012</b>	<b>67 188</b>	<b>87 998 (of which females: 33 154)</b>	<b>100 583 (38 200)</b>		

Source: MLSAF.

69 Behúňová, K., Oboňová, S. Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Slovak Republic 2020 (2021), <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocné-spravy-emn-o-migrácii-a-azyle/item/641-vyrocná-sprava-o-migrácii-a-azyle-za-rok-2020.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

70 Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

## 3.2. General Legislative Changes

In 2023, an amendment to the Act on Residence of Foreigners was prepared and submitted for inter-ministerial comment procedure which aimed to:

- in Art. I, align the Act on Residence of Foreigners with the recommendations of the Schengen Evaluation Team's evaluation of the Slovak Republic in 2019;
- transpose the new Directive (EU) 2021/1883EU, which was drawn up to address the need to increase attractiveness of the Blue Card for highly qualified employees;
- implement Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 as amended – ETIAS system;
- amend the Act No 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and to change the single permit system;
- simplify and streamline procedures and eliminate shortcomings arising from practice in relation to the residence and returns of foreigners residing in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

Towards the end of 2023, the Slovak Republic approved an amendment to the Act No. 145/1995 Coll. on Administrative Charges, which, effective since April 2024, adjusted the administrative charges for applications for residence permit, visa, business and other areas relevant for foreigners in Slovakia.<sup>71</sup>

## 3.3. Labour Migration

In 2023, the Slovak Republic focused on filling in the labour shortage in the Slovak Republic as a priority:

- The Research and Innovation Authority of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic declared that domestic and foreign talent is crucial for the future development of the Slovak Republic, as otherwise the quality of life will worsen for the people in the country. Lack of talent is a key limiting reason that prevents Slovak companies from growing and impedes innovations. In autumn 2023, an extensive analysis prepared by experts led by VAIA was presented. The analysis, entitled *Magnet for Talent*,<sup>72</sup> identifies four main areas where interventions are needed to meet this goal, as well as the tools that can bring about the change. It set the goal of doubling the number of highly skilled foreigners by 2030 and retaining them in Slovakia for at least 5 years.
- According to the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027 of October 2023, "in order to address the availability of labour in objectively scarce professions, [the Slovak Republic] will adopt clear rules for obtaining work permits for foreigners, removing existing obstacles in the process of the recognition of qualifications and other administrative barriers". The need to retain skilled foreign workforce and facilitate employment conditions for third-country nationals have been translated into several legislative changes in 2023.

<sup>71</sup> Zákony pre ľudí, <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/1995-145> and MIC IOM, Pobyť, <https://www.mic.iom.sk/sk/pobyt2/zakladne-informacie/161-ake-vysoke-su-spravne-poplatky-pri-ziadosti-o.html>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>72</sup> Research and Innovation Authority, Aktualita [News], <https://vaia.gov.sk/sk/2023/09/14/slovensko-magnet-pre-talent/>, last accessed on 18 July 2024.

Effective as of 1 January 2023, Act No.488/2022 Coll., amending Act No.5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to some acts, as subsequently amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act No. 488/2022 Coll.") has:

- facilitated the employment of third-country nationals by linking the identification of professions with a shortage of labour to regional level, with the deletion of the precondition of a registered unemployment rate below 5 %
- introduced the possibility of employing a third-country national during the period when their application for renewal of the temporary residence for the purpose of employment is being decided upon and facilitated the renewal of the temporary residence for the purpose of employment by deleting the requirement to consider the situation on the labour market,
- established a shorter period after the lapse of which a third-country national who has been granted temporary residence for the purpose of family reunification may be employed in the Slovak Republic without the need to issue the relevant confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment, a confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy and an employment permit,
- extended the period during which a third-country national may undergo training with an employer before being granted temporary residence for the purpose of employment from 6 to 8 months,
- deleted the labour market test requirement in cases where a third-country national applies for the renewal of their blue card or their temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment for the same job with the same employer,
- extended the categories of third-country nationals who hold the same legal status as citizens of the Slovak Republic for the purposes of the Employment Services Act.<sup>73</sup>

Provision 72a of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services, i.e. a transitional provision applicable during the emergency situation declared in connection with a mass influx of foreigners into the territory of the Slovak Republic caused by the armed conflict in the territory of Ukraine, the validity of which is taken into account by labour inspectors when carrying out checks of the compliance with the ban on illegal employment, continued to apply in 2023:

- During the emergency situation declared in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine and for a period of two months following the revocation of the emergency situation declared in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine, an employer may employ a third-country national referred to in Section 23a(1)(u) in the same workplace even after the lapse of the eight-week period, until the end of the procedure for granting a temporary stay for the purpose of employment
- During the emergency situation declared in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine and for a period of two months following the revocation of the emergency situation declared in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine, an employer may employ a third-country national referred to in Section 23a(1)(u) in the same workplace even in the course of the procedure for the renewal of the temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment.<sup>74</sup>

### Highly qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees from non-EU countries

In the context of the transposition of the Directive,<sup>75</sup> a draft act amending Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners and on changes and amendments to certain acts, as subsequently

<sup>73</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>74</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>75</sup> Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC.



amended, and amending and supplementing other acts has been prepared, under which Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to certain acts, as subsequently amended, has been amended, which proposes amendments to the conditions for issuing and cancelling a confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment, in particular the reduction of the salary threshold from 1.5 times to 1.2 times the average monthly salary of an employee in the economy of the Slovak Republic, with the introduction of an exemption from this salary threshold requirement applicable to third-country nationals who have completed their higher education no more than three years prior to applying for the EU Blue Card. For highly qualified jobs, a first level of higher education will suffice, while higher-level professional skills demonstrated by professional experience in highly qualified employment will be sufficient for selected ICT jobs. It has been proposed that under the short-term mobility schemes for holders of a Blue Card issued in another EU Member State temporary work activities could be carried out without the need to issue a confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment and the conditions of employment under the long-term mobility schemes for holders of a Blue Card issued in another EU Member State have been modified in order to facilitate their access to the Slovak labour market. At the same time, in the context of the regulation in the Directive it has been proposed that a holder of an EU Blue Card should have the same legal status as a Slovak citizen for the purpose of being entered in the register of jobseekers.

The legislative process concerning the draft bill has not been completed in 2023.<sup>76</sup>

#### (Low) skilled migrants

The adoption of the following legislation was based on the urgency of the situation in certain professions that have been identified as having labour shortages in the long term, particularly in the expanding field of automotive manufacturing in the Slovak Republic.

In addition to the fast track procedures introduced for the national visas for the employment of non-EU nationals, which were introduced already in 2022, two more government regulations were approved in 2023:

- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 113/2023 Coll. on the interest of the Slovak Republic to grant a national visa to selected groups of third-country nationals, effective from 6 April 2023, which regulates the granting of national visas to nationals of selected third countries in the occupations of bus drivers – 150 national visas, and heavy goods vehicle and lorry drivers (domestic and international transport) – 5 000 national visas in 2023, and
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 383/2023 Coll. on the interest of the Slovak Republic in granting national visas to selected groups of third countries nationals in selected occupations in the field of industry, effective from 3 October 2023, which regulates the granting of national visas to selected third-country nationals in the occupations of equipment operator in the metallurgical and foundry industry not listed elsewhere, machine operator for the production of rubber products, assembly worker (operator) in engineering production, assembly worker in chemical, rubber and plastic production, assembly worker (operator) in of electronic equipment, forklift operator, metal welder, CNC machine adjuster, metal worker, construction and operation electrician or maintenance worker – 2 000 national visas per calendar year.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>77</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

#### Trainees, au pairs and volunteers

In 2023, the Slovak Republic has simplified the process of recognition of professional traineeships completed abroad. Also, the *Act No.422/2015 on recognition of education documents and on recognition of professional qualifications*<sup>78</sup> – was amended, introducing the new provision (§16a) concerning the recognition of a professional traineeship<sup>79</sup>. According to this provision, if the completion of a professional traineeship is required for the performance of a regulated profession in the Slovak Republic, the competent authority shall recognise the professional traineeship (stint) carried out in another Member State in accordance with the Guidelines on the organisation and recognition of professional traineeships and shall consider the professional traineeship carried out in a third State. Recognition of a traineeship shall not replace the passing of an examination pursuant to a special regulation 2a) where the passing of such examination is conditional for accessing the regulated profession.<sup>80</sup>

#### Innovative labour mobility pathways

In 2023, the Slovak Republic has been selected to implement the new pilot refugee labour mobility programme along with four other European countries: Italy, Spain, France and Germany. This project, called DT4E 2.0, is an extension and a follow-up of the successful Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E) programme, which was implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2023 and enabled refugee labour mobility in Belgium, Ireland and Portugal.<sup>81</sup>

### 3.4. Students and Researchers

In 2023, the *National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2030 – Slovakia that trusts itself* was adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 134/2023. The material contains measure no. 2.2.1.5. *Promoting international mobility of researchers*, which aims to attract foreign researchers to Slovakia through short- and long-term support for international mobility schemes in the academic environment in the form of scholarships, aiming to foster international cooperation between organisations from the academic as well as non-academic environment. The material also includes measure no. 2.2.2.7. *Promoting the socio-cultural integration of foreign university students*, which should make it possible to retain the already attracted highly qualified talent for longer periods of time.<sup>82</sup>

To increase the attractiveness of scholarship programmes funded from public sources and attract more international talent, since 1 January 2023<sup>83</sup> scholarship holders (university students, researchers and university teachers) coming to the Slovak Republic via selected publicly funded scholarship programmes for a period longer than one month are entitled to public health insurance. Health insurance premiums are covered by the state budget.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Act no. 286/2023 Coll.

<sup>79</sup> as defined by Section 3(2)(f) of Act no. 422/2015 Coll.

<sup>80</sup> Information provided by the MESRS.

<sup>81</sup> Talent beyond boundaries, <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/blog/bigyearahead2024>, last accessed on 17 July 2024.

<sup>82</sup> Information provided by the MESRS.

<sup>83</sup> Act no. 518/2022 amending the Act no. 581/2004 Coll. on Health Insurance Companies, Healthcare Supervision and on changes and amendments to certain acts, as amended.

<sup>84</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

### Government scholarships and other scholarships

In 2023, the Government of the Slovak Republic supported a total of 394 scholarship holders, of which 142 were from the countries affected by an ongoing armed conflict or from the countries of origin of forced migration. The scholarships were mainly provided to students from Ukraine (33 scholarship holders in total) Afghanistan (27 scholarship holders), Syria (23 scholarship holders), Palestine (18 scholarship holders), Lebanon (9 scholarship holders), Sudan (8 scholarship holders), Ethiopia (8 scholarship holders), etc.<sup>85</sup>

In 2023, the first edition of the scholarship scheme designed for talented scholars from abroad was launched: <https://scholarships.portalvs.sk/>. This activity resulted from the low number of foreign students at Slovak universities, as well as from the shortage of labour in scarce professions on the labour market.<sup>86</sup>

## 3.5. Family Reunification

Effective as of 1 January 2023, the Act No. 488/2022 Coll.<sup>87 88</sup> established a shorter period (12 to 9 months) after the lapse of which a third-country national who has been granted temporary residence for the purpose of family reunification may be employed in the Slovak Republic without the need to issue the relevant confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy corresponding to highly qualified employment, a confirmation of the possibility to fill a vacancy and an employment permit. This change is in line with the general effort of the Slovak republic to simplify the conditions of entry to the labour market for third-country nationals who have entered the territory of the Slovak Republic for the purpose of family reunification.<sup>89</sup>

## 3.6. Preventing Social Dumping and Lowering of Work Standards

The Slovak Republic prepared and published *Analysis of Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation*<sup>90</sup> in 2023. The analysis aims to contribute to the improvement of the process of detection and investigation of the crime of trafficking in human beings and provide insight into the issue of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation and violation of the provisions of Act No. 311/2001 Coll. as subsequently amended, in relation to poor working conditions, and determining the dividing line between these phenomena.<sup>91 92</sup>

85 Information provided by the MFEA.

86 Information provided by the MESRS.

87 Amendment to Act no. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on changes and amendments to certain acts, as amended

88 namely in Section 22(9)(c) and Section 23a (1)(c)

89 Information provided by the MLSAF and BBFP PF P.

90 MI, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=485885> last accessed on 17 July 2024.

91 Information provided by the DFEA MIO.

92 It also concerns the implementation of Task 17 of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019-2023 (part B of the Fifth National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2019-2023).

## 3.7. Other Measures Related to Legal Migration

### 3.7.1. Bilateral Agreements Related to Labour Migration

Based on the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Canada on Youth Mobility*, a reciprocity quota of 350 participants was agreed, who could submit their applications for 2024 (the quota remained the same as in 2022 and 2023).<sup>93</sup>

### 3.7.2. Population and Foreigners Census

At the end of 2023, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic held a working meeting with Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic representatives on the topic of estimation of the realistic number of foreigners residing on the territory of the Slovak Republic and on the possibility of using the 'Signs of Life' statistical method for this purpose.

The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic continued to process data from the *2021 Population and Housing Census* in the form of analytical publications (see Chapter 2.4).<sup>94</sup>

## 3.8. Information on the Options and Conditions of Legal Migration

In 2023, information to third-country nationals were provided by state institutions (and, in case of temporary protection holders, also some self-governmental authorities), international organisations and civic sector organisations. In addition to the capital, these were offering their services through their branch offices also in various regions of the Slovak Republic. The Foreign Police Departments continued to be the main source of information on the options and conditions of the legal migration in 2023. For illustration purposes, a total of 94 224 clients who had booked their appointments through the electronic system were processed at the Foreign Police Departments in 2023. This represents an increase compared to 2022, when 74 318 clients were processed.<sup>95</sup> In addition to the Foreign Police Departments, temporary protection holders were also provided relevant information and other services by the so-called transit centres, which were established by the state in several locations across Slovakia following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. In 2023, such transit centres were still operating in Bratislava, Michalovce (closed on 1 July 2023) and in Košice.<sup>96</sup>

93 Information provided by the MLSAF.

94 Information provided by the SO.

95 Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

96 Information provided by IOM Slovakia.





## International Protection

### 4.1. Statistics and Trends

Compared to the European average, the Slovak Republic has been recording low numbers of asylum applications and various forms of international protection granted in the long-term. This trend has not changed in the last five years. Of a total of 416 applications (377 of which were first applications and 39 were repeated applications), 31 applications were submitted by people who had fled to the Slovak Republic from Ukraine. Most of the asylum procedures were discontinued (see Table 13a and Table 13b). People fleeing from Ukraine used the temporary protection status allowing them to stay in the country and access services – temporary protection is addressed in a separate chapter herein (see Chapter 5). The most numerous group of asylum seekers in 2023 were the nationals of Türkiye (136), Bangladesh (61), Ukraine (32), Morocco (28) and Afghanistan (24). Fifteen asylum applications were submitted by unaccompanied minors, predominantly from Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Türkiye (see Table 18).

In 2023, the Slovak Republic granted asylum to a total of 37 persons, mostly from Afghanistan, but also from Russia and Cuba. In the same period of time, the Slovak Republic granted subsidiary protection to 43 persons, most of whom were from Afghanistan and Ukraine (similarly to the previous years). Negative decisions were issued in 77 cases in 2023. The Slovak Republic registered an increase in the number of discontinued procedures (323) even in 2023, most frequently due to the arbitrary departure of the applicants from the territory of the Slovak Republic before the decision in their case was issued. In 2023, the Slovak Republic granted citizenship to 22 per-

sons who were granted international protection (see Table 6).<sup>97</sup>

The Slovak Republic did not resettle or relocate any persons in need of international protection into or through its territory in the period of years 2019 – 2023 (see Tables 14, 15 and 16).

### Asylum applications and international protection in the Slovak Republic in 2019 – 2023

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Asylum applicants (of which first applications)	232 (214)	282 (267)	370 (330)	547 (503)	416 (377)
Asylum granted	9	11	29	23	37
Subsidiary protection granted	19	27	13	48	43
Citizenship granted to persons granted international protec- tion	9	14	10	27	22

Source: MO MI (international protection) and PAS MI (citizenship).

### 4.2. National policies and Legislation

In 2023, two amendments to the Act on Asylum<sup>98</sup> entered into force, which, inter alia, repealed provisions<sup>99</sup> that allowed granting of asylum for the purpose of family reunification or granting of subsidiary protection to be denied based on a dissenting opinion of the intelligence services,<sup>100</sup> as these provisions had been deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic. The aim of these amendments was to provide asylum seekers with sufficient guarantees of the possibility to have the decision issued by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic reviewed and of a fair trial in the administrative justice system.

Effective as of 1 January 2023, Article I amended Act on Health Insurance<sup>101</sup> so that the provision and reimbursement of healthcare for asylum seekers, temporary protection holders and persons involved in the assisted return programme be covered by the largest health insurance company (*Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa VŠZP*), whose costs will be subsequently reimbursed by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (previously, the provision and reimbursement of urgent healthcare for applicants who were not covered by public insurance was the responsibility of the MI). This change is not an extension of the scope of entitlement, but rather an administrative change in the reimbursement implementation system, which is to the benefit of the persons concerned and also to the benefit of health care providers.

<sup>97</sup> MO MI, Statistical Report of Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic – Year 2023, <http://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20>, last accessed on 27 June 2024.

<sup>98</sup> Act No. 518/2022 Coll. and Act No. 180/2023 Coll.

<sup>99</sup> These provisions [Section 13(5)(c) and Section 13(c)(4)(d)] automatically ceased to have effect six months after the promulgation of the relevant judgment in the Collection of Laws.

<sup>100</sup> I.e. if the opinion submitted by the Slovak Information Service and by the Military Intelligence contained dissenting opinion on granting asylum, based on the assessment of the threat the applicant poses to security of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>101</sup> Act No. 580/2024 Coll. on Health Insurance and on changes and amendments to Act No. 95/2002 Coll. on Insurance and on changes and amendments to certain acts, <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/518/20231201>, last accessed on 27 June 2024.

### 4.3. Reception and Caring for Asylum Seekers

In 2023, MI's Migration Office continued to provide for the needs of asylum seekers, foreigners granted subsidiary protection (until the time of their departure for integration) and temporary protection holders accommodated in asylum facilities, also in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (Slovak Humanitarian Council). These include, e.g., the provision of food, health care, pocket money, children's school attendance, assistance in finding a job, Slovak language courses, counselling services (legal, psychological and social counselling) and leisure activities.<sup>102</sup>

In 2023, the Slovak Republic did not engage in any European or bilateral relocation activities (see Table 14). Similarly, the Slovak Republic has not implemented any resettlement or other programme aimed at the reception of refugees from non-EU countries (see Table 15) or any special humanitarian transfers of refugees across its territory (see Table 16).<sup>103</sup>

In 2023, the Slovak Republic continued to execute Dublin transfers to the states applying the Dublin Regulation, provided the requests of the Slovak Republic were accepted by the concerned Member State and the transfer decisions were enforceable pursuant to the applicable Slovak legislation. In 2023, 45 cases were transferred to the territory of the Slovak Republic for further procedure and 164 persons were transferred from Slovakia to the Member States responsible for examining their international protection applications.<sup>104</sup>

The Migration Office continued its close cooperation with non-governmental organisations, especially so within the scope of EU-funded projects. The Slovak Humanitarian Council continued to implement the *Effective Services for Asylum Seekers in the Slovak Republic III*<sup>105</sup> project in 2023, which was prolonged by a year until the end of October 2023. Within the scope of the project, basic and complementary services were provided to all asylum seekers, including those in asylum facilities. Special attention was given to the needs of vulnerable persons. Complementary services included Slovak language teaching, psychological counselling, social work, spare time activities, etc. In October 2023, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, acting as the managing authority of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) programme, launched a call for proposals entitled Services for the Target Group in Asylum Facilities (FVZ-2023-AMIF-SC1-A3-V2). The call was aimed at providing services to asylum seekers, foreigners applying for temporary protection and foreigners granted temporary protection (temporary protection holders) who are registered in the asylum facilities of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. The total funding allocated to this call was € 1 600 000. At the end of 2023, the call was in the applications for non-repayable financial contribution assessment stage.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>103</sup> The Slovak Republic has been conducting special humanitarian refugee transfers in cooperation with the UNHCR and IOM since 2009. The latest trilateral Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic, the UNHCR and the IOM concerning Humanitarian Transfer of Refugees in Need of International Protection through the Slovak Republic was concluded on 18 November 2015.

<sup>104</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>105</sup> Project code: SK 2019 AMIF SC1.1/1. Project duration: 1 January 2020– 31 October 2022, prolonged until 31 October 2023. Grant: € 1 587 106.95, increased to € 2 267 106.95 in 2022. Funding: AMIF and State Budget of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>106</sup> Information provided by the FAD EPS MI.

### 4.4. Court Decisions at the National and European Level

The Slovak Republic continuously applies the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU as well as the European Court of Human Rights in its decision-making activities in granting international protection and national protection statuses.<sup>107</sup>

### 4.5. Cooperation with EU Member States and with Non-EU States

#### Cooperation of EU Member States

In 2023, the Migration Office prepared the documents for the intensive negotiations on the CEAS reform legislative proposals and participated in them. The negotiations took place in order to reach a Council position also on the remaining three legislative proposals of the Pact (AMMR, APR, crisis management) in order to start trilogues with the European Parliament. In December 2023 (on 20 December 2023), during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU, a political agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council on all five legislative proposals of the Pact, which maintained the possibility of fulfilling the commitment to complete the CEAS reform by the end of the European Parliament's mandate.

Due to the deployment of human resources to deal with temporary protection holders from Ukraine, there were only two secondments of experts to the EUAA asylum support teams by the Slovak republic in 2023. Both deployments were made to the Ter Apel reception centre in the Netherlands.<sup>108</sup>

#### Cooperation with non-EU countries

The Slovak Republic provided humanitarian, financial and in-kind assistance to cover the needs of migrants and refugees to several countries in 2023. Moreover, it has also supported activities aimed at strengthening of the asylum system in Bosnia and Hercegovina (see Chapter 13).

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You can read more about the integration of persons granted international protection and about awareness-raising activities in the field of forced/irregular migration in Chapter 7. Legislative changes, measures and activities to address the situation of the people fleeing the war in Ukraine are described separately in Chapter 5.

<sup>107</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>108</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.



## Temporary Protection and Other Measures in Response to Persons Fleeing the War in Ukraine

### 5.1. Statistics

The number of people arriving from Ukraine was stable in 2023. A total number of persons who have entered the Slovak Republic from Ukraine in 2023 was 977 227, which is 112 897 fewer than during 2022, since the beginning of the war on 24 February 2022 (see Table 21). The number of people who have left the Slovak Republic towards Ukraine in 2023 was 1 037 946 (see Table 22).<sup>109</sup>

A total of 30 180 persons applied for temporary protection in the Slovak Republic in 2023, which is over 100 000 people less compared to 2022 (see Table 23), and thus, as of 31 December 2023,<sup>110</sup> the Slovak Republic registered a total of 114 152 foreigners with a valid tolerated stay granted for the purpose of temporary protection.<sup>111</sup>

Ukrainian nationals constituted the largest group of foreigners in Slovakia even before the beginning of the war in Ukraine, which is naturally reflected in the numbers in all areas where

<sup>109</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>110</sup> Since 1 March 2022.

<sup>111</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

integration is concerned, including schools and education. Ukrainian citizens (see Table 7) represent the largest group of foreigners in the Slovak school system at all levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary). In 2021, the number of foreigners (including EU citizens) enrolled in the school system in the Slovak Republic was 8 595, while in 2022 the number of foreigners (including EU citizens) was 19 385, of which 13 607 were citizens of Ukraine. In 2023, the number grew to 42 469 foreigners (including EU citizens), of which more than 58% were Ukrainians.<sup>112</sup>

### 5.2. Policies and Legislation

There have not been as many measures adopted in relation to the situation in Ukraine in 2023 as in 2022. The activities implemented in 2023 built mainly on the measures taken in 2022, while reflecting developments in the situation in Ukraine and the priorities of the new Slovak government in this area. In this regard, the *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027* states that “the Government of the Slovak Republic will continue to support solutions to the conflict in Ukraine based on the principles of international law, including the [principle of] independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right to self-defence. The current situation in Ukraine shows that a military solution to the conflict is nowhere near and [the conflict] causes enormous human tragedies. The Government will support the initiatives of the international community leading to a ceasefire and peace initiatives, particularly those in the European Union.”<sup>113</sup>

In particular, on 28 June 2023<sup>114</sup> the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the update of the *Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency situation related to the mass arrival of people from Ukraine into the territory of the Slovak Republic for the period July – December 2023*.<sup>115</sup> The plan focuses on ensuring access of beneficiaries temporary protection to material, legal, psychosocial and medical support and pays particular attention to the protection of persons with specific needs (minors, people with disabilities, etc.) and their transportation within the Slovak Republic. The plan looked at a high-risk scenario identified on the basis of data provided by the European Commission.

### 5.3. Measures within the Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive – Access to Rights

#### 5.3.1. Temporary Protection Provision in the Slovak Republic, Registration and Granting of Documents to Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection

The provision of temporary protection has been automatically extended until 4 March 2024, in line with the Council Decision 2022/382. Persons who had the validity expiration date stated as 4 March 2023 on their tolerated stay document marked *temporary protection* continued to have their document valid until at least 4 March 2024, without the need to take any further administrative steps on their part. However, the document could have been updated online via the

<sup>112</sup> Information provided by the MESRY.

<sup>113</sup> Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027, <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Dynamic/DocumentPreview.aspx?DocID=535376>, last accessed on 11 June 2024.

<sup>114</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 346/2023.

<sup>115</sup> Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Rokovania vlády [Government Meetings], <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28566/1>, last accessed on 12 June 2024.



electronic service available on the MI website.<sup>116</sup>

In the light of the decreasing number of applicants for temporary protection arriving from Ukraine and the decrease in the number of temporary protection applications, the Slovak Republic decided to rationalise the use of its material and human resources. Therefore, as of June 2023, the large-capacity/transit centre in Michalovce (Eastern Slovakia, on the Slovak - Ukrainian border) has been closed, and the agenda concerning temporary protection is handled by all Foreign Police Departments. Only the Assistance (large-capacity) centre in Bratislava has remained open and handled the registration of new applicants for temporary protection and all other relevant agenda.<sup>117</sup>

### 5.3.2. Access to Labour Market

There have been no legislative developments in this area in 2023.

Even in 2023 it applied that persons granted temporary protection could work in the Slovak Republic without the need for further permits, but they could not engage in entrepreneurship.

According to the Social Policy Institute, the Slovak labour market absorbed 23 858 beneficiaries of temporary protection during the first year following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but, as of 18 February 2023, only 65.3% of them were still working. This indicates that beneficiaries of temporary protection were able to find jobs relatively easily after their arrival in the Slovak Republic, but some of them had been working only for a short period of time. Most of the beneficiaries of temporary protection were in low-skilled jobs. Up to 38% of the positions filled by beneficiaries of temporary protection required only primary education, although 93% of the working beneficiaries of temporary protection who provided data on educational attainment had completed secondary or higher education. One of the reasons why beneficiaries of temporary protection preferred any job to a job matching their qualifications was likely the language barriers or barriers related to the recognition of their qualifications. The top ten most frequently filled positions were dominated by manual jobs such as assembly worker in mechanical engineering facilities (14.5% of jobs), warehouse assistant worker (7.3% of jobs) or janitor/cleaner (6.2% of jobs).<sup>118</sup>

Already in 2022, the Slovak Republic prepared the 12th Revision of the Human Resources Operational Programme with one new priority axis included: CARE ESF/ERDF. The activities included in this specific objective responded to developments in selected areas of social and economic life resulting from the war in Ukraine. The planned activities and their scope are based on the actual real time needs of the beneficiaries of temporary protection. Following activities were supported in the area of labour market integration: introduction of instruments for better integration of the beneficiaries of temporary protection into the labour market, support for capacities providing support to persons from Ukraine in the area of their entry and integration in the Slovak Republic, building administrative capacities in charge of the organisation of reception

<sup>116</sup> Information provided by the MI, [https://portal.minv.sk/wps/portal/domov/ecu/ecu\\_elektronicke\\_sluzby/ecu-overenie-potvrdenia/ut/p/a1/04\\_Sj9CPYkssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOJNDJxdPby8DbzcZd3MDQLDjlz8fdz8DAwMTIAKIpEV-Psamhk4hvqGODlahhoZGJhSqN-EOP3O7o4e-JuY-IBELIwNPFycPF3NLXwMDTzPi9BvgAI4GhPSH60ehKsEAvGvmEAV4PMDWAEeRxbkhoaGRhhkeqYrKglAjzseA!!/dl5/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9n-QSEh/](https://portal.minv.sk/wps/portal/domov/ecu/ecu_elektronicke_sluzby/ecu-overenie-potvrdenia/ut/p/a1/04_Sj9CPYkssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOJNDJxdPby8DbzcZd3MDQLDjlz8fdz8DAwMTIAKIpEV-Psamhk4hvqGODlahhoZGJhSqN-EOP3O7o4e-JuY-IBELIwNPFycPF3NLXwMDTzPi9BvgAI4GhPSH60ehKsEAvGvmEAV4PMDWAEeRxbkhoaGRhhkeqYrKglAjzseA!!/dl5/d5/L2dBISvZ0FBIS9n-QSEh/), last accessed on 12 June 2024.

<sup>117</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>118</sup> Hábel, B., Veselková, M. Odídenci z Ukrajiny na slovenskom pracovnom trhu rok od vypuknutia vojny [Temporary Protection Holders from Ukraine on the Slovak Labour Market One Year after the Outbreak of the War], Inštitút sociálnej politiky (2023), <https://institutsocialnejpolitiky.sk/analyticke-komentare/index.html>, last accessed on 19 July 2024.

and integration activities at the national level. Assistance and support continued to be provided to refugees from Ukraine throughout the year 2023. The first calls under the reviewed CARE axis were launched in 2023.

The continuity of support for third-country nationals and migrants from Ukraine should be ensured in the next programming period (2021–2027) through the Policy Objective 4 in OP Slovakia, under which activities for social inclusion of migrants, their access to language education, acquisition of skills and competences, social sensitization and sensitization of perception of migration and migrants within the majority population were supported under the specific objective.<sup>119</sup>

Two national projects supervised by the MLSAF, entitled “*Helping the beneficiaries of temporary protection*” and “*Helping the beneficiaries of temporary protection - Counselling*” continued even in 2023. In addition to providing basic information relevant for finding a job, the counselling activities also included individual support provided to beneficiaries of temporary protection when they contacted potential employers, authorities or other organisations. Moreover, beneficiaries of temporary protection could also get support in drafting basic documents in the Slovak language necessary for finding a job (e.g. CV or a motivation letter).

The “*Helping the beneficiaries of temporary protection*” project was implemented through four main measures:

- education (including the provision of financial contributions for training courses);
- mobility support (including the provision of financial contributions for partial reimbursement of travel costs);
- voluntary activities (including the provision of financial contributions for the execution of activation activities in the form of voluntary service);
- placement with an employer (including the provision of financial contributions for mentored training both for the employer and for the beneficiary of temporary protection, e.g. MH<sup>120</sup>).

### 5.3.3. Access to Accommodation

There have been no significant developments in this area in 2023.

The accommodation allowances, which were introduced in 2022 by Government Regulations,<sup>121</sup> remained in force. In 2022, the Slovak Republic introduced the reimbursement of the allowance for the accommodation for beneficiaries of temporary protection directly to the accommodation providers, who are business entities; and another government regulation<sup>122</sup> introduced the allowance for accommodating a beneficiary of temporary protection for both natural and legal persons, who are not business entities.

These allowances remained in force even in 2023 and their validity has been extended until the end of March 2024.

<sup>119</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>120</sup> MH, <https://www.health.gov.sk/?UA-uznavanie-vzdelania>, last accessed on 4 December 2023.

<sup>121</sup> Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 100/2022 Coll. and subsequently 219/2022 Coll. and 321/2022 Coll. as amended by Regulation No. 415/2022 Coll.

<sup>122</sup> Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 99/2022 of 30 March 2022.

### 5.3.4. Access to Medical Care

There has been a significant change in the area of medical care provision to beneficiaries of temporary protection in 2023.

As of 1 January 2023, the MH has modified the scope of health care<sup>123</sup> provided to children and adolescents from birth to 18 years + 364 days who have been granted temporary protection in the Slovak Republic in connection with the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine in a sense that the scope of health care provided to these temporary protection beneficiaries is the same as public health insurance and includes preventive checks, urgent health care, medical procedures, as well as spa care.

At the same time, as of 1 September 2023, the scope of health care<sup>124</sup> provided to adults who have been granted temporary protection in the Slovak Republic in connection with the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine in a sense that the health care has been extended to cover almost the same scope of health care as public health insurance and it includes preventive checks, emergency health care and medical procedures.<sup>125</sup>

### 5.3.5. Access to Social Welfare Assistance

There have been no legislative developments in this area in 2023. Persons who have applied for or who have been granted temporary protection have been granted material need benefits under the same conditions as nationals of the Slovak Republic even in 2023.<sup>126</sup>

Implementation of some national projects aimed at helping the beneficiaries of temporary protection with disabilities and at helping them with better orientation in the social welfare system continued in 2023.

Addressing the needs of beneficiaries of temporary protection with severe disabilities, streamlining the provision of targeted and continuous assistance to them, as well as facilitating their integration into the society was made possible through the National Project (NP) called *“Support for the needs of persons with severe disabilities in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine”*,<sup>127</sup> implemented under the Operational Programme Human Resources (OPHR). Within the scope of this NP, a financial contribution is provided to persons granted special protection in order to address the needs arising from their severe disabilities. These were persons who had left Ukraine due to the armed conflict there and were staying in the Slovak Republic, and the Slovak Republic was granting temporary protection to them or the granting of temporary protection to them has ceased due to the fact they applied for an asylum or subsidiary protection or due to their acquisition of temporary residence. The financial contribution was provided to persons living in a home environment and the severity of their disability was assessed by the competent labour offices by means of a questionnaire based on the WHODAS 2.0 tool, which is a standardised way

of assessing health and disability of persons.<sup>128</sup>

Assistance with the integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection into the society has been supported by the OPHR National Project (NP) entitled *“Counselling in the field of social assistance and support for refugees”*,<sup>129</sup> under which individual counselling was used to ensure the provision of basic information needed for the beneficiaries’ better orientation in the system of provision of benefits in material need, subsidies and state social welfare benefits and allowances to citizens of Ukraine who were in a difficult financial and social situation. In addition to counselling, the beneficiaries of temporary protection also received assistance with administrative tasks, e.g. assistance in filling in application forms for material need benefits and state social welfare benefits and allowances, application forms for humanitarian aid subsidies for persons with disabilities, etc.<sup>130</sup>

Within the scope of the 12th Revision of the Human Resources Operational Programme, which was prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, a new priority axis was added: CARE ESF/ERDF. The activities included in this specific objective responded to developments in selected areas of social and economic life resulting from the war in Ukraine. Following activities were supported in the area of social welfare in 2023:

- ensuring comprehensive care provision and increasing the availability of foster care facilities for children from Ukraine;
- preventing the failing of families of beneficiaries of temporary protection in caring for their children and the subsequent emergence, deepening and recurrence of child-related crisis situations;
- ensuring smooth integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection, including persons with disabilities, into the host society.<sup>131</sup>

### 5.3.6. Access to Education

Compliance with the compulsory pre-primary education for 5-year-old children granted temporary protection and compulsory school attendance for students from 6 to 16 years of age who have been granted temporary protection remained voluntary in the Slovak Republic in 2023.<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, pursuant to Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on subsidies within the competence of the MLSAF, as subsequently amended, even in 2023 it was possible to provide a subsidy to support the child’s dietary habits and a subsidy to support the child’s education to children attending a kindergarten or a primary school, with the aim of supporting children’s school attendance and reducing the financial burden on the parents of these children. The conditions for the provision of these subsidies have already been modified in 2022, so that the subsidies can also be provided to children from Ukraine.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Pursuant to Section 2, Section 3 and Section 7 of Act No. 577/2004 on the scope of health care reimbursed under public health insurance and on reimbursement for services related to the provision of health care.

<sup>124</sup> Pursuant to Section 2 and Section 3 of Act No. 577/2004 on the scope of health care reimbursed under public health insurance and on reimbursement for services related to the provision of health care.

<sup>125</sup> Information provided by the MH, MO MI and IOM.

<sup>126</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>127</sup> [www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/Opis\\_NP\\_ZZP\\_UA.pdf](http://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/Opis_NP_ZZP_UA.pdf) (downloaded on 25 January 2024)

<sup>128</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>129</sup> COLSAF, [www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/NP\\_PPU\\_opis.pdf](http://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/NP_PPU_opis.pdf), last accessed on 25 January 2024. The project was implemented from May 2022 to December 2023.

<sup>130</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>131</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>132</sup> Information provided by the MESRY.

<sup>133</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.



A number of measures were adopted in the course of 2023 with the aim to promote the integration of children of beneficiaries of temporary protection in schools and to support the education system in this regard, such as, e.g.:

- Minors' access to education was supported by the OPHR NP entitled *"Support for the inclusion of children and students in the context of the war in Ukraine"*,<sup>134</sup> which aimed to ensure access to education for children and students through the provision of the allowance for education of children and students from Ukraine who are beneficiaries of temporary protection in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools;<sup>135</sup>
- In the course of 2023, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic provided funding to self-governing regions for secondary schools under their founding authority, in order to support the inclusion of children and students from Ukraine who are applicants for temporary protection or who have been granted temporary protection in the Slovak Republic and who have been enrolled in schools here. The funds were allocated to the schools concerned according to the number of pupils from Ukraine attending the given school.<sup>136</sup>

There have been no developments concerning access to education for adults in 2023.

### 5.3.7. Unaccompanied Minors

There have been no developments concerning care for unaccompanied minors regarding beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine in 2023.

In 2023, support for the implementation of measures of socio-legal protection of children and social guardianship for UAMs from Ukraine in Centres for Children and Families (CCFs) continued to be implemented through the national project entitled *"Support for the Implementation of Measures for the Socio-legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship for Unaccompanied Minors and Children from Ukraine, Their Parents and Other Persons Responsible for the Care of the Child"*, implemented under OPHR.<sup>137</sup> Within the project, provision of care for UAMs was comprehensively ensured in state and non-state Children and Family Centres, i.e. housing, meals, care activities, personal equipment, health care, nursing care (in case of UAMs with disabilities from Ukraine), compulsory school attendance, vocational training, Slovak language courses, as well as psychological help and psychological and social counselling were provided to the UAMs. Activities were mainly aimed at crisis intervention, post-traumatic assistance and family reunification (in compliance with all child trafficking preventing measures).<sup>138</sup>

In the period of years 2022-2023, training activities aimed at ensuring awareness and training of relevant authorities working with children – beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine were conducted in cooperation with UNICEF. The activities, which were available for the staff of SPCSG and CCF authorities, focused on:

- trafficking in human beings (practical training of methods for identification of victims and sensitive communication with children) - the activities were attended by staff members of the impacted labour offices on the border with Ukraine and of the Central Office of Labour who were providing emergency services;
- expert methods applicable in working with children from Ukraine for staff members of relevant SPCSG bodies, counselling and psychological centres, centres for children and families and the Central Office of Labour.<sup>139</sup>

After the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, The Memorandum of Cooperation ("Letter of Exchange") between the MLSAF and UNICEF was signed in May 2022 and declared the areas of cooperation of these entities. It concerned the specific material aid provided by UNICEF (indirect financial aid provided directly to the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Children and Family Centres or the Ministry), aimed at supporting the exercise of rights and needs of children from Ukraine (children residing in the Slovak Republic with their own parent/parents/other legal representatives appointed by the Ukrainian authorities, UAMs from Ukraine and the "non-separated" children, whose legal representative is not present in the Slovak Republic, but to whom the Slovak courts appointed other close person as a guardian). In accordance with the Letter of Exchange, inter alia, the following was also included in cooperation in 2023:

- search for, recruitment, training of and support of the "temporary" families for UAMs;
- immediate and long-term psychological support for Ukrainian families with children;
- personnel capacity building: communication techniques used with refugee children, basic psychological and social support, drafting of relevant guidelines/standards in order to set a unified approach;
- the creation of informational materials for children, women and families about social and legal protection of children and social guardianship and children's rights;
- support for interpreting and help with costs for interpreting in order to improve the accessibility of services in the CCFs for the UAMs;
- the provision of ICT to support inclusion in the CCFs (to support the contact of Ukrainian children with their families in Ukraine).<sup>140</sup>

## 5.4. Measures Taken Outside of the Temporary Protection Directive Implementation Framework

Right from the beginning of the war, local governmental authorities have played an important role in working with beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine. Even in 2023, their activities in this area were supported by the NP implemented under the scope of OPHR called *"Helping people from Ukraine with their entry and integration into the Slovak Republic - Local Government"*.<sup>141</sup> Local governments facilitated general information and counselling, particularly in areas related to employment, education, health care, housing, social welfare or exercising of legal rights in general; they provided information, material aid and food, initial psychological and social support and help with orientation in the field of health care, housing, social welfare, culture, sport or

<sup>134</sup> MLSAF, Riadenie a implementácia programov EÚ [Management and Implementation of EU Programmes], CARE-ESF - MPSVR SR, last accessed on 25 January 2024. The project was implemented from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

<sup>135</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>136</sup> Information provided by SK8.

<sup>137</sup> COLSAF, [www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/Opis\\_NP\\_Podpora\\_vykonu\\_opatreni\\_SPODaSK\\_pre\\_MBS\\_a\\_deti\\_z\\_Ukrajiny\\_a\\_ich\\_rodicov\\_a\\_ine\\_osoby\\_zodpovedne\\_za\\_starostlivosť\\_o\\_dieta.pdf](http://www.upsvr.gov.sk/buxus/docs/SSVaR/Opis_NP_Podpora_vykonu_opatreni_SPODaSK_pre_MBS_a_deti_z_Ukrajiny_a_ich_rodicov_a_ine_osoby_zodpovedne_za_starostlivosť_o_dieta.pdf), last accessed on 25 January 2024. The project was implemented from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023.

<sup>138</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>139</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>140</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>141</sup> Implementation Agency of the MLSAF, <https://ia.gov.sk/np-pomoc-osobam-z-ukrajiny-pri-ich-vstupe-a-integracii-na-uzemi-sr-samosprava/zakladne-informacie/index.html?csrt=13736062179705595451>, last accessed on 15 February 2023. The project was implemented from February 2022 to December 2023.

the exercising of legal rights in general. Moreover, community-based activities and programmes, information and awareness-raising activities aimed at the general public and the provision of mentoring, supervision and methodological support activities were organised, too.<sup>142</sup>

National project entitled *"Prevention of the emergence of crisis situations during the emergency situation caused by the war in Ukraine"*<sup>143</sup> also helped to promote active integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine into the Slovak society, helping to prevent the emergence of crisis situations and ensure prevention in the form of monitoring, data collection, identification of relevant cases and best practices, mentoring and presentations in the regions. During the project implementation phase, cooperation was established with providers of social services, self-governing regions, local self-governments, Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and, in particular, with their Departments of Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship, with CCFs and with accommodation providers in all regions. Moreover, cooperation was also focused on community-based services. Awareness-raising activities were implemented in the form of direct presentations delivered in the field across the Slovak Republic by the implementation team. Information, data and insights were also collected during the implementation phase, to serve as a basis for the creation of the methodological package tools.<sup>144</sup>

More detailed information on the measures and activities to combat trafficking in human beings in the context of the war in Ukraine can be found in Chapter 11.3.

## 5.5. Cooperation with International and Non-Governmental Organisations

Cooperating with state actors in various areas, international and non-governmental organisations played a significant role in assisting beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine even in 2023.

*The Regional Refugee Response Plan*<sup>145</sup> can be seen as an example of interagency cooperation of state authorities, non-governmental and international organisations in this area. As many as 28 institutions operating in the region participated in its creation (21 in 2022), of which 13 were non-governmental organisations, two were organisations led by refugees, and seven were the UN agencies. The Plan aims to support all the states neighbouring with Ukraine, including the Slovak Republic, in receiving refugees from Ukraine in a way which ensures their access to safety and international protection. The Plan also serves to ensure effective coordination of partners regionally and in individual countries. Attention is given to social cohesion, inclusion, and peace cohabitation. The Plan covers all of the basic needs – material support, health, education, means of subsistence, inclusion, logistics and telecommunications. Consultations and preparatory work on a similar plan for 2023 commenced in the autumn of 2023.

Thanks to the cooperation between international (UNHCR, UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations (Slovak Humanitarian Council, Human Rights League, Mareena, Nitra Community

142 Information provided by the MLSAF.

143 MLSAF, Pomoc pre odidevcov z Ukrajiny [Assistance for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine], <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/uvodna-stranka/koronavirus-pracovna-socialna-oblast/predchadzanie-krizovym-situaciám-vo-vztahu-k-občanom-ukrajiny-uzemi-sr/>, last accessed on 25 January 2024. The project was implemented from June 2022 to November 2023.

144 Information provided by the MLSAF.

145 UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99247>, last accessed on 26 June 2024.

Foundation), assistance to beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine was provided also in 2023 through the so-called Blue Dot<sup>146</sup> centres located in Bratislava, Dunajská Streda, Košice, Michalovce, Nitra and in the Trenčín Region. Blue Dots are support centres that provide important protection services as well as reliable information for beneficiaries of temporary protection. Their services include e.g. legal assistance and counselling, advice on access to public services and accommodation, psychosocial support, help with obtaining documents, temporary protection and/or with applying for asylum, applying for financial assistance, material assistance, medical first aid or assistance with family reunification.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continued to provide support to beneficiaries of temporary protection through its Migration Information Centre (MIC IOM). MIC IOM operated in all 8 regional cities of the Slovak Republic in 2023. Beneficiaries of temporary protection had access to legal and employment counselling, language courses, reimbursed retraining courses or education recognition grants.<sup>147</sup> Information was provided through the phone, website, various leaflets and face-to-face meetings. IOM was also active in the areas of assisted voluntary returns, prevention of trafficking, sexual exploitation and violence, it offered material assistance and support in the fields of housing and health care.

Human Rights League (HRL) cooperated with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and provided information and legal advice to beneficiaries of temporary protection. They organized information meetings in many cities in Slovakia, e.g. Bardejov, Humenné, Ilava, Michalovce, Modra, Prešov, Snina, Spišská Nová Ves, Trenčín and Trnava. The information was also disseminated via a dedicated hotline, e-mail, Facebook, webinars, etc.

In addition to the abovementioned activities, the NGOs provided assistance and counselling to beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine as part of their wider scope of activities for foreigners, building on the activities they had been providing in this area even before the war. The channels through which they provided assistance included fieldwork, websites or hotlines.

Non-governmental organisations were able to provide services for beneficiaries of temporary protection also thanks to the NP, implemented under the scope of OPHR, called *"Helping people from Ukraine with their entry and integration into the Slovak Republic - NGOs"*.<sup>148</sup> Provided in this way were the information, material aid and food, initial psychological and social support and help with orientation in the field of health care.<sup>149</sup>

146 UNHCR, Slovakia, <https://help.unhcr.org/slovakia/sk/services/modre-body/>, last accessed on 28 June 2024.

147 For more information see also Chapter 7: Integration and Inclusion. The provision of the assistance mentioned above takes place in the context of the broader assistance and support provided to all foreigners within the scope of activities offered by the MIC IOM.

148 Open Society Foundation, [https://eucare.osf.sites/\\_gl=1\\*~q0lJx\\*\\_ga=MTI2NDQ32xExN54zNzA3MzAzMzE3\\*\\_ga\\_MV5J1NSC8P\\*MTcwNzMWzMzNy4xLjAuMTcwNzMWzMzNy4wLjAuMA.\\*\\_ga\\_NNLGE7EPVX\\*MTcwNzMWzMzNy4xLjAuMTcwNzMWzMzNy4wLjAuMA](https://eucare.osf.sites/_gl=1*~q0lJx*_ga=MTI2NDQ32xExN54zNzA3MzAzMzE3*_ga_MV5J1NSC8P*MTcwNzMWzMzNy4xLjAuMTcwNzMWzMzNy4wLjAuMA.*_ga_NNLGE7EPVX*MTcwNzMWzMzNy4xLjAuMTcwNzMWzMzNy4wLjAuMA), last accessed on 15 February 2023. The project was implemented from February 2022 to December 2023.

149 Information provided by the MLSAF.



## Minors and Other Vulnerable Groups

### 6.1. Unaccompanied Minors

#### Statistics and Trends

The number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in the Slovak Republic grew in the period of years 2019 – 2023, but in 2023 there was a decline in the number of UAMs. The most significant increase occurred between 2021 (183 UAMs) and 2020 (79 UAMs), while such a large increase was not recorded even in 2022, when the overall number of foreigners in the Slovak Republic increased significantly as a result of the war in Ukraine. A total of 270 new UAMs<sup>150</sup> were placed in SPCSG facilities in the Slovak Republic in the course of 2022, while the year 2023, on the contrary, saw the decline to 179 new UAMs.<sup>151</sup> Unlike in 2022, the biggest group of UAMs was not from Ukraine (Ukrainians were the second largest group in 2023), but from Syria, similarly to the years before the war in Ukraine. Other UAMs were from Afghanistan, Türkiye and Egypt. It needs to be said that a vast majority of these UAMs will leave the Slovak Republic after some time. In 2023, the number of such departures was 170, which represents almost 95% (see Table 17).<sup>152</sup>

Fifteen UAMs applied for asylum in 2023, which represents only 6% of the total number of UAMs newly arriving in the SPCSG facilities (see Table 18). This, however, is an increase compared to

2022, when only 3% of the UAMs (nine applications) applied for asylum. In general, the number of UAMs who applied for asylum is low: 21 UAMs in 2021, 9 UAMs in 2020 and 29 UAMs in 2019.<sup>153</sup>

#### Policies, legislation and measures

There were no significant developments in relation to legislation or policies concerning unaccompanied minors in 2023.

#### Other measures

The IOM MIC continued to provide counselling and advisory services to UAMs in CCF Medzilaborce in 2023. The services included mainly individual legal counselling on the possibilities that the UAMs have – asylum application or other legal ways to stay in the Slovak Republic, family reunification or an assisted voluntary return. In this context, interpretation services and mediation meetings were also provided. Slovak language courses, educational trips and help with IT also continued to be provided. The IOM also organized a training session for the staff members of the CCFs receiving UAMs to raise awareness of the specificities of working with this particularly vulnerable group (best interest of the child, vulnerability of UAMs, trauma informed approach, etc.)<sup>154</sup>

Working meetings and methodological days were organised in 2023 for the staff of SPCSG authorities and CCFs in order to improve and enhance cooperation between the competent authorities working with UAMs.

In cooperation with the IOM and within the scope of EMN activities, a “*Networking and coordination of activities implemented by the entities caring for UAMs*” meeting of representatives of relevant stakeholders took place, where recommendations were adopted to improve the quality and efficiency of work at the identification stage. Within the scope of cooperation with the IOM, a “*Training Curriculum for Working with UAMs*” has been developed and the prepared training programme will be implemented in 2024.<sup>155</sup>

### 6.2. Other Vulnerable Groups

There were no significant developments in relation to policies or legislation in this area in 2023.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>150</sup> SPCSG authorities registered a total of 290 UAMs (of which 43 were girls) in 2022.

<sup>151</sup> SPCSG authorities registered a total of 245 UAMs (of which 21 were girls) in 2023.

<sup>152</sup> Information provided by the COLSAF.

<sup>153</sup> Information provided by the COLSAF.

<sup>154</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

<sup>155</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>156</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.





## Integration and Inclusion of Migrants

### 7.1. Integration of Third-Country Nationals

#### 7.1.1. Policies and Legislation

There were no significant developments in relation to legislation concerning integration and inclusion in 2023. No strategic policy documents were adopted in this area in 2023 either.

The *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic*<sup>157</sup> includes consideration of the introduction of compulsory school attendance for children of foreigners and the improvement of conditions for the education of adult foreigners, which will include the possibility for foreigners to study Slovak as a second language. Moreover, the Manifesto declares that the state will use a controlled migration policy to make sure only those foreigners who, in the highest degree, meet the security prerequisites of security can live in the Slovak Republic. On the other hand, it will provide such foreigners with support to ensure their smooth cultural and professional integration into life in the Slovak Republic, including assistance with the recognition of their professional qualifications, so that they can be the greatest possible contribution to the economy and society of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>157</sup> Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027, <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Dynamic/DocumentPreview.aspx?DocID=535376>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

#### 7.1.2. Measures to Support Integration

In 2023, several changes to support integration were introduced at the state level.

Based on the Act No. 182/2023 Coll. amending and supplementing Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (School Act) a new *State Educational Programme for Primary Education* was approved on 31 March 2023, which for the first time includes the educational standards for teaching Slovak as a second foreign language.

Under the new State Educational Programme, the individual educational needs of a pupil or a child who is a foreigner are considered in the implementation of the educational process and support measures are applied in the scope and intensity corresponding to their needs. Support measures can be aimed at:

- the application of a personalised and differentiated approach by adjusting the objectives and content of education and training, and of the methods, forms and approaches in education and training, including testing and assessment methods and forms;
- support for the acquisition of the state (Slovak) language and, at the same time, support for the acquisition of the language of instruction of the school, provided it is a language other than Slovak;
- the use of compensatory and special educational aids;
- identification of needs, obstacles and barriers in education and training through pedagogical diagnostics, orientation diagnostics, monitoring and risk assessment methods.<sup>158</sup>

Most of the provisions of the amendment to the School Act, i.e. Act No. 182/2023 Coll., entered into force on 1 September 2023. The provisions, inter alia,

- defines anew the concept of special educational needs (SEN) of children and pupils and provides for the development of a model of eligible support measures in education and training, including the system for their funding. According to this concept, if a child or pupil who does not have a disability, is not from a socially disadvantaged background, or is not gifted, but needs support measures to be fully included in a school or other educational facility, they are considered a child or pupil with special educational needs. Provisions concerning the support measures entered into force on 30 May 2023.
- expand the group of children or pupils with special educational needs to include the children or pupils who need support measures due to difficulties in the field of e.g. language, behaviour, cognitive abilities, motivation, emotionality, creativity or other skills. This arrangement can help children who are foreigners e.g. in external testing of 9th grade primary school pupils (T9), whereas if a pupil is granted a support measure because of their linguistic abilities, such pupil is recognized as a pupil with special educational needs and, according to Section 12 of Decree No. 223/2022 Coll. on Primary Schools, they are entitled to modifications of external testing, for example in the form of extending the time limit for solving tasks, using compensatory aids or changing the wording of some tasks. Practically, it means that pupils who are beneficiaries of temporary protection can also be identified as SEN pupils on the basis of the fact that they need support because of their language ability.
- The amendment also introduced a support measure which ensures the provision of a course

<sup>158</sup> Information provided by the MESRY.

of the school's language of instruction or the provision of other forms of support for the acquisition of the school's language of instruction, in particular to compensate for the language abilities or skills of the foreign pupils or children.<sup>159</sup>

At the project level, within the policy objective 4 (A More Social Europe) of the *Programme Slovakia* for the programming period 2021-2027,<sup>160</sup> the content of the specific objective i) was prepared within the priority Active Inclusion and Available Services aimed to support the integration of third-country nationals including migrants. The objective is to contribute to better integration of migrants into the society, make the social services system available to them and help them obtain the language competence, skills and experience needed for their successful integration into the labour market. Another objective is to make the domestic population more sensitive to migrants across communities, using the best practice examples.<sup>161</sup>

The integration support continued to be implemented mainly by project activities also in 2023. The projects focused on various integration areas and offered direct support to migrants, such as counselling, courses etc., or contributed to the creation of policies, measures or sensitive public discussion. Some integration activities were provided exclusively to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, while other projects provided services to all foreigners. These latter projects are the primary focus of this chapter (more detailed information on the support for the integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine can be found in Chapter 5).

### Labour and legal counselling

The IOM Migration Information Centre (MIC IOM) continued to provide their services in 2023. These were not only their counselling services in legal, labour and socio-cultural areas, but also other services to promote integration, such as language and vocational education of foreigners or protection of UAMs rights and support for their integration. The cooperation with migrant communities was also being enhanced. The work of IOM MIC was largely impacted by the increase in the number of foreigners due to the war in Ukraine also in 2023. Consultations about residence, family, employment, entrepreneurship, education or citizenship in the Slovak Republic continued to be provided in person, via phone or e-mail, while the number of consultations provided have increased by 11% as compared to previous year. In 2023, MIC IOM operated in all regional capitals of the Slovak Republic in order to ensure better accessibility of counselling and other services for even bigger group of foreigners.<sup>162</sup>

All the information is summarised in a comprehensive way on the IOM MIC website in Slovak, English, and Russian. Selected information continues to be available also in the Ukrainian language. In 2023, MIC IOM continued to organize online webinars on various topics concerning labour and family law.<sup>163</sup>

The MIC IOM's Visa Check<sup>164</sup> and Work Permit Check<sup>165</sup> web applications continued to be used actively in 2023. They provide information to foreigners from any country who want to come

the Slovak Republic and wish to find out if they need visa to enter the country and what kind of residence permit is required to study, work or engage in business in the Slovak Republic.

The MIC IOM continued to provide consultations about the labour market orientation, CV preparation, job interview preparation, communicating with employers, searching for job offers or arranging employment. They also provided financial support for client retraining courses and for their qualifications recognition.<sup>166</sup>

Free-of-charge legal assistance to migrants (counselling and representation) was provided by the Human Rights League (HRL), either pro bono or within the scope of their project focused on hate crimes victims and potential victims. The project activities included, inter alia, awareness raising information campaigns, meetings with self-government representatives in the regions and preparation of information leaflets in seven languages.<sup>167</sup>

The non-profit organisation Mareena also provided its services in 2023, focusing mainly on labour-related counselling.<sup>168</sup>

### Language education

The MIC IOM continued to provide Slovak language courses online and in person in 2023. In addition to Bratislava and Košice, the courses were available also in other towns and cities such as Trnava, Piešťany, Trenčín, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Žilina and Prešov. The courses were extended to include B1-B2 levels of language proficiency. The MIC IOM also provided specialised courses for Ukrainian medical professionals. At the same time, social and cultural orientation courses continued to be provided, usually as part of the language courses.

In 2023, Slovak language and conversation courses were provided mainly to the third-country nationals and other foreigners also by the Mareena civic association in Bratislava, Košice and Nitra. The courses covered beginner to advanced proficiency levels. Mareena also continued to offer socio-cultural orientation courses and courses aimed at comprehensive skills training for female migrants who are mothers and housewives, aiming to improve their employability and facilitate their entry into the labour market.<sup>169</sup>

### Community activities

The above mentioned organisations continued to develop community activities also in 2023.

Working together with cultural mediators, the MIC IOM organised various events aimed at promoting community engagement and creating conditions facilitating better understanding between the communities of foreigners and local communities. The number of such events organized in 2023 increased by 110% compared to 2022. Most of the activities were organized in cooperation with the Ukrainian, Mongolian, Iranian and Kazakh community.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Information provided by the MESRY.

<sup>160</sup> Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, Eurofondy [EU Funds], [https://www.eurofondy.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Program\\_Slovensko\\_SK\\_verzia-1.0-1.pdf](https://www.eurofondy.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Program_Slovensko_SK_verzia-1.0-1.pdf), last accessed on 11 January 2023.

<sup>161</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.

<sup>162</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia. Statistical data includes also the number of consultations related to the war in Ukraine.

<sup>163</sup> IOM Slovakia, IOM Slovakia - YouTube, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>164</sup> MIC IOM, Visa Check <https://mic.iom.sk/visacheck/en/home/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>165</sup> MIC IOM, Work Check, <https://www.mic.iom.sk/workcheck/sk/domov/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>166</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

<sup>167</sup> HRL, Čo robíme [Our Work] <https://www.hrl.sk/sk/co-robime/projekty/aktualne-projekty/pomoc-obetiam-trestnych-cinov-z-nenavisti>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>168</sup> Information provided by Mareena.

<sup>169</sup> Mareena, <https://mareena.sk/migra-moms>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>170</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

Mareena was also intensively involved in community activities organisation. Events were held in different parts of Slovakia in cooperation with local governments. In addition to the Ukrainian community, Mareena cooperated also with the Iranian, Indian or Mexican communities. They also organized educational activities in this field in 2023 and continued to develop its engagement programme, which promotes individual and community volunteering to assist in the process of integration of foreigners and working with communities.<sup>171</sup>

In 2023, the Centre for Research of Ethnicity and Culture (*Centrum pre výskum ethnicity a kultúry, CVEK*) published a handbook entitled *The Roadmap to the Integration of Refugees and Foreigners in Cities*, which is aimed primarily at local governments and other stakeholders active at the local level in the area of integration of foreigners and, in particular, refugees (beneficiaries of temporary protection) into local communities. The publication includes a number of activities, suggestions and measures to be implemented in all areas of integration.<sup>172</sup>

### 7.1.3. Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection

There were no developments in relation to legislation concerning beneficiaries of international protection in 2023.

Some project activities in this area continued in 2023.

The implementation of the *Rifugio* project by the Slovak Humanitarian Council continued in 2023. Under the project, clients – asylum or subsidiary protection beneficiaries – were provided social, labour and psychological counselling, legal and social assistance or the assistance in searching for accommodation, material or financial help, Slovak language teaching, and school integration.<sup>173</sup>

Increase in the number of beneficiaries of international protection using the services provided under the scope of this project was seen also in 2023. A total number of 307 beneficiaries, including children (239 in Bratislava, 68 in Košice) participated in the project activities. At the beginning of 2023, the project started using an internal online system for fast automated reporting and for managing individual client profiles, ensuring they are always up-to-date, which facilitated the day-to-day operation of the integration project.

Fourteen integration activities and 10 meetings aimed at increasing foreigners' socio-cultural orientation in Slovakia were organised within the scope of the project and SHC representatives participated in community events such as *Trnavský rínok* fair or the World Refugee Day in Bratislava and Košice. At the same time, they visited educational institutions where they engaged in awareness raising activities for students about refugees in Slovakia and in the world, actively participated in EUAA activities within the Civic Society Organisations Advisory Forum and used their experience with the implementation of relevant activities to help develop educational modules on the topics of inclusion and psychosocial support.

<sup>171</sup> Information provided by Mareena.

<sup>172</sup> CVEK, Publikácie [Publications], <https://cvek.sk/sprievodca-integraciou-ludi-na-uteku-a-cudzincov-v-mestach/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>173</sup> The project was implemented until 31 October 2023 and was financed from AMIF, <https://nasiutecenci.sk/rifugio/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

In August 2023, the *Rifugio* team visited several integration centres in Prague. Aiming to share best practices, the team also visited various integration centres across Slovakia.<sup>174</sup>

The HRL continued to work with IKEA to implement the three-year Skills for Employment project to support the work integration of international protection beneficiaries in Slovakia in 2023. The aim of the initiative is to help these people obtain new skills and work experience and thus improve their chances to find employment, either in IKEA or in other companies in Slovakia. The participants can also find better chances to integrate into their new host community. In the course of the project, 16 participants attended more than 400 hours of individual Slovak Language teaching focused on improving their knowledge of work-related topics and their preparation for a job interview. Moreover, an IKEA Training Day was organised for them where they could learn about open positions, company values and corporate culture. Project participants met with an employment expert from Profesia and received information on job searching. An online workshop was organised to provide basic information about the employment law and the basic rights and obligations of employees and employers in Slovakia. A training session was also organised, entitled "Together in a Slovak Team", where topics concerning cultural practices, unwritten rules, effective cooperation and adaptation to a new workplace were discussed. The project follows the IKEA's global commitment to support more than 2 500 refugees in 300 IKEA stores in 30 countries.<sup>175</sup>

## 7.2. Raising Awareness on Migration and Non-Discrimination

Many traditional activities in this area, extended to include beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine, continued also in 2023.

The MO MI conducted public awareness activities about the migration and asylum related topics using lectures at music festivals: Dobrý festival (Prešov) – 9-10 June 2022. Cooperation with the *Nová scéna* Theatre in Bratislava continued in 2023, within the scope of which the audience could see the staging of a play based on Janne Teller's "*Domov, kde je ten Tvoj?*" ("Home, where is yours?") script, followed by the discussion with the audience. The MO MI continued its cooperation with the Academy of the Police Force and the Secondary Vocational School of the Police Force.<sup>176</sup>

As part of its activities, Human Rights League organised *Fórum Integrácie* (Integration Forum) also in 2023. Topics discussed included the key role of local governments and international organisations in providing, arranging and financing assistance to people coming from Ukraine and generally in the integration of foreigners into society, as well as the cooperation of state institutions with NGOs in the investigation of war crimes committed in Ukraine.<sup>177</sup>

Other 2023 events aiming to approach the topic of migration and asylum in the Slovak Republic in a sensitive manner included, for example, the *Fjúžn* multigenre and multicultural festival organised by the Milan Šimečka Foundation. Every year it focuses on the topic of migration and foreigners living in the Slovak Republic. In 2023, the main topic was "Understanding".<sup>178</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>175</sup> Information provided by the HRL. Information available from IKEA, <https://www.ikea.com/sk/sk/this-is-ikea/community-engagement/ikea-pomaha-utecencom-s-uplatnenim-na-trhu-prace-pub2c2373f0>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>176</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>177</sup> HRL, Čo robíme [Our Work], <https://www.hrl.sk/sk/co-robime/vzdelavanie/forum-o-integracii-/forum-o-integracii-2023>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>178</sup> Festival Fjúžn, <https://festival.fjuzn.sk/index.php?lang=sk>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.



Thanks to cooperation of a number of non-governmental and international organisations and with support from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, the *Umbrella March* event was organised in Bratislava – Staré Mesto to mark the World Refugee Day. The march was followed by a cultural programme, discussions, expo and a variety of side events.<sup>179</sup>

Training courses for elementary and secondary school teachers organised by the Milan Šimečka Foundation continued also in 2023. The courses are entitled *Rozmanité školy* (Diverse Schools) and *Stories that Move* and they offer educational tools and methods that strengthen the skills of teachers and bring inspiration, suggesting how to approach topics of identity, discrimination, prejudices, and migration in the classroom.<sup>180</sup>

Človek v ohrození (People in Peril) organisation prepared the *One World* Documentary Film Festival, which features also migration issues, also in 2023. The festival also included the *One World in Schools* section, which involved 84 schools and 2 872 pupils. The *One World in Communities* section screened documentaries at 159 community events in various places in Slovakia.<sup>181</sup>

The People in Peril organisation also organised the 2nd edition of *The World Between the Lines* Festival of Journalism in 2023, which included the *Svet medzi riadkami* (World Between the Lines) podcast and the *Naša migrácia* (Our Migration) media special. The World Between the Lines podcast discusses, inter alia, also migration-related topics.<sup>182</sup>

Human Rights League relaunched its blog discussing, inter alia, various migration-related topics on SME daily webportal in 2023.<sup>183</sup>

EMN Slovakia also worked to raise awareness about migration in 2023. Throughout the year, it has organised a number of educational events at schools and universities, using the *Destination Europe* tool.<sup>184</sup> This tool allows participants to put themselves in the shoes of a minister, a commissioner, a mayor or an NGO representative and find out how their decisions can influence policymaking in the fields of migration and integration and how these decisions will affect the lives of migrants.<sup>185</sup>

The Destination Europe educational tool, as well as the EMN and the topic of migration in general were presented during the celebration of Europe Day in Bratislava, organised by the Representation of the EC in the Slovak Republic, the European Parliament Office in the Slovak Republic and the European Investment Bank.

To present information about migration, the EMN prepared videos and podcasts from the *9th EMN Educational Seminar on Migration: Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations*.<sup>186</sup> The podcasts are available at the EMN Slovakia podcast channel.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Facebook events, [https://www.facebook.com/events/986860439164294/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/events/986860439164294/?_rdr) or youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3V54WBpbY2E>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>180</sup> Milan Šimečka Foundation, Programy [Programmes], <https://nadaciamilanasimecku.sk/program/vediet-nestaci/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>181</sup> People in Peril, Aktuality [News], <https://clovekvoohrozeni.sk/co-sa-nam-podarilo-v-roku-2023/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>182</sup> People in Peril, Aktuality [News], <https://clovekvoohrozeni.sk/co-sa-nam-podarilo-v-roku-2023/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

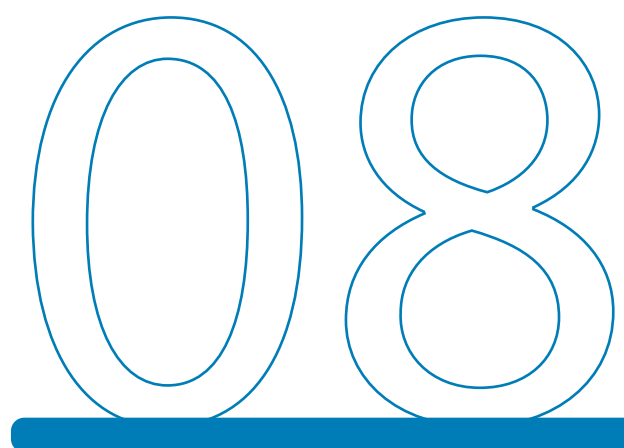
<sup>183</sup> SME Daily, Blog, <https://blog.sme.sk/ligazaludskeprava>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>184</sup> EMN Slovakia, Vzdelávanie o migrácii [Education on Migration], <https://www.emn.sk/sk/vzdelavanie-o-migracii.html>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>185</sup> EMN Slovakia, Novinky [News], <https://www.emn.sk/sk/novinky.html>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>186</sup> EMN Conference, Previous Seminars, <https://www.emnconference.sk/previous-seminars/2023/2023-programme-and-participants.html>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.

<sup>187</sup> Podbean, EMN Slovakia, <https://emnslovakia.podbean.com/>, last accessed on 5 July 2024.



## Citizenship and Statelessness

### 8.1. Statistics and Trends

Third-country nationals comprise more than two-thirds of all foreigners acquiring citizenship in Slovakia each year. In the period of the last more than five years, the number of third-country nationals who have been granted citizenship in the Slovak Republic has been continually rising, except for the “pandemic” year 2021, when the Slovak Republic granted the state citizenship to 480 third-country nationals. Between 2018 and 2022, state citizenship was granted to approximately 400 – 600 third-country nationals annually. In 2023, this number increased to 909. Similarly to previous years, most new citizens of the Slovak Republic came from Serbia and Ukraine to a lesser extent Slovak citizenship was granted also to the people from the USA, the United Kingdom and Russia (see Table 6 in Annex).

Citizenship of the Slovak Republic can be obtained also by citizens of non-EU countries to whom international protection was granted. In 2023, 22 asylum holders or subsidiary protection beneficiaries from Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Russia and Afghanistan acquired Slovak citizenship.

### Acquisition of citizenship of the Slovak Republic 2019 – 2023

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Citizenship of the Slovak Republic acquired by third-country nationals	546	626	480	515	909	<b>3 076</b>
Citizenship of the Slovak Republic acquired by all foreigners	913	916	707	797	1 102	<b>4 435</b>
Of which citizenship of the Slovak Republic granted to BIPs (asylum and subsidiary protection)	9	14	10	27	22	<b>78</b>

Source: MI.

Note: Since 2020, the total number has been accounting for the post-Brexit situation. This means that the total number includes the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## 8.2. Acquiring and Losing Citizenship

In 2023, there were no developments concerning the Act on Citizenship of the Slovak Republic, which was last amended in April 2022. The Slovak Republic did not adopt any legislative measures which would significantly influence the situation of stateless persons.<sup>188</sup>



## Borders, Visas, and Schengen

### 9.1. Statistics and Trends

In 2023, the number of issued Schengen visas increased slightly to 20 556, but (similarly to 2022, when 17 014 Schengen visas were issued) the numbers did not attain the level from the pre-pandemic era (see Table 5). While in 2019 there were 29 148 Schengen visas issued, due to the restricted mobility of people the number of Schengen visas issued in 2020 was only 7 240 and in 2021 it was 8 365.<sup>189</sup>

The pandemic had a similar effect on the number of national visas issued, too, as the number of national visas issued dropped from 5 640 in 2019 to 3 111 in 2020. Subsequent years saw a slight increase due to both the weakening of the pandemic and legislation changes adopted by the Slovak Republic. In 2021, 4 647 national visas were issued and in 2022 the number increased to 6 136 national visas issued. In 2022, the Slovak Republic began issuing national visas for highly qualified workers and bus and truck drivers, due to which the number of national visas issued exceeded that of 2019. The upward trend continued in 2023, when the list of categories of persons to whom national visas are issued was extended to include manual occupations in the industrial sector. The number of national visas issued increased to 8 951 in 2023 (see Table 5).<sup>190</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Act No. 40/1993 Coll. on the Citizenship of the Slovak Republic, as amended. Information provided by the DFEA MIO (via DSCRO MI).

<sup>189</sup> Information provided by the MFEA and MI.

<sup>190</sup> Information provided by the MFEA and MI.

## 9.2. Border Control Policies and Measures

There were no developments in relation to legislation or policies concerning internal or external border control in the Slovak Republic in 2023.

In the light of the growing pressure caused by irregular migration, the Slovak Republic temporarily reinstated internal border controls in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code)<sup>191</sup> and with the Act on Residence of Foreigners<sup>192</sup> as follows:

- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 156 of 26 April 2023 temporarily reinstating border controls at the internal borders of the Slovak Republic (from 24 May to 8 June 2023);
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 388 of 4 October 2023 temporarily reinstating border controls at the internal border of the Slovak Republic with Hungary (from 5 October to 14 October 2023);
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 395 of 11 October 2023 extending the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the internal border of the Slovak Republic with Hungary (from 15 October to 3 November 2023);
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 426 of 2 November 2023 extending the temporary reintroduction of controls at the internal border of the Slovak Republic with Hungary (from 4 November to 23 November 2023);
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 434 of 20 November 2023 temporarily reinstating border controls at the internal border of the Slovak Republic with Hungary (from 24 November to 23 December 2023);
- Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 461 of 6 December 2023 extending the temporary reintroduction of controls at the internal border of the Slovak Republic with Hungary (from 24 December to 22 January 2023).<sup>193</sup>

In compliance with the *National Strategy of Integrated Border Management for 2019 – 2022*,<sup>194</sup> several projects continued to be implemented in the Slovak Republic in 2023<sup>195</sup> aiming to upgrade technical equipment and improve automation of border controls. In particular, these were the projects focused on the acquisition of an ABC gate for automated border control of EU citizens crossing the external border of the Slovak Republic at M. R. Štefánik airport in Bratislava, exchanging of technical equipment for documents examining, renewal of technical equipment for the second and third lines of document checks, renewal of the technical and hardware equipment within the National Visa Information System (N-VIS) and Central Query Console (CQC), modernising and renewing hardware equipment of the national SIS II part, acquisition of vehicles or thermal cameras for border surveillance, etc. In 2023, the implementation of projects aimed at the visa access digitisation concerning the introduction of the digital seal, the renewal of the camera system for border surveillance at the external EU border, the development and implementation of the entry/exit system and the purchase of the off-road and on-road vehicles have been launched and completed.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code).

<sup>192</sup> Act No. 404/2011 on Residence of Foreigners.

<sup>193</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>194</sup> Behúňová, K., Mészárosová, S., Oboňová, S. Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Slovak Republic 2019 (2020), <https://www.emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocnne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle/item/563-vyrocnna-sprava-o-migracii-a-azyle-za-rok-2019.html>, last accessed on 11 June 2024.

<sup>195</sup> All the projects are funded by the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa and were implemented in 2020 – 2022.

<sup>196</sup> Information provided by the FAD EPS MI.

## 9.3. Visa Policy

The Government of the Slovak Republic approved Regulations No. 113/2023 Coll. and No. 383/2023 Coll. on the Interest of the Slovak Republic to grant a national visa to selected groups of third-country nationals to whom national visas started to be issued instead of residence permits. These were workers in manual occupations needed by the expanding automotive industry and bus and truck drivers from selected countries.<sup>197</sup> Further information can be found in Chapter 3.

<sup>197</sup> Information provided by the MLSAF.



# 10

## Irregular Migration

### 10.1. Statistics and Trends

Between 2019 – 2021, the Slovak Republic has been recording decreasing trend in irregular migration: the overall irregular migration has decreased from 2 190 persons in 2019 to 1 769 persons in 2021. A more significant decrease was recorded mainly in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (1 295 persons). However, in 2022, there was a significant increase of irregular migration due to significant pressure of secondary transit migration along the Western Balkan route and the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls by the Czech Republic and Austria at the sections of their borders neighbouring with the Slovak Republic in September 2022. In 2022, the irregular migration thus increased to 11 791 persons. An even more significant increase occurred in 2023, when, yet again as a result of a huge increase in secondary transit migration, total irregular migration numbers increased to 47 610 persons, of which more than 97% was secondary transit migration (see Table 8).<sup>198</sup>

As concerns irregular migration, the Slovak Republic distinguishes two migration situations or statistical categories: unauthorized residence, which includes secondary transit migration (98.6% share) and unauthorized crossing of the state border (1.4% share). A year-on-year increase has been recorded in both categories: unauthorized residence by 317% (increase from 11 242 to 46 932 cases) and unauthorized state border crossing by 23% (increase from 549 to 678).

<sup>198</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

In the unauthorized residence category (including secondary transit migration) citizens of Syria were most represented (95.7%). In the unauthorized state border crossing category, citizens of Ukraine were the most prominent group (95.6%). These were mostly men trying to avoid conscription due to the mobilisation declared in Ukraine as a result of the war. On the other hand, the number of detained third-country nationals of non-Ukrainian origin decreased, as the worsened situation in Ukraine discouraged them from using Ukraine as an entry country into the EU and using this migration route (see Table 8).<sup>199</sup>

### 10.2. Developments in Policies and Legislation to Prevent and Tackle Irregular Migration

There were no developments in relation to legislation in this area in 2023.

The *Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2023-2027*<sup>200</sup> states in this regard that the competent authorities will work with partners abroad and strictly monitor and assess risks in other countries outside of the European Union that could lead to an increase in migration flows or other risks (movement of dangerous persons, transmission of diseases, transport of hazardous substances) for the countries in the European Union, including the Slovak Republic. The Manifesto also states that the government will call for strong action taken by the whole of the European Union against illegal migration and, in particular, against those cases where external forces use migration as a tool of pressure against the European Union.

### 10.3. Prevention of Irregular Migration

#### Monitoring and identification of irregular migration routes

In 2023, migrants were entering the territory of the Slovak Republic via the internal border with Hungary with the intention to continue towards Germany via the Czech Republic, Austria or Poland, having previously crossed the external Schengen border twice (the first time via the Eastern Mediterranean route and the second time via the Hungarian section of the EU external border with Serbia).

The tactics adopted by groups of smugglers (which monitor the situation in transit countries along the route and adapt the choice of route and their modus operandi accordingly) and their choice of the most appropriate and least risky route from Hungary had a major impact on the choice to use the Slovak Republic as a transit country. Instructed by the smugglers, the migrants (most of them without ID documents and in 97% of cases declaring Syrian nationality) sought the police after entering the Slovak Republic, as they knew they were not at risk of detention or administrative expulsion. At the same time, by doing so they obtained a certificate of remaining which, although not a residence permit, allowed them to continue their safe passage to the country of destination without the threat of being returned to Hungary, their country of origin or to the transit non-EU countries.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>200</sup> Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2023-2027, <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Dynamic/DocumentPreview.aspx?DocID=535376>, last accessed on 11 June 2024.

<sup>201</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

In this context, intelligence was exchanged with neighbouring EU Member States on a weekly basis during 2023, at the level of both the analytical and operational units. Intensive exchange of information was also actively pursued in other formats, e.g. through Frontex Analytical Network or the Blueprint network established within the European Commission (including intensified communication and bilateral online meetings with Frontex and DG Home).

Apart from statistical data, the Slovak Republic also provided the Blueprint network and Frontex with analytical, qualitative and contextualised information on transit migration (on a weekly, monthly and ad-hoc basis), also pointing out certain shortcomings in the protection of the external Schengen border and the absence of a more comprehensive analysis of transit migration flows within Schengen in the analytical products of relevant EU agencies. The results of these efforts were later translated into analytical products produced by said agencies.<sup>202</sup>

### Combating smuggling

The enormous irregular migration pressure in 2023 has brought an excessive workload for the operatives of the competent BBFP PF P department. For this reason, at the end of 2022, with a continuation in 2023, a measure was adopted to deploy district and regional criminal service officers of the Police Force to cases of apprehended irregular migrants with smugglers when the human resources of the competent BBFP PF P departments are not available to be deployed.<sup>203</sup>

In 2023, the Slovak Republic was a member of a joint investigation team whose aim was to uncover and prosecute an organised smugglers ring operating along the Western Balkans route.<sup>204</sup>

The decrease in transit migration was recorded by the Slovak Republic only in autumn 2023. This was mainly due to the robust measures taken by the Serbian authorities at the Serbian - Hungarian border, as well as due to the performance of a number of measures taken by the Slovak Republic and other EU Member States at the internal EU borders or the announcement thereof.<sup>205</sup>

In 2023, there were 2 462 irregular migrants documented as smuggled in investigation files, and such acts were committed in the previous years, too. This represents a decrease compared with 2022 when 3 489 such cases were documented. Of the 2 462 migrants apprehended in 2023, 1 686 had entered the Slovak Republic illegally with the help of smugglers. The most numerous among these migrants were citizens of Syria (73%) (see Table 9). Despite the overall increase in irregular migration, there has been a decrease in this category, as, compared to the previous year, the modus operandi of migrants crossing the Slovak - Hungarian border changed significantly since the beginning of 2023. Migrants most frequently crossed the border on foot (83.5%), i.e. without the direct participation of smugglers. Therefore, the facts of the criminal offence of smuggling as defined by Section 355 of the Criminal Code were not fulfilled.<sup>206</sup>

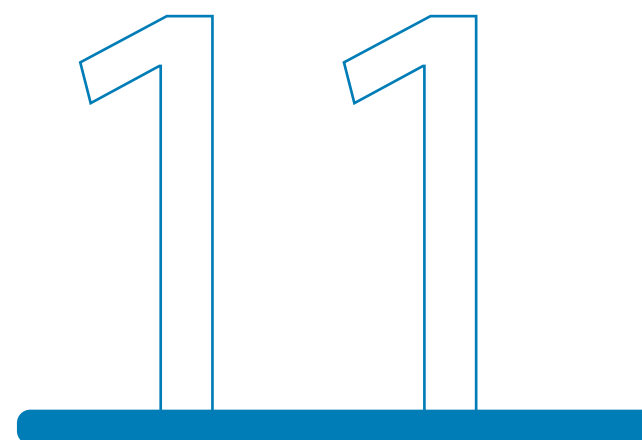
<sup>202</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>203</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>204</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>205</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>206</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.



## Trafficking in Human Beings

### 11.1. Statistics and Trends

Sexual and labour exploitation has remained the most frequent purpose of trafficking in the last five years.

The number of foreigners who were identified as human trafficking victims in the Slovak Republic is very low in the long term. Similarly to 2022, three foreigners were identified as victims, including one person from a non-EU country in 2023 (see Table 19) out of the total of 44 identified victims. None of the cases concerned the ongoing war in Ukraine or the Western Balkans irregular migration route into the EU. The foreigners were to be exploited for the purpose of forced labour and forced begging in the Slovak Republic. One of the foreign victims who has entered the assistance programme was also formally identified by the Police. The number of victims who have a formal status of victims in criminal proceedings and who are also provided assistance has been very low in the Slovak Republic in the long term – we can only speak of a few individuals per year.

As concerns the crime of trafficking in human beings, the Slovak Republic filed charges against 18 persons in 12 cases and convicted 18 persons of committing this crime in 2023 (see Table 20).<sup>207</sup> Like in the past, in most cases personal contacts were used to recruit the victims.

<sup>207</sup> Information provided by the NUCIM BBFP PF P and DFEA MIO.

More detailed information on relevant trends and statistics can be found in the Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023 (*Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v Slovenskej republike za rok 2023*), which described concrete activities and measures taken in the area of trafficking in human beings.<sup>208</sup>

## 11.2. Policies, Legislation and International Monitoring

In October 2023, the Slovak Republic approved the *National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2024 – 2028*, which also concerns migration and foreigners as cross-cutting topics. The document contains an action plan with 19 measures as well as an implementation strategy.<sup>209</sup> The programme addresses, inter alia, a new area in the context of the Slovak Republic – the setting up of systemic state policies to reduce the demand for goods and services in which trafficking in human beings victims may have been exploited.

The updated Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency context of the mass arrival of people from Ukraine<sup>210</sup>, valid until December 2023, included increased attention to and protection of persons with specific needs, in particular UAMs, people with disabilities and female victims of trafficking in human beings and/or sexual and gender-based violence as one of its strategic objectives (see Chapter 5.2).<sup>211</sup>

The Slovak Republic prepared and published the *Analysis of Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation in 2023*, with the aim to help to determine the dividing line between the issue of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation poor working conditions.<sup>212</sup>

Effective as of 1 February 2023, the information centres for victims of crime were included in the organisational structure of the MI in order to provide systemic services for victims of crime, including trafficking in human beings victims. At the same time, the Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention<sup>213</sup> was deleted from the same law and, as of 1 December 2023, it was incorporated as a department under the Crime Prevention Department (CPD) of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. The CPD was separated from the Office of the Minister of Interior and established as a separate department of the Ministry of Interior. The Crime Prevention Department was transferred to the 1st State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, who also acts as the National Coordinator in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.<sup>214 215</sup>

208 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

209 Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Rokovania vlády [Government meetings], <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28861/1>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

210 Contingency Plan of the Slovak Republic for dealing with the emergency situation in the context of the mass arrival of people from Ukraine into the territory of the Slovak Republic caused by the escalation of the armed conflict in the territory of Ukraine for the period from October 2022 to March 2023.

211 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

212 MI, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=485885>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

213 MI, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=485885>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

214 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

215 Both changes were introduced on the basis of the Act No. 458/2022 amending Act No. 583/2008 Coll. on the prevention of crime

In its latest *Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023*, the Slovak Republic lists the most important challenges that should be given intensive attention in the coming years:

- “Unification and formalization of the procedures applied by the structures involved in the victim referral process within the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), while maintaining the promptness of referral to support systems, with the consistent application of the non-discrimination system. Consideration for the changes in the framework of the European Reference Mechanism impacting the national Referral Mechanism of the Slovak Republic.
- Harmonisation and formalisation of the procedures applied by the structures involved in the referral of victims to support systems, while consistently applying the principle of non-discrimination.
- Modification of legislation in favour of adequate and just punishment of perpetrators by increasing the level of the basic and qualified offence of trafficking in human beings, with a view to minimising the imposition of suspended prison sentences through the use of the possibility of extraordinary reductions in prison sentences, as well as the creation of possibilities for the effective compensation of victims.
- Adoption of legislative measures aimed at reducing the demand for the services of victims of all forms of exploitation when they are knowingly exploited.
- Improving the identification of victims among foreign nationals who may be intercepted in transit or occurring in various legal or illegal situations on the territory of the Slovak Republic.
- Consistent application of criminal law provisions with a view to imposing an adequate and proportionate punishment on the perpetrators.
- Seeking solutions to prevent the concealment of the employment relationship, as well as solutions to penalise the entities that carry out employment for remuneration and temporary employment agencies when they deliberately exploit their clients.”<sup>216</sup>

### International monitoring

In November 2023, the Slovak Republic sent the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) its opinion concerning their Questionnaire on the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, in the framework of the fourth evaluation round focusing on vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings. This was followed by the GRETA expert group evaluation visit to be carried out in the Slovak Republic from 26 February to 1 March 2024.<sup>217</sup>

In the *Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP), which is issued annually by the US Department of State, the Slovak Republic remained a Tier 2 country in the meeting of the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking in 2023. The Slovak Republic has been Tier 2 since 2019, the reasons being the same – mainly the insufficient identification of victims and the low number of convicted traffickers (who are often given conditional sentences without imprisonment), low rate of utilization of tools for aiding and compensating victims, and formal identification of vic-

and other antisocial activities and on the amendment to certain acts, as subsequently amended of 29 November 2022.

216 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

217 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.



tims being solely the competence of the Police.<sup>218</sup>

### 11.3. Interinstitutional and International Cooperation

To implement the Regional Response Plan, UNHCR established several thematic working groups and sub-groups in the Slovak Republic in 2022 (see Chapter 2.2) including the Anti-Trafficking Task Force. The sub-group was led by IOM Slovakia also in 2023 and its members included and included representatives of state institutions, non-governmental and international organizations.<sup>219</sup>

The BBFP PF P's national project, implemented under the scope of Internal Security Fund and entitled *Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Application of Tools for its Prevention*, which started in 2019, ended at the end of 2023. The aim of the project was to increase the efficiency of the fight against organised crime, and especially cross-border crime such as trafficking in human beings and promote and support cooperation of states in order to combat trafficking in human beings. During two coordination and working meetings NUCIM BBFP PF P officers (the only unit within the Slovak Police Force with the competence to investigate the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings) with their counterparts from Serbia and Germany. Two special interrogation rooms were built at the NUCIM BBFP PF P departments in Bratislava and Humenné (adapted for the interrogation of particularly vulnerable victims), equipment was purchased for the operational activities connected with trafficking in human beings detection (photo-traps, mini car video cameras, cameras, binoculars for covert observation, thermal imaging devices, laptops, etc.) and language courses were organised for NUCIM BBFP PF P officers.

The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic participated in the research project called *Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking*. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic and the consortium of institutions AC-CENDO - *Centrum pre vedu a výzkum, z.ú.* and Charles University. The aim of the project is to ensure comprehensive approach to prevention and combating child trafficking through an expert study and the development of a methodology for identifying and providing assistance to child victims, development of an educational programme and of a standard prevention-oriented project.<sup>220</sup>

#### Cooperation Among Institutions in the Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic continued to perform regular checks of business entities to detect illegal work and illegal employment and to identify potential victims of human trafficking (see Chapter 3) also in 2023. The checks were conducted jointly by the BBFP PF P and Labour Inspectorates or COLSAF authorities. No trafficking in human beings victim has been identified during these checks.

In 2023, apart from other activities, the Slovak Republic built its capacity in the field of combating trafficking in human beings by organising seminars and trainings for selected professional groups who encounter (potential) victims of trafficking:

- Two international workshops were organised in cooperation with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The first, in February 2023, focused on the recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on the need to strengthen prevention in the context of mass migration flows and in the context of the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. The second workshop, in November 2023, focused on unconditional access to services for victims.
- NUCIM BBFP PF P conducted training course for the officers from Border and Foreign Police Directorates in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Sobrance (a total of 46 officers trained), for cadets studying at the Police Force Academy in Bratislava (92 participants), online training on trafficking in human beings with a special focus on forced marriages for representatives of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, and a training course for the staff of the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior (6 staff members).
- Border and Foreign Police Directorate in Sobrance organised three trainings on trafficking in human beings in 2023, where two trainings were conducted in cooperation with UN agencies, namely the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The third training took place based on the order of the Director of the BFP Directorate Sobrance, under which 290 members of the Police Force were retrained during regular monthly meetings.
- IC MI conducted training for consular staff on qualified identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and familiarisation with the National Referral Mechanism to enable them to provide timely assistance. The centre also conducted training for hotel staff, diagnostic centre, labour inspectors and staff of social service facilities and self-governing regions to obtain basic skills needed for identification of trafficking in human beings, assistance to victims and the national referral mechanism.
- MO MI paid attention primarily to the prevention of trafficking in human beings among asylum seekers and to the training of the Office's staff on the subject in 2023. At the turn of 2023/2024, training of all adjudicators within the "Trafficking in Human Beings" module of the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), which specialises in the topic of trafficking in human beings among applicants for international protection, was conducted. The completion of the module and the retraining of all adjudicators was planned for March 2024.<sup>221</sup>

Trainings on the topic of prevention of trafficking in human beings and exploitation were also carried out by NGOs and international organisations IOM and UNHCR during 2023. Due to the high level of vulnerability of people coming from Ukraine, first contact workers, members of NGOs, volunteers, law enforcement agencies, etc. were trained again on the topic by the Ministry of Interior and IOM Slovakia.<sup>222</sup> Slovak Catholic Charity organised 14 training courses for (field) social workers, social work assistants and volunteers working for NGOs and local or regional charities.<sup>223</sup>

218 US Department of State, Reports, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/slovakia/>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

219 UNHCR, Opean Data Portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/working-group/378?sv=54&geo=10785>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

220 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

221 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

222 Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

223 MI, Situačná správa pre oblasť boja proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi v SR za rok 2023 [Situation Report on Human Trafficking in the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2024, <https://www.minv.sk/?informacne-centrum-na-boj-proti-obchodovaniu-s-ludmi-a-prevenciu-kriminality&subor=510446>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

## 11.4. Provision of Information and Assistance

Contracted by the MI, the Slovak Catholic Charity and Greek Catholic Charity provided help and support to victims of trafficking in human beings under the specialised Reintegration Programme for the Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. The Slovak Catholic Charity continued to operate the National free hotline for the victims of trafficking in human beings 0800 800 818. The information hotline on human trafficking and safe travel was also operated by the IOM Slovakia in 2023. Their staff answered phone and replied to e-mail queries about trafficking in human beings, requests to vet labour agencies or requests for information on training to prevent human trafficking. The organisations also provided reception and reintegration assistance to the victims.<sup>224</sup>

In addition to the distribution of various materials and trainings for other institutions, IOM Slovakia organized a total of 39 information events for a total of 823 people from Ukraine in 2023. These events focused on the topics of safe employment, recognition of potentially risky job offers and prevention of trafficking in human beings. IOM Slovakia also updated the *Safe Travel and Work Abroad* website on safe work and prevention of trafficking in human beings, which is available in Slovak, English and Ukrainian, as well as updating the SAFE app in seven languages.<sup>225</sup>

To sensitise the public to the issue of trafficking in human beings, the Slovak Republic used the Blue Heart campaign prepared in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in October 2023. The campaign was launched with a press conference and the lighting of the Grasalkovič (Presidential) Palace in Bratislava blue. The information campaign through the IC MI and MI profiles on social media lasted the entire month.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.

<sup>225</sup> IOM Slovensko, Safework, <https://bezpecnecestovanie.iom.sk/>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.

<sup>226</sup> Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/obchodovaniesludmi/>, last accessed on 8 July 2024.



## Return and Readmission

### 12.1. Statistics and Trends

The downward trend in forced returns continued in 2023, as there were 94 forced returns in 2022 and only 59 forced returns in 2023. The most significant decline occurred between 2022 and 2021, as the number of forced returns in 2021 was 298. This decline was caused mainly by the war in Ukraine. Between 2019 and 2021, Ukraine was the most frequent country of return while the citizens of Ukraine were among the top five nationalities most frequently using the forced returns. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, forced returns to Ukraine were almost completely stopped. Ukrainians are expelled almost exclusively on the basis of a criminal warrant or other substantive decision of a court following a sentence of expulsion issued on the grounds of committing a criminal offence in the Slovak Republic. However, in the event of enforcement of forced return and duration of the ban on entry into the Slovak Republic, these persons are allowed to enter the Slovak Republic in specified cases, after individual assessment of the case by police officers performing the border control.<sup>227</sup>

On the other hand, a significant increase has been noted in voluntary departures as compared with 2022: from 139 in 2022 to 205 in 2023. The growing trend could be seen already in 2021 – 2022, with 72 voluntary returns in 2021. Assisted voluntary returns decreased from 90 returns in 2022 to 50 returns in 2023. This was mainly caused by the fact that the AMIF-funded assisted

<sup>227</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

voluntary return project ended in May 2023. The year 2023 was the second year in which the Slovak Republic carried out returns also through Frontex.

Compared to the previous year, the total number of returns remained more or less at the same level, with 233 returns in 2022 and 264 returns in 2023 (see Table 12).<sup>228</sup>

## 12.2. Developments in Policies and Legislation

Effective as of 15 September 2023, the emergency situation declared on 11 March 2020 in connection with COVID-19 was revoked. After the revocation, return decisions started to be issued to certain groups of third-country nationals who had been unable to leave the Slovak Republic within the specified time limit. Foreigners who had enjoyed protection during the emergency situation have lost their protected status and could be subject to return decisions.

## 12.3. Forced Returns and Readmissions

Aiming to streamline the readmission process and within the scope of the project of electronic processing of readmission applications with countries which have signed a readmission agreement with the EU, the Slovak Republic has launched the RCMS (Readmission Case Management System) platform with Georgia in 2023.<sup>229</sup>

As in the previous years, the implementation of BBFP PF P's *Forced Return – AMIF III* project<sup>230</sup> continued in 2023. Its main objective was to improve the effectiveness of return operations management and ensure the sustainable, safe and dignified return of third-country nationals with the aim of contributing to the effective management of migration flows. The project activities were mainly operative in nature (ensuring transport, flight tickets, accommodation, replacement of travel documents, interpreting, expert assessment of age etc.).

The Slovak Humanitarian Council non-governmental organisation continued to implement the KOMPAS III project in 2023, which primarily focused on the provision of dignified living conditions to persons placed in the BBFP PF P specialized facilities or 60 days following their release from these facilities, with a special emphasis on vulnerable groups. The following activities were provided to the third-country nationals in PDCFs under the project: social and psychological counselling, leisure time activities and education (Slovak language and cultural orientation courses), supplementary health care, material assistance, and translations and interpreting. Third-country nationals released from PDCFs received assistance for 60 days following their release. This assistance included basic care (provision of basic needs for a dignified life, such as hygiene and sanitary items, necessary health care, food allowance, financial means for administrative costs, low threshold accommodation, travel expenses coverage, field social care) and was provided based on consultation and a favourable statement of the competent PDCF. The above activities contribute to an effective return process for these persons.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>228</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P and IOM Slovakia.

<sup>229</sup> Information provided by the BBFP PF P.

<sup>230</sup> The project follows the *Forced Return – AMIF II* programme implemented in 2017 – 2019, which was financed from the National AMIF programme and concluded on 31 October 2023.

<sup>231</sup> Pracros Girmanová, A., Ulrichová, N.: Responses to long-term irregularly staying migrants: practices and challenges – contribution of the Slovak Republic (2020) – EMN Study, IOM Slovakia, Bratislava.

## 12.4. Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continued to implement humane, dignified and financially effective returns of unsuccessful asylum seekers and foreigners without a residence permit to their country of origin within the scope of the *Voluntary Return and Reintegration in the Country of Origin*<sup>232</sup> project also in a part of 2023. The activities included comprehensive services provided under the programme: informing the target group and cooperating institutions about the programme, preparation and implementation of assisted voluntary returns to the countries of origin, and the provision of reintegration assistance to migrants following their return. The project ended on 31 May 2023 and assisted voluntary returns were subsequently executed only on the basis of the Cooperation Agreement between the International Organization for Migration and the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic on Assistance with the Return of Unsuccessful Asylum Applicants and Illegal Migrants to the Country of Origin concluded in 1998.

Similarly to 2022, the target group included also third-country nationals coming from Ukraine and staying in the Slovak Republic legally, who could benefit from the services of the programme also in 2023.

In total, 50 third-country nationals from non-EU Member States returned from the Slovak Republic to nine countries of origin with IOM assistance in 2023. The majority of these people went to Türkiye (35), Vietnam (4), Tunisia (3), Morocco (2) and North Macedonia (2). Assisted voluntary returns also took place to Iraq (1), Egypt (1) and Lebanon (1). One third-country national from the Russian Federation, who had fled the war in Ukraine, was assisted in returning to their country of origin.

IOM also provides assistance with reintegration upon the people's return to their country of origin. In 2023, such post-return reintegration assistance was provided to 10 persons from Vietnam, Türkiye and Libya.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>232</sup> The project was a natural continuation of the previous project entitled *Voluntary Return and Reintegration in the Country of Origin*. The project is funded by AMIF and the original planned implementation period was until 31 December 2021. Based on the decision of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the implementation period was prolonged until 31 May 2023.

<sup>233</sup> Information provided by IOM Slovakia.





# Migration and Development

The Slovak Republic did not adopt any policies or legislation with the specific aim of integrating the development aspect of migration into the country’s sectoral policies in the last five years. According to World Bank data, remittances (cash contributions) sent by migrants living in the Slovak Republic to support their families and communities in other countries around the world in 2023 amounted to almost half a billion Euro, or 539 169 834 USD (see Table 24). This is the highest volume of such remittances in the last five years. In the period 2020 – 2022, this amount declined most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>234</sup>

**Personal remittances sent by migrants from the Slovak Republic to other countries in 2019 – 2023**

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Personal remittances in USD	511 269 955	410 588 884	441 006 641.3	366 554 014.6	539 169 833.8

Source: World Bank.

234 World Bank, Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BM.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?end=2023&locations=SK&start=2010>, last accessed on 22 June 2024.

In 2023, the Slovak Republic reaffirmed its interest and aimed its activities and funding in the area of development and humanitarian aid to address global forced and/or irregular migration, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and climate change; and to provide support to the most vulnerable groups through various development cooperation instruments (e.g. grant projects, material humanitarian aid, financial contributions or asylum system development in transit countries).

## 13.1. Development Cooperation

*Focus of Bilateral Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2023*<sup>235</sup> identifies the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian military invasion in Ukraine and other neighbouring countries as one of the biggest challenges. The Slovak Republic reaffirmed its aim to address the causes of forced migration as close as possible to the countries of origin of asylum seekers so that refugees can find protection as close to home as possible, and, in addition to conflicts, it also quotes climate change as a cause of forced migration. Introducing multi-year strategic partnerships for the implementation of development projects continued to be a priority for the Slovak Republic also in 2023, with a new strategic partnership planned to be established in Moldova (previously there was only the 2022 partnership in Kenya).

The Slovak Republic intended to become more intensively involved in the implementation of EU development cooperation instruments through delegated cooperation and through the coordinated Team Europe initiatives. As part of Team Europe initiatives, in January 2023 SAIDC signed a contract with the European Commission and the Member States’ (France, Belgium, Germany) development agencies acting as implementing partners in the *Investing in Young Businesses in Africa - Supporting Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development (IYBA-SEED)* project, committing to direct implementation of project activities. The IYBA SEED project aims to improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the entrepreneurial environment in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Slovak Republic has also become a member of the core group of countries coordinating the Investing in Young Businesses in Africa (IYBA) programme<sup>236</sup>. Efforts to involve the business sector in development cooperation also continued in 2023.

In 2023, the validity of *the Medium-Term Development Cooperation Strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2019-2023* was extended by one year and the new medium-term strategy will be submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic for approval in the course of 2024. The Act on Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic has not been amended.<sup>237</sup>

The Slovak Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to use the study visits to exchange know-how on asylum and functioning of the asylum system. This cooperation started in 2021 and was later confirmed by the signing of *A Memorandum of Cooperation on Migration and Asylum between the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina of 17 September 2021*. The Slovak Republic funds this activity from its Official Development Assistance. In addition to the continuation of the established cooperation and exchange of experience in the field of social work, the joint activities also had an impact on the

235 Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation, *Zameranie dvojstrannej rozvojovej spolupráce SR na rok 2023* [Focus of Bilateral Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2023], 2023, <https://slovakaid.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/03-Zameranie-dvojstrannej-ODA-SR-2023.pdf>, last accessed on 22 June 2024.

236 European Commission, Policies, [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/investing-young-businesses-africa\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/investing-young-businesses-africa_en), last accessed on 22 June 2024.

237 Information provided by the MFEA.

academic community. The aim of one of the study trips to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was also attended by representatives of two Slovak universities, was to expand the academic offer in those areas of social studies whose graduates can potentially work in the field of migration and asylum. The possibility of implementing a bilateral social work project that would support the capacities of social service workers is unique for both partner countries, and, at the same time, it has the potential for expansion and involvement of further stakeholders in the future. The project also opens an opportunity for the representatives of the Slovak Republic to gain experience in the field of social work in migration in different than Slovak contexts.<sup>238</sup>

In 2023, the SAIDC continued collaborating with the Self-Help Africa organisation to implement the AgriFI programme KILIMO-VC segment under the EU's joint programming aimed at stabilizing and strengthening local communities, as well as preventing migration in East Africa. The programme contributes to reducing the food deficit and strengthens the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in Kenya. The supported component aims to improve the integration of the value chain of small farmers and shepherds by providing incentives for investment in the agri-food sector. By the end of 2023, € 15.5 million of the planned € 18.2 million was paid to the agribusinesses involved. The last instalment of the Slovak Republic amounting to € 312 500 will be paid in 2024.<sup>239</sup>

In 2023, the Government of the Slovak Republic funded the costs of a total of 394 scholarship holders, 142 of whom come from countries affected by armed conflicts or from countries of origin of forced migration. Scholarships were mainly provided to students from Ukraine (33 scholarship holders, Afghanistan – 27 scholarship holders, Syria – 23 scholarship holders, Palestine – 18 scholarship holders, Lebanon – 9 scholarship holders, Sudan – 8 scholarship holders, Ethiopia – 8 scholarship holders, etc.).<sup>240</sup>

## 13.2. Humanitarian Aid

The Slovak Republic actively contributed to the EU Trust Funds, which were established in response to the 2015 – 2016 refugee and migration crisis also in 2023. In accordance with the instalment plan, in 2023 the Slovak Republic contributed € 742 330 to the EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRiT).

The main bilateral recipient of the official humanitarian assistance of the Slovak Republic in 2023 was Ukraine. Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in February 2022, the value of assistance amounted to almost € 16 million, of which the sum of seven million Euro was donated in 2023. Thus, the Slovak Republic actively participated in addressing the causes and consequences of forced displacement, which is deepening globally also due to the impact of the war in Ukraine. The Slovak Republic continued to provide material humanitarian assistance to Ukraine in order to provide for the basic needs of vulnerable people affected by the war. In addition to this, the Slovak Republic was implementing nine humanitarian projects amounting to over € 2.3 million. Thanks to the SlovakAid projects, urgent needs for the people in need were provided, including food and sanitary packages, medical care and psychological and social support. The Slovak Republic supported Ukraine also through several international humanitarian (such as IOM, UNHCR,

WFT, UNICEF and others) and local non-governmental organizations, providing financial support for their activities to aid people affected by the war in Ukraine since February 2022. Thanks to the financial support of the Slovak Republic, water and sanitary supplies were provided to people temporarily placed in the civil protection shelters in Dnipro, an orphanage in Seredne and a medical facility for disadvantaged children in the town of Svaliava were reconstructed, safety courses were provided and evacuations of journalists in Ukraine were secured, equipment for the kitchen in the rehabilitation centre in Berdychevo was purchased, materials for the rehabilitation and prosthetic centre in Zaporhyzia were purchased, a civil protection shelter in Sumy was built, a centre for victims of sexual violence was built and many other projects were supported. As part of the assistance to humanitarian demining in the affected areas of Ukraine, financial support was provided for the purchase of two Bozena 4+ demining systems, which will operate in Kherson region.

As in the previous years, the Slovak Republic supported the implementation of four humanitarian projects in the Near and Middle East region (Syria, Iraq, Lebanon) through the SAIDC humanitarian call in the total value of almost € 1 million. The projects interventions focused mainly on the building of water infrastructure and providing urgent medical care significantly contribute to the improvement of living conditions of the communities affected by armed conflicts and forced migration in the area.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Information provided by the MO MI.

<sup>239</sup> Information provided by the MFEA.

<sup>240</sup> Information provided by the MFEA.

<sup>241</sup> Information provided by the MFEA.

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Annex: National Statistics

The Annex contains selected migration and international protection statistics for 2023, includ-  
ing those which are not collected at EU level through Eurostat<sup>242</sup> or Frontex<sup>243</sup> agency.

National statistics for Slovakia are available mainly in the annual statistical overviews of BBFP P P<sup>244</sup>  
(legal and irregular migration, returns, temporary protection), annual statistical reports of  
MO MI<sup>245</sup> (international protection including UAMs applying for asylum, temporary protection),  
statistics of COLSAF<sup>246</sup> (employment of foreigners, UAMs not applying for asylum, temporary  
protection), MFEA<sup>247</sup> (visa), SO<sup>248</sup> (demographic data and international migration), Public Admin-  
istration Section of MI<sup>249</sup> (citizenship) and MESRS<sup>250</sup> (education of migrant children). Summary of  
the basic statistical data on migration in Slovakia for a calendar year from Eurostat provides the  
annual EMN Country Factsheet<sup>251</sup> on developments in the area of migration and international  
protection or the website of the IOM - Mission in the Slovak Republic<sup>252</sup>.

Explanation of symbols (not applicable to Table 9 in the Annex):

(:) - not available (-) - the phenomenon did not occur

242 Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics), last accessed on 12. 2. 2024.  
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247 Statistics on numbers of issued visas are available upon request.  
248 SO, Statistics, [https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/themes/demography/population/news/lut/p/b1/jdDRColwFABgZ-kF3HFb-c7ucRnMI5jTLdhMWEVJqUBS9fRbeZp27A9\\_\\_wznlogLZprxXx\\_JWtU15fu-WbY2nue-7Eri\\_wqC9OHXnxqi5Szuw6UCgZEi9CIBHagxahnkqD-CEgyX95-DISfuVnyFa72nnsawccAEKx4IJQzoCxsSBojexgRe71YJolWAqqgkm6mIJeBphnEcOg2A8Abg-GnvABA1fGYVsfUHY9oUudF89MV8IR-jl5AKltdl4/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/themes/demography/population/news/lut/p/b1/jdDRColwFABgZ-kF3HFb-c7ucRnMI5jTLdhMWEVJqUBS9fRbeZp27A9__wznlogLZprxXx_JWtU15fu-WbY2nue-7Eri_wqC9OHXnxqi5Szuw6UCgZEi9CIBHagxahnkqD-CEgyX95-DISfuVnyFa72nnsawccAEKx4IJQzoCxsSBojexgRe71YJolWAqqgkm6mIJeBphnEcOg2A8Abg-GnvABA1fGYVsfUHY9oUudF89MV8IR-jl5AKltdl4/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/), last accessed on 12. 2. 2024.  
249 Statistics available upon request.  
250 Statistics available upon request from the Ministry or from the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, which processes and published these statistics on their website [https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia/statisticka-rocenka-vysoke-skoly.html?page\\_id=9596](https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia/statisticka-rocenka-vysoke-skoly.html?page_id=9596), last accessed on 12. 2. 2024.  
251 EMN Slovakia, Publications, <https://emn.sk/sk/publikacie/vyrocnne-spravy-emn-o-migracii-a-azyle.html>, last accessed on 12. 2. 2024.  
252 IOM Slovakia, Migration, <http://www.iom.sk/sk/migracia/migracia-na-slovensku>, last accessed on 12. 2. 2024.

Table 1: Foreigners with valid residence in the SK in 2023 (by nationality and type of residence)

Indicator	As of 31 December 2023		Top nationalities of foreigners
Number of foreigners with valid residence	311 406		1. Ukraine (176 522) 2. Serbia (19 045) 3. Czechia (12 684) 4. Hungary (9 631) 5. Vietnam (9 082)
Share of foreigners in total population*	5.74 %		
Number of TCNs with valid residence	255 898	temporary residence: 109 043	1. Ukraine (176 522) 2. Serbia (19 045) 3. Vietnam (9 082) 4. Russia (8 434) 5. Georgia (5 217)
		permanent residence: 32 632	
		tolerated stay: 114 223**	
Share of TCNs in total number of foreigners	82.18%		
Share of TCNs in total population *	4.72 %		

Source: BBFP PF P and SO.  
Note:  
\* The total population of the Slovak Republic represents number of persons with permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic irrespective of their citizenship. As of 31 December 2023, the total population was 5 424 687.  
\*\* The significant increase of foreigners with granted tolerated stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic compared to 2021 is related to the granting of temporary protection (mainly to Ukrainian nationals). Of the 95 450 tolerated stays, only 60 did not concern temporary protection (53 – for the purpose of unaccompanied minor and 7 – for the purpose of respecting private and family life). In 2023, out of the 114 223 tolerated stays mentioned in the Table, 73 did not concern temporary protection (66 – for the purpose of unaccompanied minor and 7 – for the purpose of respecting private and family life).

Table 2: Third-country nationals with a valid residence by regions within the Slovak Republic in 2023

Region	Valid residences as of 31. 12. 2023	Of which tolerated stay (tem- porary protection)
Bratislava region	92 808	42 421
Košice region	31 891	14 612
Nitra region	27 993	11 118
Trnava region	27 578	10 096
Žilina region	23 215	11 817
Prešov region	20 957	8 884
Trenčín region	18 529	8 884
Banská Bystrica region	12 927	6 318
Total	255 898	114 150

Source: BBFP PF P.

Table 3: Residence permits issued in the Slovak Republic to third-country nationals in 2023 by sex and purpose<sup>253)</sup>

Sex***	Total (out of which first permits)	Residence purpose				Most common nationalities — total and for first permits
		Family formation and reunification <sup>254</sup> (family reasons)	Education and study <sup>255</sup>	Remunerated activities <sup>256</sup>	Other reasons <sup>257</sup>	
Male	:	:	:	:	:	1. Ukraine (60 416) 2. Serbian (7 938) 3. Vietnam (4 250) 4. Georgia (3 654) 5. Russia (3 434)  First permits: 1. Ukraine (36 229) 2. Serbia (4 044) 3. Georgia (2 946) 4. India (2 123) 5. Vietnam (1 587)
Female	:	:	:	:	:	
Total* (out of which first permits**)	96 815 (58 236)	9 832 (3 863)	6 657 (4 212)	47 724 (20 003)	32 602 (30 158)	

Source: BBFP PF P.  
Notes:  
\* Total residence permits are understood all granted, renewed or extended residences in the given year.  
\*\* First residences (data in brackets) are understood residences which were granted in the given year in the Slovak Republic for the very first time or in the period of minimum 6 month after the end of the previous residence.  
\*\*\* The breakdown of data by gender is not available in the Slovak Republic. Out of a total of 96 815 residence permits, an estimated 39% are women and 61% are men. For the first permits, the ratio is: 42% women and 58% men.

253 Reasons for issuing residence are in accordance with the respective EU legislation (Commission Regulation (EU) No. 216/2010 of 15 March 2010 implementing Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection, as regards the definitions of categories of the reasons for the residence permits) and are divided into four categories: 1. Family formation and reunification,(family reasons) 2. Education and study, 3. Remunerated activities, and 4. Other reasons. National types of and reasons for residence permits are divided into these four categories.  
254 Category family formation and reunification (family reasons) following the Act on Residence of Foreigners No. 404/2011 as amended includes: 1. temporary residence – person with long term residence in another MS in line with Article 30 par. 1e); family reunification; Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states the category family); 2. permanent residence for 5 years in line with Article 43 par. 1a) to d); family member of EU citizen; Brexit for 5 years (if the foreigner states the category family) – registered from 2020 onwards; 3. permanent residence for unlimited period of time in line with Article 46 par 1a) and b); family member of EU citizen - permanent; 4. long term residence in line with Article 52 par. 1a) - family; Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states the category family); Article 52 par. 1b) (if the foreigner states the category family); Brexit for unlimited period of time (if the foreigner states the category family) – registered from 2020 onwards; 5. tolerated stay – if it is needed due to the respect for private and family life of the foreigner and does not represent a threat to the security of the state and public order in line with Article 58 par. 1b).  
255 Category education and study following the Act on Residence of Foreigners No. 404/2011 as amended includes: 1. temporary residence for the purpose of study (study – student, study - pupil); study – student/Art. 24 par. 1b), study – student/Art. 24 par. 1c), study – student/Art. 34 par.1 b), study – pupil/Art. 24 par. 1a), special activities – Governmental or EU programme (only category study); special activities – international treaty (only category study); special activities – international treaty (only category study, special activities - traineeship within study outside of the Slovak Republic; special activities – volunteering activities; for the purpose person with long term residence in another MS in line with Article 30 par. 1c) or in line with Article 30 par. 1d) (if the foreigner states the category study); Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states the category study); 2. permanent residence for 5 years - Brexit for 5 years (if the foreigner states the category study) – registered from 2020 onwards; 3 long-term residence for the unlimited period of time in line with Article 52 par. 1a) – Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states the category study); Article 52 par. 1b) – special activities (if the foreigner states the category study), Article 52 par. 1b) (foreigner states the category study);

Table 4: Foreigners employed in the Slovak Republic in 2023

	As of 31 December 2023 (out of which female)	Top nationalities	Top third-country nationalities
EU/EEA citizens	31 892 (9 319)	1. Ukraine (39 307) 2. Serbia (9 681) 3. Romania (7 068) 4. Czech Republic (6 530) 5. Hungary (5 977)	1. Ukraine (39 307) 2. Serbia (9 681) 3. India (3 211) 4. Georgia (1 640) 5. Russia (1 430)
Third-country nationals	68 691 (28 881)		
Total	100 583 (38 200)		

Source:COLSAF.

256 Category remunerated activities following the Act on Residence of Foreigners No. 404/2011 as amended includes: 1. temporary residence for the purpose of business; business – start-up; employment in line with Article 23 par. 1 a 2, seasonal employment; special activities – journalist; special activities – lecturing; special activities – artistic activities; special activities – sport; special activities – international treaty (only category remunerated); special activities – Governmental or EU programme (only category remunerated), for the purpose of intra-corporate transfer (ICT – manager, ICT – specialist, ICT – trainee); person with a long-term residence in another MS in line with Article 30 par. 1a) and b) and also in line with Article 30 par. 1d) (if the foreigner states category remunerated); performing professional duties by civilian units of the armed forces in line with Article 28; EU Blue Card; Research and development; Research and development /Art. 34. par.1b); Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states category remunerated); 2. permanent residence for 5 years in line with Article 43 par. 1e) – interest of the Slovak Republic; Brexit for 5 years (if the foreigner states category remunerated) – registered from 2020 onwards; 3. permanent residence for unlimited period of time in line with Article 46 par. 1a) – interest of the Slovak Republic; 4. long-term residence in line with Article 52 par. 1a) - employment; Article 52 par. 1a) - business; Article 52 par.1a) – research and development; Article 52 par. 1a) – Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states category remunerated), Article 52 par. 1a) – special activities (if the foreigner states category remunerated), Article 52 par. 1b) (if the foreigner states category remunerated); Article 52 par. 1c) – EU Blue Card holder; Brexit for unlimited period of time (if the foreigner states category remunerated) – registered from 2020 onwards.  
257 Category other reasons following the Act on Residence of Foreigners No. 404/2011 as amended includes the following types of residence which do not fall under any of the previous: 1. temporary residence for the purpose of special activities – health care - providing healthcare and accompanying a TCN who is provided healthcare; Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states category other reasons), person with long-term residence in another MS in line with Article 30 par. 1d) (if the foreigner states category other reasons); 2. permanent residence for 5 years in line with Article 43 par. 1e) – if it is in the interest of the Slovak Republic and based on Article 45a (if the foreigner states category other reasons); Brexit for 5 years (if the foreigner states category other reasons) – registered from 2020 onwards; 3. permanent residence for unlimited period of time in line with Article 46 par. 2 – if it is in the security interests of the Slovak Republic (if the foreigner states category other reasons); 4. long-term residence for the unlimited period of time in line with Article 52 par. 1a) – Slovak living abroad (if the foreigner states category other reasons); Article 52 par. 1b) (if the foreigner states category other reasons); Brexit for unlimited period of time (if the foreigner states category other reasons) – registered from 2020 onwards; 5. tolerated stay – if it concerns a minor found in the Slovak Republic in line with Article 58 par. 1a) or if it concerns victim of trafficking in human beings who is at least 18 years old in line with Article 58 par. 1c), eventually if it concerns victim of trafficking in human beings who is at least 18 years old, where as a tolerated stay a period of maximum 90 days in line with Article 58 par. 3 is considered, further if it results from international obligations of the Slovak Republic in line with Article 58 par. 1 d), also if it concerns illegally employed person under particularly exploitative working conditions or an illegally employed minor person, whose presence in the Slovak Republic is necessary for the purpose of criminal proceeding in line with Article 58 par. 2; 6. subsidiary protection; 7. asylum.



Table 5: Visas issued by the Slovak Republic to third-country nationals in 2023 (by type of visa and previous residence)

Total	(Schengen) short stay visas (A and C and LTV types of visa)		National visas (D type of visa)*	
	previous residence			
	issued in a third country	issued in other EU MS	issued in a third country	issued in other EU MS
20 556	10 912	693	8 725	226

Source: MFEA (based on the Microcomp data from the NVIS system).  
\* Out of the total number, MI issued 122 national visas.  
Explanations: A type of visa – airport transit visa  
C type of visa – tourist visa  
D type of visa – national visa  
LTV visa – visa with limited territorial validity  
Note: The number of visas issued may differ from the data presented in the Statistical Overview of Legal and Illegal Migration in the Slovak Republic – 2023 issued by BBFP PF P. The number of decisions taken on the visa application in the system at the time of processing the report, does not have to be reflected in the number of visas printed or issued.

Table 6: Acquired Slovak citizenship in 2023 (by sex and previous citizenship)

Sex	Total Slovak citizen- ship acquired by foreigners	Top previous citizen- ships (foreigners)	Total Slovak citizen- ship acquired by third country nationals	Top previous citizenships (third country nationals)
Male	553	1. Serbia (409) 2. Ukraine (141) 3. Czech Republic (80) 4. USA (36) 5. Germany (32)	458	1. Serbia (409)
Female	549		451	2. Ukraine (141)
Total	1 102		909	3. USA (36)
				4. United Kingdom (29)
				5. Russia (24)

Source: MI.  
Note: Citizenship of the Slovak Republic is usually acquired by naturalization.

Table 7: Foreigners in the school system in the Slovak Republic as of 15 September 2023 (school year 2022/2023) – kindergartens, primary and secondary schools

Indicator	Total	Out of which third-country nationals	Top third-country nationalities
Foreigners in kindergartens	2 840	2 408	1. Ukraine (1 935) 2. Vietnam (133) 3. Russia (84) 4. Serbia (56) 5. United Kingdom (23)
Foreigners in primary schools	12 721	11 299	1. Ukraine (9 024) 2. Russia (474) 3. Vietnam (358) 4. Serbia (292) 5. Korean rep. (207)
Foreigners in special kindergar- tens and primary schools	200	169	1. Ukraine (131) 2. Russia (17) 3. Serbia (7) 4. Vietnam/Taiwan/USA
Foreigners in secondary schools	4 796	4 261	1. Ukraine (3 271) 2. Russia (323) 3. Serbia (162) 4. Korean Republic (79) 5. Kazakhstan (75)
Foreigners in universities	21 912	15 590	1. Ukraine (10 466) 2. Russia (1 251) 3. Serbia (544) 4. Norway (444) 5. Belarus (426)
Foreigners total	42 469	33 727	1. Ukraine (24 827) 2. Russia (2 149) 3. Serbia (1 056) 4. Vietnam (599) 5. Norway (444)

Source: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

Table 8: Irregular migration in the Slovak Republic in 2023

Indicator	Number of cases	Top third-country nationalities
Registered illegal border crossings	678	1. Ukraine (648) 2. India (3) 3. Bolivia/Russia/Syria (2) 4. Belarus/Comoros/Turkey/ Pakistan (1)
Registered irregular stay	46 932	1. Syria (44 927) 2. Turkey (1 013) 3. Afghanistan (158) 4. Iraq (97) 5. Bangladesh (85)
Total	47 610	1. Syria (44 929) 2. Turkey (1 014) 3. Ukraine (703) 4. Afghanistan (158) 5. Iraq (97)

Source: BBFP PF P.

Table 9: Smuggled persons in the Slovak Republic in 2023<sup>258</sup>

Indicator	Male	Fema- le	Total	Top nationalities
Third-country nationals identified as smuggled persons	:	:	2 462 / 1 686 *	1. Syria (1 234) 2. unidentified (446) 3. Turkey (422) 4. Serbia (200) 5. Afghanistan (39)

Source: BBFP PF P.

\* 2 462 irregular migrants were identified in investigation files in 2023, while the acts happened also in previous years. From the stated number 1 686 migrants who entered Slovakia irregularly with smugglers were apprehended in 2023.

Notes:

(:) Unavailable data (in the cases documented by the NUCIM BBFP PF P, only the nationality of irregular migrants and the relation to the crime for which a charge was brought against the smugglers are recorded).

258 According to the Art. 355 and Art. 356 of the Act No. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code, smuggling is defined as follows:  
§ 355: Any person who organises illegal crossing of the state border of the Slovak Republic, or a transfer through its territory, for a person who is neither a citizen of the Slovak Republic nor a person with permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, or who enables such activity or aids and abets it with the intention of obtaining financial or other material benefit.  
§ 356: Any person who, with the intention of obtaining financial or other material benefit for himself or another either directly or indirectly, enables or helps a person, who is neither a citizen of the Slovak Republic or of another EU MS or a citizen of a contracting state of the Agreement on the EEA nor a person with permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, to stay or get an illegal job in the territory of the Slovak Republic or of other EU MS or a contracting state of the Agreement on the EEA, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of two to eight years.

Table 10: Smugglers in the Slovak Republic – selected indicators in 2023

Indicator	Smugglers		
	Arrested as suspected/ charged	Top nationalities	Convicted
Total <sup>259</sup>	250* / 196**	1. unidentified (56) 2. Syria (26/27) 3. Slovak Republic (25/26)	200***

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (arrested as suspected), General Prosecutor's Office of the Slovak Republic (charged) and Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (convicted).

\* The total number of persons suspected from the criminal offence of migrant smuggling.

\*\* Out of a total of 196 convicted persons, 169 were charged for irregular crossing of the state border, 23 for marriage of convenience, 3 for illegal work and 1 for irregular stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic / EU.

\*\*\* 181 persons were convicted based on Article 355 and 19 persons (incl. two legal entities) based on Article 356 of Act No. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code.

Table 11: Detained third-country nationals in the Slovak Republic in 2023\*

	PDCF Sečovce	PDCF Med- ved'ov	Total	Top nationalities
Number of placed TCNs during 2023	348	462	810	1. Turkey (232) 2. Syria (197) 3. Iraq (73) 4. Morocco (42) 5. Bangladesh (37)

Source: BBFP PF P.

Note: \* TCNs detained by the Slovak Republic are placed in Police Detention Centres for Foreigners (PDCF).

259 The number includes convicted persons based on Article 355, Article 356 of the new Criminal Code No. 300/2005 and Article 171 of the old Criminal Code No. 140/1961 (based on the nature of the criminal act).

**Table 12: Third-country nationals returned from the Slovak Republic in 2023 (by type of return, nationality and country of return)**

Indicator	Returned within forced return measures*				Returned voluntarily (including AVR)**				Returned voluntarily within AVR programme				Persons with provided reintegration assistance within AVR			
	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 0	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 11	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 0	Total	M	F	Out of which Min. 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	54	5	0	<b>205***</b>	186	19	11	<b>50</b>	45	5	0	<b>10</b>	6	4	3
<b>Top nationalities</b>	1. Ukraine (21) 2. Morocco (14) 3. Serbia / Turkey / Belarus (4) 4. Georgia (3) 5. Bolivia / Iraq (3)				1. Turkey (104) 2. Tunisia (12) 3. Ukraine/Uzbekistan (5) 4. Vietnam (4) 5. Georgia (3)				1. Turkey (35) 2. Vietnam (4) 3. Tunisia (3) 4. Morocco/North Macedonia (2) 5. Egypt/Iraq/Lebanon/Russia (1)				1. Turkey (5) 2. Vietnam (4) 3. Libya (1) 4. – 5. –			
<b>Top countries of return</b>	1. Ukraine 2. Morocco 3. Belarus / Serbia 4. Turkey / Georgia 5. Bolivia / Iraq				1. Turkey 2. Serbia 3. Georgia 4. Morocco 5. Albania/Vietnam											

Source: BBFP PF P<sup>260</sup> and IOM Slovakia<sup>261</sup>.

\* Forced return – This category refers to the execution of decision on administrative or judicial expulsion by Police Force escort: a) via external land border; b) via internal land border or; c) via airplane to a third country.

\*\* Returned voluntarily (including AVR) – This category includes a) voluntary fulfilment of an obligation to travel out of the Slovak territory within the time limit set in the decision on administrative expulsion due to detected unauthorised stay within the Slovak territory (fulfilment of this obligation was recorded at the border crossing on external border) or b) traveling out of the Slovak territory after detecting irregular stay on the border crossing point while a foreigner is leaving Slovakia, issuing him/her decision on administrative expulsion. Such case includes also persons whose return was organised by IOM through the AVRR programme, after issuance of decision on administrative expulsion. One person is included only once (that means one person is only issued one decision on expulsion).

\*\*\* The number of 205 includes 114 voluntary returns under the new cooperation with Frontex, 50 voluntary returns through the IOM AVRR programme and 41 voluntary departures.

Explanations: AVR – Assisted voluntary returns, AVRR – IOM's Programme of Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration, M – men, ML – minors, F – women

260 BBFP PF P provided return statistics based on data provided to Eurostat for 2022. BBFP PF P collected statistical data in compliance with the Art. 7.1. of the Regulation No. 862/2007 on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection and with current Eurostat technical instructions (Technical Guidelines for the Data Collection – Enforcement of Immigration Legislation EIL Statistics).

261 IOM Slovakia collects statistics on assisted voluntary returns and reintegrations which are, compared to data above, listed on its website as number of AVR and reintegration cases. One case can include several persons.

**Table 13a: Asylum applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in the Slovak Republic in 2023 – selected indicators**

Indicator	Total	Male	Female	Out of which minors	Top nationalities ***
Applications for asylum (out of which first applications)	<b>416 (377)</b>	341 (305)	75 (72)	101 (83)	1. Turkey (139) 2. Bangladesh (61) 3. Ukraine (32) 4. Morocco (28) 5. Afghanistan (24)
Asylum granted	<b>37</b>	18	19	18	1. Afghanistan (17) 2. Russia (9) 3. Cuba (5) 4. Belarus/Iran/ Morocco/Nigeria/ Serbia/ Ukraine (1) 5. –
Subsidiary protection provided*	<b>43</b>	28	15	17	1. Ukraine (22) 2. Afghanistan (7) 3. Syria (5) 4. Russia (4) 5. Pakistan (2)
Negative decisions**	<b>77</b>	60	17	14	1. Bangladesh (13) 2. Morocco/Turkey (9) 3. Russia/Pakistan (8) 4. Tunisia (4) 5. Czech Republic/ India/Ukraine (3)
Proceeding suspended***	<b>323</b>	244	79	70	1. Turkey (153) 2. Bangladesh (46) 3. Afghanistan (20) 4. Pakistan (14) 5. Morocco (13)

Source: MO MI.

Note: This table concerns first instance decisions only. The processing of statistics for 2022 is adapted to the changes resulting from the amendment to the Asylum Act.

Explanations:

\* Subsidiary protection – protection against serious harm in the country of origin.

\*\* Negative decisions – includes decisions on not granting asylum, not granting subsidiary protection and rejecting asylum applications as (i) manifestly unfounded or (ii) inadmissible. The statistics do not include decisions on rejected asylum applications as inadmissible if another Member State is competent for the asylum procedure, the so-called Dublin cases.

\*\*\* Proceeding suspended – termination of proceedings pursuant to § 19 of Act No. 480/2022 on asylum and on amendments to certain acts, as amended.



**Table 13b: Number of persons who applied for asylum in the territory of the Slovak Republic in connection with the war in Ukraine in 2023**

Nationalities	Male	Female	Minor	Total
Ukraine	8	6	12	26
Russia	2	1	2	5
Other third countries	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: MO MI.

**Table 14: Third-country nationals relocated to the Slovak Republic in 2023 (by sex, country of origin and EU Member State)**

Indicator	Total	Male	Female	Minor	Country of origin of relocated TCNs	Relocations made from EU MS
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	–	–

Source: MO MI.

**Table 15: Third-country nationals resettled to the Slovak Republic in 2023 (by sex and original host country)**

Indicator	Total	Male	Female	Original host country
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	–

Source: MO MI.

**Table 16: Third-country nationals resettled through the Slovak Republic to third countries in 2023 (by sex and by original host country)**

Indicator	Total	Male	Female	Original host country	Destination country
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	–	0

Source: MO MI and IOM Slovakia.

Note: The Slovak Republic carries out through its territory resettlement activities to other third countries (see Chapter 4.3). Humanitarian transfer of refugees through the territory of the Slovak Republic is based on trilateral agreement among the Slovak Government, UNHCR and IOM.

**Table 17: Unaccompanied minors in facilities in the Slovak Republic in 2023**

	Male	Female	Total	Top nationalities	Left facilities
Unaccompanied minors placed to facilities	172	7	<b>179</b>	1. Syria (98) 2. Ukraine (32) 3. Turkey (19) 4. Afghanistan (8) 5. Egypt (6)	170
Total number of unaccompanied minors in facilities	224	21	<b>245</b>	1. Syria (119) 2. Ukraine (62) 3. Turkey (20) 4. Afghanistan (11) 5. Egypt (6)	235

Source: COLSAF – Preliminary statistics as of March 2023.

Note: In 2023, unaccompanied minors (non-EU citizens) were being placed in the Centre for Children and Families (CDR) in the town Medzilaborce.

**Table 18: Unaccompanied minors in the Slovak Republic by legal and sex in 2023\***

Indicator	Male	Female	Total	Top nationalities**
Unaccompanied minors not applying for asylum	209	21	<b>230</b>	1. Syria (117) 2. Ukraine (62) 3. Turkey (15) 4. Egypt (6) 5. Afghanistan (6)
Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum	14	1	<b>15</b>	1. Turkey (9) 2. Afghanistan (3) 3. Syria/Tunisia/Ukraine
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>245</b>	1. Syria (118) 2. Ukraine (63) 3. Turkey (24) 4. Afghanistan (9) 5. Egypt (6)

Source: MO MI (applying for asylum) and COLSAF (not applying for asylum).

Notes:

\* Unaccompanied minors in the care of social-legal protection of children and social guardianship.

\*\* If the number of unaccompanied minors is low, we do not give specific numbers for their protection.

**Table 19: Human trafficking victims from third countries in the Slovak Republic – selected indicators in 2023\***

Indicator		Total	Male	Female
<b>TCNs identified as victims of human trafficking<sup>262</sup> or presumed victims of human trafficking<sup>263</sup></b> <b>Presumed victims are provided in brackets.</b>		1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Age	18 years of age or more	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
	Under 18 years of age	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Form of exploitation <sup>264</sup>	Sexual exploitation	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Labour exploitation	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Other	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Top nationalities of trafficked persons		Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data	Confiden- tial data
<b>Tolerated stay granted**</b>		0	0	0
Directive 2004/81/EC		0	0	0
Other (e.g. humanitarian reasons, etc.)		0	0	0
<b>Residence permits requested</b>		0	0	0
Directive 2004/81/EC		0	0	0
Other (e.g. humanitarian reasons, etc.)		0	0	0
<b>Residence permits granted</b>		0	0	0
Directive 2004/81/EC		0	0	0
Other (e.g. humanitarian reasons, etc.)		0	0	0

Source: BBFP PF P (stays) and IC MI.

\* If the number is low, we do not provide it and also do not include other selected data on those victims for the protection of vulnerable persons. The specific number is substituted by "Confidential data" statement.

\*\* BBFP PF P does not record any tolerated stay that would be granted or extended in 2023 pursuant to § 58 par. 1 letter c) of Act no. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners.

262 Identified victims are those who have been formally identified by the relevant authority (i.e. the national person/body authorised to formally identify victims). Slovak National Referral Mechanism states that only the law enforcement bodies are authorised to formally identify a victim of human trafficking in the Slovak Republic.

263 Presumed victims are persons who fulfil the definition of victim of trafficking in human being, as outlined in Directive 2011/36/EU, but whom have not been formally identified by the relevant authorities (i.e. the national person/body authorised to formally identify victims).

264 More than one form of exploitation may be associated with each victim, therefore the statistics presented in this section may not necessarily agree with the overall totals entered above.

**Table 20: Traffickers in human beings in the Slovak Republic – selected indicators in 2023**

Indicator	Traffickers of human beings			
	Charged		Convicted	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18*</b>	9 male	<b>18**</b>	10 male
		9 female		8 female

Source: BBFP PF P (charged) and Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (convicted).

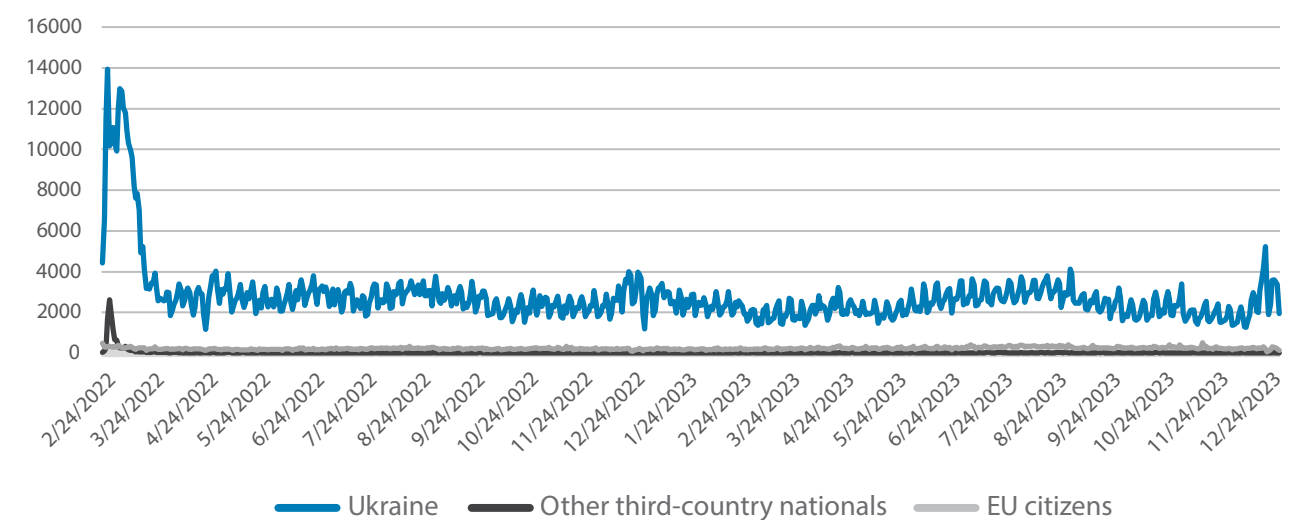
\* Number of lawfully concluded cases.

\*\* According to the § 179 of the Criminal Code.

**Table and graph 21: Number of persons who entered the territory of the Slovak Republic from Ukraine since the outbreak of war in Ukraine (24. 2. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)**

Indicator	Nationalities			
	Ukraine	Other third-country nationals	EU citizens	Total
Number of persons (24. 2. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)	1 880 707	24 529	162 115	<b>2 067 351</b>
Number of persons (1.1.2023 – 31.12.2023)	876 510	7 092	93 625	<b>977 227</b>

Source: BBFP PF P.

**The flow of travelers from Ukraine through the common land border into Slovakia (24. 2. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023) (daily from 00:00 to 23:59)**

Source: BBFP PF P.

Table 22: Number of persons who have left the territory of the Slovak Republic towards Ukraine since the outbreak of war in Ukraine (24. 2. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)

Indicator	Nationalities			
	Ukraine	Other third-country nationals	EU citizens	Total
Number of persons (24. 2. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)	1 736 895	11 508	165 132	1 913 535
Number of persons (1.1.2023 – 31.12.2023)	936 483	6 184	95 279	1 037 946

Source: BBFP PF P.

Table 24: Personal remittances of migrants sent from the Slovak Republic to other countries in 2023

Indicator	2023
Personal remittances in USD	539 169 833.8

Source: World Bank.

Table 23: Number of persons who applied for temporary protection in the territory of the Slovak Republic in connection with the war in Ukraine (1.3. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)

Nationalities	Adults		Minors		Number of applications from 1. 3. till 31. 12. 2022*	Adults		Minors		Number of applications from 1. 1. till 31. 12. 2023*
	M	F	M	F		M	F	M	F	
Ukraine	24 680	65 794	22 453	21 071	133 998	9 671	14 214	3 564	2 570	30 019
Russia	140	208	17	25	390	37	54	4	1	96
Other countries	260	108	25	14	407	37	23	4	1	65
Total	25 080	66 110	22 495	21 110	134 795	9 745	14 291	3 572	2 572	30 180
	91 226		43 605			24 036		6 144		
Total applications (1. 3. 2022 – 31. 12. 2023)	164 975									

Source: BBFP PF P.

\* According to the status in the source information system (IS) MIGRA on 25.3.2024. The above statistics are variable updated on a daily basis as well as retrospectively due to continuous monitoring and corrections made in the source IS. Therefore, there may be slight changes in the subsequently published numbers of applications for 2023.





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